



## **SPI Podcast Session #112 - How Matt Donley Quit to go Full Time with His Side Gig – Even Though He’s Not an Expert**

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session112>

**Pat Flynn:** This is The Smart Passive Income Podcast with Pat Flynn Session #112.

### **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, he prefers the Disney Channel over Nickelodeon, Pat Flynn!

### **Pat Flynn:**

Hey, hey, what’s everybody? Welcome back. This is session #112 of the Smart Passive Income Podcast. I’m so thankful you’re here. And in case you’re wondering what does song was I beat boxed at the beginning of the show, it was the Bad Boy remix of a song called *Only You* by a group named 112, one of my favorite R&B bands from the ‘90s. It brings back a lot of great memories, a lot of memories of me standing on one corner of the gym during a dance and the girl standing on the other side. But anyway, that’s a whole different story.

Now, before we get to today’s episode, I do have something very special to share with you. This is something that my team and I have been working on for the last few months. And actually, I have spent a few thousand dollars to create this and make this happen. A brand new Smart Passive Income mobile application is now available for you to help make your life easier when it comes to consuming Smart Passive Income content. This includes a Smart Passive Income Podcast, the Smart Passive Income blog content, and also, my other podcast, AskPat all in one convenient spot.

What you could do is you can go in there and see all of the content. You could filter through it all and only get what you want. You can get notified when new content comes out. There is a podcast player there that’s really, really cool that allows you to speed through the shows if you want. And it’s just great. Everybody who has downloaded it so far since the launched earlier this week is loving it. Four, five thousand people have already checked it out. And I know that you’re going to love it.



So, head on over to [SmartPassiveIncome.com/App](http://SmartPassiveIncome.com/App). You should probably stop this episode right now and go to iTunes and look for Smart Passive Income or go to [SmartPassiveIncome.com/App](http://SmartPassiveIncome.com/App). Download it and then resume this episode and see what it's like and tell me what you think. I know you're going to love it.

Currently, as of today, I'm recording this in June 2014, this is only available for the iPhone. Now, don't worry Android users. I made the mistake last time of not building an application for you and that was a huge mistake because there is just probably more of you. But an Android version is coming your way. But currently, it's only available on iTunes.

And if you're listening to this in the future, just go to the same link, [SmartPassiveIncome.com/App](http://SmartPassiveIncome.com/App). If the Android version is available, you go to the landing page. It has both options there for you. One more time, [SmartPassiveIncome.com/App](http://SmartPassiveIncome.com/App). I know you're going to love it.

Now, let's move on to today's featured content. I have a great interview with a guy who has an amazing story who – his name is Matt Donley and he runs a site at [MasterSketchup.com](http://MasterSketchup.com). And I really resonate with his story because I actually used Sketchup myself quite a bit when I was still working in architecture. Sketchup, you'll hear Matt explain as a software that allows you to create 3D models and stuff and then you could print them or you could turn them into different renderings for photo realistic images and all these cool things.

Well, Matt created this site on the side. He had a 9 to 5 gig before. But then February 4th of this year, he sent me an email that said, "Pat, I'm about to let go." So he was giving me this information about his business that was doing really well on the side and he told me he was going to let go and quit his job, which was awesome. I was so happy for him.

And then a week later, actually, just a few days later, he sent me another email that said this, "Oh crap! I'm so terrified right now. My boss is really disappointed. I feel like I'm 'giving up on the team.' I was expecting to feel so much happier right now. But I just feel awful. I hope it gets better from here. I wish I have someone to talk to who actually understands what I'm doing. Everyone is acting like I'm completely irresponsible or don't know what I'm doing. They don't understand that I've been planning for this outcome for 2 years."



That's crazy because he has been working so hard. He has been doing great with his side job and then all of a sudden, he feels like he's sort of ditching his other employees. But really, he took control finally. And then he sent me an email a month later that said, "Pat, unemployment is great! Things are going well." And he showed me some numbers that were just staggering about how his business was doing.

And what I love most about the story like many of the other stories and the interviews I have here on the show, this is another case, another example of somebody who is building a business by providing value to somebody in a way that's different than just, "Hey, here's how to build a business or here's how to build a blog or here's how to be an entrepreneur." This is somebody outside of that space who is generating an income online by sharing information that he or she has learned that is useful for somebody. Very, very similar to my story, getting started online, sharing information to help people pass the LEED exam.

Well, Matt is helping people understand how to use this software which a lot of people are using and it's growing. And he's even getting recognition from the parent company which is awesome. So let's just dive right into it. Here is Matt Donley from [MasterSketchup.com](http://MasterSketchup.com).

Matt Donley, what's up? Welcome to the show. How are you?

**Matt Donley:** Pat, this is absolutely incredible. Thank you so much for having me on the show. I've been a long time listener. Really, I consider myself like a student of yours because I've just been following you for so long and applied so much of what you have taught and I've applied it and because of that, I have gained success with my website. So thank you for having me on the show. This is awesome. I'm really excited to share my story.

**Pat Flynn:** Oh, this is going to be fantastic. I was just looking in my email archive actually when I was trying to figure out what your Skype address was or Skype username and I saw that we've been talking for a quite a while. Since April 2012, we've had some conversations via email together.

**Matt Donley:** Yeah.

**Pat Flynn:** I was looking back at some of those emails. I mean you've progressed so much. I mean you've gone full time with this now. And let's just go right into your



story. How did you – or what were you doing before what you do now? Like how did you get started with all of this?

**Matt Donley:** So, I've kind of always been interested in the make money online, just somehow I knew – I had to figure out how to make money online. I've always been interested in web design and that sort of stuff. I mean even when I was in like middle school, I learned HTML like back in the late '90s. And so, I had always kind of messed around with web design. Throughout high school, I actually became a carpenter so it's like completely different from making money online. I never did like web design as a service or anything. It was always like a hobby of mine.

And in high school, I started to learn how to program just because I was so interested in computers and online stuff. And I tried to build a couple of different custom built like web apps really. And I built those up and they just turned into these big monsters. I didn't even get to launch them and they were just so out of control. I had to just drop them.

So this is really like my third like really big attempt to make money online. But yeah, my background is really in construction. I was a carpenter doing roofing, siding, interior, exterior like a little bit of everything. And I never went to college. I went for about two months and dropped out. I started my own business doing carpentry for a while. So I kind of always had that entrepreneurