



**SPI Podcast Session #58 –
Pay What You Want
with Anthony Vennare from Hybrid Athlete**

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session58>

Pat: This is the Smart Passive Income Podcast with Pat Flynn, session #58!

You got this. You got this! You got this. YOU got this!

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!

And now your host: one of the worst tennis players in the world--Pat Flynn!

Pat: True story. I either hit the net or I go over the fence in the back. It's not pretty.

Thank you so much for listening in on session 58 of the Smart Passive Income Podcast! My name is Pat Flynn, and I'm here to bring you as much info and inspiration as possible to help you get your online business or blog going, or up to the next level.

I actually just got back from Nashville, Tennessee, and I have to say the trip was AWESOME. I had such a blast at Michael Hyatt's Platform Conference. First one ever, actually, and I was privileged and honored to speak at the event, and I was the last speaker, which was pretty cool.

But I sat in on some amazing presentations as well by Michael Hyatt, Ken Davis, Steven McLaren from Wishlist Member, Carrie Wilkerson from Barefoot Executive, Jeff Goins, my buddy Cliff Ravenscraft from Podcast Answer Man, John Saddington, who I got to know really well this past week--it was just so cool, and I know Michael Hyatt listens to this podcast, so Michael, if you're listening right now, thank you so much for inviting me to your awesome event! It was amazing. I hope I can go back again! And hopefully I can share my presentation or bits and pieces of it with all of you listeners later in the future.

On Tuesday night, the night before the event finished, right before my presentation, Cliff Ravenscraft and I held a meet up, actually, at an awesome cafe called Fido in Nashville. If you're ever in the area, if you're ever in the Nashville area, hit up Fido.



Seriously, the food, the coffee, the service, it was amazing. Tell them Pat Flynn from Smart Passive Income sent you. I don't know if that'll do anything, but whatever.

Anyway, on Tuesday night Cliff and I had about 50 people over in a room in the back of a cafe to just chat and meet and network and it was AWESOME. Everybody who was there was amazing! A few people I want to call out--Pia, thank you so much for driving, I think you said, four hours with your baby and your dad came along too, which was great, just to see me, which was so cool of you and you deserve much more than a shout out on the podcast, but I hope this helps repay you even just a little bit!

And I also want to give a shout out to Seth and Shawn, two amazing, brilliant kids--yes, KIDS, both under the age of 10, who listen to the podcast and they were there asking me a ton of fantastic questions! Seth, Shawn, if you're listening to this right now, just know that I wish I started writing books and filming documentaries and doing other cool stuff like what you guys are doing right now when I was your age! Seriously, keep up the great work and give your dad a break every once in a while? He's pretty awesome too. But I think you know that already.

See this, people? Kids getting inspired by the SPI podcast! I love it, and this is why I keep my show clean. Blown away, blown away. Thank you everyone who came out to the meet up in Nashville, and I plan to have more meetups like that in the future, wherever I may be traveling. Keep an eye out on my Twitter feed @patflynn or on Facebook--facebook.com/smartpassiveincome for those announcements.

Today we have another success story interview for you! Once again, we're talking about something outside of the make money online blogging and entrepreneurship industry--HOWEVER, we're in the fitness niche today. And many of you, I'm sure, would easily and quickly put fitness into the same category as Internet marketing as far as how scammy and aggressive and car salesman-y some people and businesses can get. BUT, the person I'm interviewing today, he and his brother are taking a completely different approach in the fitness industry online, and it's working really, really well for them.

They actually started with a brick and mortar business, 12,000 square-foot gym, and moved their business COMPLETELY online. So they don't have that gym anymore. You'll hear the interview, what they've got going on now, and how they're putting a dent in the online fitness industry by doing stuff a little bit differently.

Without further ado, let's welcome Anthony Vennare to the podcast. Dude, what's up Anthony?



Anthony: How's it going, Pat? Thanks for having me!

Pat: Yeah, my pleasure, seriously. I can't wait to have you share your story.

Let's talk about that--what do you do and how did you get there?

Anthony: Well, there's a lot of things that we do--it's my brother and I, Joe. We run an online business where we reach as many people as we can in the fitness industry, but we kinda turn it on its head with Hybrid Athlete which is a fitness resource. Everything is technically free.

We do this pay-what-you-want type of thing where we give away everything for free, and if you want to pay for the products we offer, you can. And then we run what's called Race Day Domination. It's a niche site that I kind of learned from what you were doing--that's where I got into that category--it's for obstacle race training for tough mother Spartan-ers warrior dash. It is a 24 week training plan and videos and all that that goes with that program, and that's pay as you want as well.

Finally, we own an affiliate franchise program called Kettlebell Cardio where we have an accredited instructor certification and we have facilities running our licensed programming.

Pat: So you guys are in the fitness industry.

Anthony: Yes.

Pat: That is a really difficult--I mean, super competitive industry. How did you get into this?

Anthony: Well, long story...I joined the Marines right out of high school, and I was into fitness before I left for the Marines. Got into it when I was in there, and at my boot camp graduation, I found out my dad had terminal brain cancer, and my 20 year career, "I want to be in the Marines forever," kind of got flipped on its head and I had to work to help out the family, and one thing that I was good at was fitness.

I started as a personal trainer, started my own in-home personal training company, became a fitness director at the YMCA, ran a few of the facilities, opened my own 12,000 square foot training facility, had that for about a year and a half, and then got



the inspiration from you and a few others to reach a lot more and start the online fitness game and licensing and workshops as well, and that's how we got here, where we are today.

Pat: Wow, so you and Joe actually came from a brick and mortar business and then got online?

Anthony: Yeah. We--Joe was a teacher, actually, when this whole thing happened, when our family had that problem and we all had to come together. Joe was teaching in North Carolina, history, and he did fitness on the side. So he moved home with me, started in personal training and then we had the gym, so we had a gym for almost two years.

Pat: What was it like having a gym? What were some of the strugg--I imagine that business was probably pretty good. I mean, a lot of gyms are doing really well. What made you decide, really, to put that aside and start to do stuff online?

Anthony: I guess it's that whole entrepreneurial spirit kind of thing, where we were directing Ys and Joe--I was a director at Y, and so was Joe at another Y, and there was always--we had such great success with our programming, and that's where our program Kettlebell Cardio came from, but there was always someone ahead of you holding you back, so we decided to get in the fitness industry and open a gym, and when we did we only ran group exercise classes around our Kettlebell and body weight training that all of our programs online are based off of, and we ended up having almost 500 members by the time we closed.

Pat: Wow, that's awesome.

Okay, so after you decided to scrap the 12,000 foot brick and mortar business, what was the first thing that you created? You said you had Hybrid Athlete, you have Race Day Domination and Kettlebell Cardio Fitness. I want to get into all three of those, and of course I want to talk about the pay as you go stuff, but what was the first one that you created?

Anthony: Kettlebell Cardio actually started right when our whole thing happened with the fitness facility. We started running Kettlebell Cardio, and that turned into the certification and the affiliate. Similar to--most people know a program called CrossFit? We do the same type of thing but ours is more of an on-ramp, where anyone can do it, it's real simple, effective, it's based on one piece of equipment and that was our foot



into the door, was Kettlebell Cardio. We now have 15 locations running that right now and certified a few hundred instructors.

Pat: Wow, that's really cool. Was that always the plan, to create that certification and branch out from there, or did it just start as a blog, or stuff that I normally do?

Anthony: Well, that just started as we were running at our facility and someone else wanted to do it, so then we kind of got from there. That was more of the, I guess, business to business thing. It wasn't online. [Hybrid Athlete](#) website is the one that I started after running into stuff that you put up and then some stuff that I saw through a few other people online, and that's the blog where we kind of grew from blogging, which Joe writes. Joe's the writer.

Pat: Okay. Let's talk about Hybrid Athlete. When did that start?

Anthony: That started April of 2012. That's right when we closed the facility and we started the Hybrid Athlete website.

Pat: Wow. So that's fairly recent.

Anthony: Yeah, we're coming on 10 months right now, and we're killing it, for what we've been doing. Seeing how other people have done and how long it takes, how long it used to take them, we're really excited and we kind of chalk it up to the pay what you want, everything's free, kind of be two normal guys trying to help everyone out.

Pat: Hmm. Okay. So define "killing it." You said you guys are killing it with Hybrid Athlete. I'm interested in knowing exactly what that means to you.

Anthony: Well, we--for giving everything away for free, we have reached a point where we are coming on 6 figures for the year, and it's been about 10 months, and that's a profit. Revenue is above 6 figures, and we sell fitness equipment, too. So we do a lot of things through Hybrid Athlete that's not just blogging. But it all comes into the selling of fitness equipment, giving away the products and selling the products and licensing our name and Joe writing for a lot of other people.

Pat: Okay. So I'm a brand new person, I somehow stumble upon your site. Actually, first, where's all this traffic coming from to Hybrid Athlete?



Anthony: Actually, when I first found out what Smart Passive Income was, it was through searching "How to Do SEO." So a lot of it's through SEO. Most of our traffic is SEO and then Facebook. We actually don't have email marketing at all, you can't subscribe to anything, we don't have an RSS feed.

Everything is through Facebook, and we have a great social media director who was our intern for the longest time and was a good friend of mine that gets our word out through Facebook, and when you find a blog, everyone comes there through Facebook, Twitter or SEO.

Pat: Wow, that's interesting. What was your SEO strategy? Was it based off of the Backlinking Strategy That Works, or...what was kind of the strategy there?

Anthony: Our strategy was the backlinking as much as we can. I mean, every single source we could write for, really in depth social bookmarking, things like that. We went and paid three different companies--I can't remember the name, but different little companies that would do social bookmarking and things like that. Backlinking has been a huge strategy for us. And then very specific keyword dense posts at the very beginning.

From there, once we got to a point where we were doing well, the whole update to Google hit, and then we hired someone to help us out, a contractor.

Pat: Okay. So did you guys get hit by Google?

Anthony: Yeah, really bad. I guess it was Penguin when it came out?

Pat: Yeah, Penguin or Panda...I mean, that hit a lot of people really hard. How did you recover from that? You just hired someone--do you know exactly what they did?

Anthony: I have no idea what they did.

Pat: [laughs]

Anthony: They, uh, someone that we just found online searching, and she would [inaudible] at most, a small monthly fee for what she does, it's amazing. It's not much at all. And she works her Google magic, we like to say, because when Penguin--I think it was Penguin when it came, it really, on both Race and Hybrid destroy us. No money was coming in. We were top three, four places for keywords, and when that came we



were 12, 15, 20--no one could find us, traffic was terrible. That was like a devastation, we didn't know what to do.

Pat: [pained laugh] Maybe we can, afterwards--or maybe I'll try and look at your site and dissect it and see maybe what your SEO person is doing. Or maybe--yeah, I'm pretty sure they won't just give that information away, but I'll try to see if I can find the information with the SPI community as far as how you got back. Because I know a lot of people DID get hit hard by that, and a lot of people are interested on how to get that back. I'll do some research and see if I can share that in the show notes.

Anthony: Yeah. I can send you the updates that she gives us on what she does. It's well beyond my understanding, but I bet you could decipher it.

Pat: Okay, sure. Yeah, that would be cool. I think everybody would appreciate that. And of course, I'm going to just try and present that as easy as possible to the audience.

Okay, so Hybrid Athlete--I want to talk about the free, but kind of pay whatever you feel. What made you guys decide to do that?

Anthony: Well, what we were doing when we first came online--everything in the online fitness industry is pretty much a scam. There's always the fat loss, fat burn, all these things, and they're all long sales copy pages or blogs that are nothing but links to other people's affiliate links to a product on ClickBank.

So we did that for a while, and it worked, but it felt terrible, because the more you worked on sales copy and wording and--all you were doing was tricking and convincing someone to buy your product.

So Joe found--his favorite website was [Philosopher Notes](#)? I don't know if you know that website.

Pat: I do, actually. That's where you can sort of get summaries of books and you can download PDFs with your, just like--sort of cliff notes for really inspirational books and self-development type of books. Am I correct?

Anthony: Yeah, that's exactly right. Joe's really into that, so he would always be on that site, and he has a "pick your price" model as well. So you can pay \$5 for the update or the summary, or you can pay up to \$100, which is what he recommends.



That's where we found that model, and then we took it a step further and instead of having them pay any price, it's free, if you want to, or you can pay if you want to.

Pat: Wow, okay. So I come to your site--is this thehybridathlete.com?

Anthony: It's thehybridathlete.com, yes.

Pat: Okay, thehybridathlete.com. What do I see when I get there? And when am I given the option to pay for something?

Anthony: Whenever you get to the site, there's four big buttons. We really follow the simple rule. Simplifying fitness is our whole thing. So there's a button that says "start here!" It explains our backstory and the whole pay-what-you-want method. There's a "pay what you want" button that links to the products, and then there's exercise videos where we have about 170 now exercise demonstration workout videos, and then the blog, obviously.

But the pay what you want, you click it and it's like a very simple store, but in the store there's "6 Week Body Weight Training Program: A Guide to Healthy Eating," "6 Week Kettlebell Training Program," "12 Week Obstacle Race Training Program," a Kettlebell how-to manual...they're all very well done, designed eBooks.

Pat: Yeah. I mean, I'm on the site right now and it's very minimalistic sort of theme, and it's really simple. I really love the homepage, like you said, it's just really clear that these are your options, these are only things you should do. I think I've obviously done fitness, and I've done research online on different fitness companies and things like that, and this is totally opposite of what I normally see. You know, the long sales pages with the tons of options and things to click on--this is very simple, and I really like the motif and theme that you have going on here.

The pay what you want stuff looks like, to me, ah...there's going to be people who download stuff for free, right? And then there's going to be the other extreme where I think, of course, if the content is well worth it, they're going to pay you quite a bit.

Where are you--let's say 100 people bought stuff from Hybrid Athlete or did the pay what you want things, some free, some a lot. Tell us what the spectrum is like. How many people get stuff for free versus, you know, \$5 versus--I don't know if anybody gives you, like, \$1000. What's that like for you guys?



Anthony: I'd say probably 60% of the people take stuff for free. But that's OK, because the other 40% are paying the most, which is \$20. So a lot of people--most people pay the \$20 or they take it for free.

Pat: Okay, so the \$20 is sort of the recommended maximum price?

Anthony: Well, the way we word it is, "I'll just take it," "I like you guys, you rock" for \$5 or "I'm all in, thanks a lot," for \$20.

Pat: That is really cool! I'm on the--I just clicked a button to purchase something, sorry if that screws up your analytics a little bit.

Anthony: Oh, you're good.

Pat: It says "6 Week Body Weight Training Plan: That's right, you pay what you want! Take it for free, or if you like what we offer, drop us a few bucks."

It says "Pay what you want:" and there's three buttons here. The default one is "I like what I see and want to support, add \$5." I can click on "I'll just take it." That changes the total to 0, and I can click on "I'm all in, you guys rock" at \$20. That is really interesting! So you're saying 60% of the people take it for free...

Anthony: A little more than that, I'd say, honestly.

Pat: Is there a way for people who get it for free to then later pay you?

Anthony: That's what happens, I was going to say that next is, they take it for free, and they use the videos, the programs go with the videos, inside the eBooks, I can send you one later if you want to share it with your community for free we have a lot of extra ones that we don't sell or giveaway right now.

But in the eBook, in the very beginning I explain how we do things, what to do and where to find our resources, and they're on the site everyday under "videos." You can see the tab at the top. So they're on the site every day, see Joe or myself on the videos, so eventually they'll come back and either buy the same program and give us \$5 or \$20, or they'll just go and contact us and say "Hey, can I give you money?" pretty much.



Pat: Do you think you guys are leaving money on the table by doing it this way, or do you think it's better?

Anthony: Honestly, we have this debate every other day, but...I think we are really not leaving money on the table, because our community is growing so fast and they are so passionate about what we do, because it's--like you said, it's such an extreme. We even pledge, like, there's no ads on our site, there never will be. We don't have any big thing in fitness or mommy blogging as product placement in the posts, we don't do any of that. Nothing but our products, and they're all free, so people go crazy.

We just launched selling fitness equipment, and we keep adding more when that happens. As soon as we launch something, sell a few hundred of that, do something else, a few hundred of that, and people are always adding money to that, so on the short term scale we've definitely left money on the table, but long term, who is there to compete against, honestly, in the fitness industry doing what we're doing right now online? I'd like to say no one, so it kind of opens us up to be the, I guess, underdog coming up to the top.

Pat: Yeah. This is great, I really commend you guys for taking a chance with this strategy and using an example like Philosopher Notes as kind of a path to go down. I think this is really cool! It sort of feels like, you know, I sort of feel like this is a great model for me, if I were to sell something. What if I were to give stuff away for free, and then do pay-what-you-want? I mean, people have offered me--this is crazy, people are like "Pat, I don't care what you come out with, I'm just going to pay you."

Anthony: Oh, that's me!

Pat: "I don't care what it is," right? And...you're crazy. But I think that's because we're similar in the way that we just have given away so much stuff for free, and are just completely honest and upfront about our business models and what we do that we have just a passionate group and community and audience behind us who's just willing to give back for everything that we've given.

Anthony: Oh, that's like, with you--honestly, it kind of established too, for me, when [inaudible] affiliate links where, you say "If you are going to buy something, please go to an affiliate link." That's it. You're not asking them, you're not hiding affiliate links, you announce them, but how many people, obviously, from your income reports we all see, go in and want to do that because they want to repay you?



Because of what--how else could I have found to do SEO or found all the information I have or listen to all the podcasts that I have? Nowhere! So in the world where--it's like Joe and I said, if you go to Starbucks and the barista gives you a cup of coffee for free, what are you going to do?

Pat: You tip them.

Anthony: Exactly.

Pat: Yeah. That's--

Anthony: That's kind of how we feel. You're online, tipping us, because we're giving you free coffee.

Pat: Yeah. That's interesting. That sort of reminds me of this story. I went to Chipotle one day, and you know, Chipotle--which is actually pretty good as far as fast food is concerned for fitness and stuff, and the barbacoa burritos are awesome. But you go and order, and then you go down the line and you tell them what you want in your burrito or whatever, in your tacos, and at the end, that's when you pay for it.

And unfortunately this one time I went and I totally forgot my wallet, but I didn't know until I got to the end and my burrito was made, and I was like "Augh, I forgot my wallet, I can run home and get it right now" and the woman at the counter was like "No, just take it for free."

I was like "Really?" And then she was like "Yeah, just next time, whatever--yeah. Just take it for free." I was like "Wow, that's so cool!" And then I swear, that entire week I went back every single day, and I bought--you know, I was like "Wow, that was so awesome, I'm going to go back every day and I'm going to make sure that I bring my wallet and also tip." And I did that! So every day I would tip, and sometimes I would see the same girl and I'd be like "Thank you so much." She'd be like "Oh, it's okay."

But yeah. There's something psychological that goes on when you give stuff away for free! This is what my presentation was about at New Media Expo in January of this year. It was just, the more you give stuff away, the more that comes back to you.

Now, do you feel like that this model is sort of where things are trending? Or do you think that this is a special case because you guys are in an industry where everything's



really aggressive and typically in your face? Can anyone do this in any industry, or would you recommend that they do this?

Anthony: I would say that we are lucky because we're in an industry where it's honestly such a scam both in the facility AND online that we can do this and stand out. There are some different categories where most stuff is free anyways, so it's hard to say "Hey, we're giving it away for free" when everyone else is as well. But I kind of figure the whole--I know you're a big fan of Gary Vaynerchuk, where his, the bull crap meter that everybody has nowadays?

Pat: Yeah, yeah. [chuckle]

Anthony: Where...they know you're selling them something. They know you're lying. They know that what you're doing--like, for me, I'm really into online business, so I go and listen to as many people--and I've had coaching calls where people have told me to sign up for their coaching master class for \$10,000.

Pat: Yeah, that's...that's...

Anthony: It's happened--I don't want to say the names, they're really famous, important people who're claiming to make all this money but--[instantly?] I'm like, you're--nothing that you're going to do is going to get me there, so.

But if he would've said "I'll help you out, I'll talk to you," really helped me out and gotten me along the way, I probably would've eventually been like "Can I pay you lots of money to help me out? You've been such a great resource for me. Let me help you out." But when he said that, I was like "I will never look at you the same again. \$10,000?"

Pat: Yeah, it's crazy the parallels, actually, between the fitness industry and Internet marketing. I think you're setting a great example here for other people in the fitness industry, so I'm trying to do the same thing in Internet marketing. I really commend you in what you're doing here, and I want to maybe have you come back and interview in the future just to see where things are going, because obviously, you guys have a lot going on.

Let's talk about one of your other niche sites. [Race Day Domination](#). I think just as far as a niche, that's a really smart thing, because I've just noticed--I don't know what it is, maybe because of the age I'm at, and because a lot of people are like "Aw, my



metabolism's catching up with me, I got to start running again!" Because all of my friends are starting to run races now, starting to run the Spartan race, the tough mother, and the mud runs and the fun runs and stuff. So I think it's really cool that you have developed a training course for this. Where did that idea come from?

Anthony: We had the gym, and everyone was going to run a Spartan race, and a tough mother, and we had a crowd of everybody. You work in the office, you come home, what are you going to do? You work out and you run races. So we looked online, there was nothing, nothing at all, really.

And everyone was wanting to do this, and it's the new Couch to 5K, or I want to run a marathon and get in shape. It's they want to run an obstacle race. So we put together what we would train a person normally, scaled it back to fit everybody and our plan is three phases, 24 weeks--it goes from using a body weight, using your body weight, all the way up to going into a gym, using barbell if you want to.

We just said "How many people want to do this? How many people do you think we can reach? Let's put it together." And we put it up, and originally we were selling it on a Weebly website with PayPal links. Now we've kind of upgrading every time we started selling it, and people have started responding well to it, and it's been exploding. I mean, we're in 15 countries, last time I checked. I mean, we sell more in Australia and the UK than we do in the United States.

Pat: That's really cool. When you set up the site, was it instantly successful, or what do you think made it successful, eventually?

Anthony: The same thing as everything that we do, is based off of my brother, Joe. I am not a writer, I actually am extremely dyslexic and I have a lot of learning disabilities, so Joe is probably the best writer I've ever seen. He writes very well, and he contacts places like active.com or Spartan Race. He's written for the Spartan Race blog, and different places where he talks to them, and he writes for them, and people find him through that.

That's where a lot of our initial success came from. Joe is on every website that you could possibly think of in the fitness industry that would let someone write for them, from 10 followers to 10,000, Joe has written for them, so that's where it originally came from.



And then we, once we upgraded the site and we kept all of our same great customer service and really helping everyone out, SEO kicked in. It was amazing.

Pat: So in a sense, he's doing guest posts, just for really large sites, and getting backlinks to you site and traffic.

Anthony: And honestly, small sites as well. He's on sites that have 50 Facebook fans, and he's on sites that have 700,000. So he writes for anyone and everyone that will let him write for them.

Pat: So he's everywhere.

Anthony: Everywhere! It's very time consuming on his part. We like to say we morph together to form one superhuman where he does all that stuff and I do all the backend stuff. It's amazing to me. He writes for everybody, and that's honestly where almost all of our success--no one knows who I am! Everybody knows who Joe is because he's in the videos and he writes all the blog posts and stuff.

Pat: Uh-huh. That's cool. So if we were to look up Joe's name in Google, we'd probably find him. What's his last name, if you don't mind?

Anthony: Vennare. And yeah, you'll find posts on...I can't even...Elite Daily, active.com, I'm thinking of some of the more recent ones...Fit Day...I can't even remember. So many of them!

Pat: Yeah, I know some people in the Internet marketing industry who have just gone buck wild with guest posting, and it still is a very viable strategy. Obviously it's working for you guys in the fitness industry, which is super competitive, which I think is really cool, but Joe's obviously a REALLY good writer, and I think that's what it takes in an extremely competitive niche like this.

But if you're not in the fitness industry or Internet marketing industry or a super competitive industry I just think--I really do think guest posting and going back to sort of old school methods for building backlinks and getting in front of other people is a top--should be a top strategy in your arsenal for backlinking and also just for building traffic to your site and building a relationship with people.

Anthony: Yeah, you can't--honestly, most of us, a lot of your followers and me and Joe and all of our friends as well, we can't afford to pay for AdWords or we can't afford to



advertise, so how do you reach these people? You get in front of them where they want to be, and it's either Facebook, Twitter, helping people out, just emailing one-on-one with people or you can post on blogs if they let you that people are at. I mean, that's the only way we thought--we sat down and said "How are we going to do this?" and that was our original plan, those four things. That was the only way we could afford to do this.

Pat: Yeah, that's a great bootstrapping method to get things started.

Tell us about your Facebook strategy, you said Facebook and using social media was big for you guys. How is that integrated into what you guys do?

Anthony: Facebook is pretty much our entire lifeline. Like I said, we don't have any email marketing. You can't subscribe to our blog. We did it on purpose! All you can do is follow us on Facebook, and what we do is, between Twitter and Facebook, we have a girl named [inaudible] who was a friend of mine in high school--we have a lot of interns that intern for us, so she was one of our interns and then she was amazing at it, so we brought her on and she interacts so much and we follow Gary Vaynerchuk's "don't push, just talk and interact."

And so, she's just always talking and interacting and commenting on posts and everything that we would usually do through email marketing like updates on our posts, updating on our blog, updating on a product, we just put it out on Facebook and Twitter.

And Joe has a personal Twitter, Ally does, the HybridAthlete, does the Kettlebell Cardio, and she's managing all these accounts. Between all of them with her always being there to answer questions, interact and post information, then we just have a great following. But we also do the Page and Promoted Posts as well, to reach our full audience.

Pat: Okay. I was going to say, on Facebook at least, and even on Twitter, you're never going to reach everybody who's following you, because on Twitter not everyone's on at the times that you're posting, and Facebook has the EdgeRank algorithm. So you're actually paying for sponsored ads and things like that.

Now...oh, go ahead, I'm sorry.

Anthony: I was going to say, just--sorry. We pay for the important ones, and one thing that she does is we do what's called like, uh, we call it "Do Work Wednesday."



Every Wednesday we put out an infographic workout, and everybody loves them, but what we do is Joe's written for so many other blogs that every blog that he knows and a lot of people that he's friends with online all post our Do Work Wednesdays because they're a free infographic workout for their crowd. We're not selling anything, so they say "Hey, everyone gets a free workout!" So those posts have hundreds of shares and all these blogs and different places are posting them as well, so that grows our audience, too.

Pat: Where would we go to check out the Facebook Page?

Anthony: [Facebook.com/hybridathlete](https://www.facebook.com/hybridathlete).

Pat: Okay. And do you any direct selling on social media?

Anthony: No.

Pat: So it's all basically relationship building.

Anthony: Exactly. It's posting our posts and workouts and videos and all the new stuff and all the new free content, and then we do a lot of giveaways, which is exciting! We do a Kettlebell giveaway every month, we do...we have partnerships with a lot of big equipment companies, so we get different pieces of equipment. TRX or SandBell or different things away as well.

Pat: How do you establish those relationships with those kinds of companies?

Anthony: I don't know...

Pat: Just Joe, because he's the kind of writer and he...?

Anthony: Actually, I'm the one who finds the partnerships and does all the backend stuff, and Joe calls me the Jack of No Trades. I've kind of figured out how to do stuff. I don't really know how to do anything exceptionally well, but I'll figure out how to get the Kettlebell contracts and the different things we do and the friends and the partnerships and get him to write for different places, things like that.

Just honestly being honest and saying we have an audience, we want to do a giveaway, and sometimes honestly, we'll pay for it. We'll, out of pocket expense pay for the giveaway, but we tell people that. "Hey, we're paying for this giveaway, so please share



it, we want to reach a large audience, we want to do the giveaway" and it works in our benefit.

Pat: Right. How many people are on your Facebook Page?

Anthony: I think we're at probably 6000 or 7000 right now.

Pat: 6-7,000? It sounds like a really engaged community, and you're reaching more than that, because you're running these giveaways and you're getting tons of shares and stuff. So that's really cool.

Anthony: Yeah. Every obstacle race out there, or almost all of them, we've contacted to get--and we provide them with Do Work Wednesdays and different workouts, and all the mommy bloggers and different people out there as well. As many people as we can, we're on their Facebook page or the Twitter somewhere with infographic workouts or videos made for them.

Pat: So on the Race Day Domination, social media or links to other sites are the primary traffic, as opposed to Hybrid Athlete which is SEO.

Anthony: Yes. And race day as well, we've gotten--well, Race Day picked up for a while really, really good, because, I mean, Tough Mother training is--there's 20-30,000 searches a month for that. It's really growing. The same with Spartan Race and Warrior Dash. So we were doing great and then the update came and crushed our lives, crushed our souls, and then we are starting to get back up there again with the help of one of our SEO consultants.

Pat: Again, let's see that information and share the idea about how that's--how you're recovering from that. Do you feel that you made any mistakes along the way that you want to share so that people who might be started something similar or starting their own businesses or IN their own businesses can avoid?

Anthony: Yeah. Definitely, what we did was we copied all the people that were out there doing it, but they weren't doing what we wanted to be doing, so don't just copy someone out there.

It's funny, everywhere that you listen, especially with the industry that you're in, the online marketing and new media, everyone says "just follow your passion and put it out there." Well, that's not going to work, that's false. We did that for a long time and it



didn't get us anywhere. That's a lie! You really have to put the time and effort into seeing what's happening in the industry and seeing what people are doing and put your spin on how you want to be sold to.

Think about how you feel. If there's a 11% open rate on emails, why are you emailing people? Just follow them--interact with them on social media, or email them personally and think about how you interact and how much you hate getting emailed and how much you can't stand ads and you can't stand marketed things and you can't understand how these people are talking to you, and just act like that to other people. Kind of the "treat others like you want to be treated" but online.

It's as simple as can get. Don't follow the "just put stuff out there or follow your passion." Because we did that for a while, and we are at the point where "Can we do this any longer? It's not working." So we got to where we are now with the pay what you want in different marketing strategies that you and other people are at.

Pat: That's definitely great advice. A lot of people know that I have purposefully followed other people's email lists and other blogs just to purposefully do the opposite of what they were doing, because I didn't like how I was being treated as a subscriber, and things like that, so I was like "You know what, I'm not even going to sell on the email list, or I'm not even going to sell anything on my blog right now" and it's been working really well! Again, it's sort of a niche by niche, case by case basis, and you kind of have to see what's out there and also think about the expectations of your audience.

For instance, I think it's okay to sell on the email list if the people who sign up know that you're going to be selling to them.

Anthony: Yeah.

Pat: The worst is just when you get someone to sign up for something to get something for free, and then they're getting bombarded with aggressive marketing tactics and really good sales copy. I mean, it's scary, the kinds of people out there who can just write something and persuade you to pull out your wallet, so you don't even know what you're doing. They're just so good at what they do.

But, you know, I'm not a copywriter.



Speaking of email, I'm still curious about why you guys don't have an email list. Because I think email list is probably one of the most important assets for any business online, primarily for the reason of if Facebook died, then those people would be gone.

Of course, I know you have--you probably have a list of customers and stuff that you could always contact, which is great. But email, for me, even though I don't sell anything, I think it's still a huge asset to my business because of the safety net there in case Facebook and other social media things die, and also because I can reach everybody, or--you know, not everybody because the open rate's not 100%, but it's really high, like 70% for some emails, and I think you guys would have an even higher open rate.

Anthony: That's...I mean, that's amazing. 70%! I must be wrong, but I've heard that a lot of standards are like 11% or 12%.

Pat: Yeah. I mean, 20%, max, for most industries, but I take good care of my list, and I feel like what you guys do on Hybrid Athlete and on your other sites, you know, how you're taking care of your audience and just the way that you approach stuff, I feel like email will be a perfect fit for you. I'm not trying to tell you how to run your business or anything, I'm just curious about the thinking and the thought process behind not having an email.

You said you did that on purpose.

Anthony: Yeah. Well, I mean, I open your emails, so I might have to take your advice. But what we do is--the way, like we said, we thought "Do I like opening emails? No, I hate getting emails." Especially now, when you're trying to run an online business, that's all you communicate through.

So you get 100s and 100s and 100s of emails a day, plus like you said, our audience--when they download or by something, which most people on our site, honestly...we're probably at, I'd say, around 1000 people a day, on average, unique visitors. And our conversion rates are actually pressing the "pay what you want" and download buttons are through the roof. It's amazing! Because they can take it for free or pay what they want. We have their emails to contact if we want to.

We have a huge customer list, and every person that has downloaded or bought anything from us, EVER? Gets a personal email from me saying "Hey, I appreciate you downloading our product. If you have any questions or concerns, you can email me or



call me. So that's an interaction right there, and most of them email me back and we have a good interaction, but we just thought having--it was just so confusing to set up the email marketing system for me, to write it without seeming scammy and when do we email people? When do you do it?

We did, and then we had, like you said, we had 20% open rates, and we didn't know what we were doing wrong, and we didn't want to play the "What's the title of our email? What's this? This works better than that. This button is red, this one is supposed to be grey." So we just said "forget it! If only 20% of our people are opening emails, that means 80% don't want to hear from us, so we'll take that as a vote and majority wins, we're done with them.

Pat: No, I think that the--I commend you for being straight with that, and I think every business should approach it as whatever works for you, right? And...yeah.

Come to think of it, a lot of people who work 9 to 5 who are maybe interested in fitness are probably sick of emails because they just scam all day.

Anthony: Yeah. We figure, what's everyone doing? They're on Facebook and Twitter--and I mean, we do our best to put our phone numbers and emails everywhere on the site so they're contacting us. That means if they need something, they can find 18 ways to figure out who we are and find us through every social media and phone number, email outlets out there.

So, I mean, we're available to our customers, we just really don't want to put anything in front of their face unless they want to find it.

Pat: Yeah. That's a good way to put it.

How many hours a week are you spending on your businesses?

Anthony: Heh, this is the downfall. This is a problem. I can't get away from it because what I enjoy. It's the same thing as probably what I would assume most of your audience is--they do this because they enjoy it. It's something they want to do.

I mean, I would've dealt it hours in working because I'm probably at Starbucks or another place, out having lunch in between what I'm doing, but I'd say...I'd....every hour that I'm awake, I'm putting some time and be safe, I'd say probably 75, 80 hours a week.



Pat: Wow. So you guys are hustling for sure, but it sounds like it's not work because you guys are just enjoying everything you're doing.

Anthony: Yeah. I mean, you get to hang out with your brother all day, you get to talk to people that are interested in what you're saying and you get to make friends on a very large scale, so it's great.

Pat: But with the systems that you have set up, you could potentially walk away for a little bit. Is that correct?

Anthony: Yes. Everything is automated. We sell kettle bells and equipment? We actually don't sell them. We get manufactured [inaudible] and we all [inaudible] that costs our clients, but there's someone in a factory that's selling those to them through fulfillment. Everything we do is through download or fulfillment, so we don't have to do anything for the online business.

For the franchise, it takes a little bit more work, but we have some people in place to help us. Technically, when we went on vacation last year for a solid 3 weeks and we kind of really didn't work. It went fine.

Pat: That's cool. What systems are you using for payments and fulfillment and stuff like that?

Anthony: For payment we use 1ShoppingCart for the shopping cart system. They're great. They handle email--like, that's where all our emails are, that's where the download digital products dare, everything's through them. We us--what is the name? Sorry, I can't remember the name of our processor...it's eonlinedata. They are a payment processor, and then we use the um...sorry, I can't remember the name.

[Inaudible] We use a credit card processor. They're one of the most popular online--Merchant Online, I think it is. We use them as a payment processor. But if you go to 1ShoppingCart, they set it up all for you. Mine was a phone call, and then we had a little shopping cart set up.

Pat: Nice. So if I were to buy equipment...I mean, if I were to buy a digital product, an eBook or something from your site, it would just get sent to me automatically because of what you have set up with 1ShoppingCart, right?



Anthony: Yes. It's available right after download, and then it's sent to you as well as an email.

Pat: Awesome. And if I were to purchase a physical product, like a kettle bell, for example, it would be....is that automated for you as well?

Anthony: Yes. An email is--the product is purchased, we process it, an email is generated, it's sent to the company, the company sends it out to you.

Pat: [inaudible]

Anthony: Yep.

Pat: Okay, so that's typically how it's done, if you work with these companies. They get an automated email that sort of lets them know who made the purchase, where to send it, and then where's the--how does--the money goes to you, and then you send it to them?

Anthony: Well, the way we did it, ours is kind of different. We just found a very small company that's doing that we want to be doing, making kettle bells. They're not really selling to anyone else. They're very small, they're in [Ohio?], we're in Pennsylvania, so they--we charge price, which is--we actually offer the kettle bells for the cost we get them, and you can add more if you want. So we--whatever the price it costs for us, we take the money and then they bill us for that.

Pat: Okay, so they bill you...yeah, there we go. I'm just trying to understand how it all works, because I love the idea of selling physical products, but I don't love the idea of having to physically go out there and ship them and, you know. Just the idea of a fulfillment type of deal with somebody is very attractive, I think. And it opens up a lot of doors for a lot of people as far as automation.

Anthony: We did ship products and it was miserable! We had kettle bells all over our house. So we found that [inaudible]. If you contact the company and you ask them if they drop ship. If they drop ship, it can be done very easily. You might have to personally send an email or make the phone call, but if you have to spend five minutes on a phone call every night, and you're not touching product, whoever your customers are, it's amazing!



We originally did that, but now the auto responders are up, but if anyone drop ships and you want to sell the products, you can--say you have a big audience, I want to offer a great price to them, and most people will think the volume aspect and will definitely give you a much lower price and help you out.

Pat: Love it dude, love it! Thanks, dude. Thanks for all the information and inspiration. If you want to leave our audience with one tip, or one piece of advice, what would it be, before we take off?

Anthony: The biggest thing is approach this as the lifestyle design that everyone talks about, because, yeah, you might work for yourself, but you're never going to get away from the computer, so don't pick a category that you think you're going to make the most money in, and that's going to be great because it's not. You have to really like what you do. You have to surround yourself with people that you want to be around. And then pick a few people and put them in place, and have them be who you want to be.

Like Pat, you [inaudible], I like you, I like Gary Vaynerchuk. I look up to you guys and I say "How do they act? How do they treat their customers? How do they treat me because I'm a huge fan? That's who I want to be so I'm going to act that way, and I'm going to follow what they do, and everything I've done is honestly can some way be chalked up to you or Gary Vaynerchuk in how I act. So you have to find the person out there that you want to be like, they inspire you to get online and do what you're doing and just follow them and act like they do.

Pat: Awesome, man. Great piece of advice. Thank you Anthony for your time and the inspiration. Again, all the links that we talked about are going to be in the show notes, on the blog. I'll mention the link after the interview's over.

Dude, thank you so much. If we wanted to send you a tweet just to say what's up, what Twitter handle would that be?

Anthony: Easiest one would be @joevenare. We both kind of share a Twitter account. And then it's facebook.com/hybridathlete.

Pat: Okay, great, facebook.com/hybridathlete and then @joevenare. Did I get that right?

Anthony: Yes, sir.



Pat: Okay. Awesome, man. Thank you so much! We'll have to chat again in the future and get an update for you and Joe and maybe we can have Joe on next time, too.

Anthony: Oh, he'd be a lot more fun than I would, I guess!

Pat: Nah, dude! You were good. You were great! Thanks, man.

Anthony: I'm a big fan and I mean, this is huge for me. I appreciate it and I hope your audience likes what I had to say.

Pat: I know they will. Thanks, man.

Anthony: Thanks, Pat.

Pat: All right! Thanks again to Anthony from thehybridathlete.com, racedaydomination.com and kettlebellcardio.com! That is a lot of stuff going on there, but great insights and I just love what he and his brother are doing together. They just seem like a perfectly matched team for what they have going on, which is, of course, really important.

Anthony emailed me after this interview to let me know, you know, he said it himself-- he hates when people talk about numbers and they're like "Yeah, he's doing awesome" or "he's killing it" and they don't really share exactly what those numbers mean, and he really wanted to make sure that you understood exactly what was going on in his business. Thank you again, Anthony.

So he said that his business is averaging between \$400 and \$600 a DAY. That is from thehybridathlete.com and racedaydomination.com, which is ridiculous! I mean \$400-600 a day, when the business model is just giving stuff away for free. I love that! And that doesn't include the affiliate relationships and all that stuff with Kettle Bell Cardio.

Well done, Anthony! Thank you so much for the inspiration and all of your wisdom there.

If you have a success story like this that you want to share, and you'd like to be featured on the SPI podcast and help inspire others with their online businesses, too, please shoot me an email, you can email me at pat@smartpassiveincome.com with the subject line SUCCESS STORY, in all caps, so I can find it.



I may not be able to respond to all of the inquires, but I do keep them handy, and if your business and your success story seem like a perfect fit for the show, I'll contact you when the time is right. If you don't have a success story--MAKE ONE. Make a success story happen! I want you to just, in the future, just blow me away with your success story and say "Pat, it was because you told me to make it happen, here it is."

I don't want you to make up a success story, I actually want you to make it happen. I KNOW you can do it!

Thanks again for your support everyone, I'll see you in session 59, and remember it takes just a few sections to leave a review of the podcast on iTunes. A few seconds which can really help out the podcast and the brand. That is all I ask of you for now. Thank you so much in advance, and I'll talk to you soon.

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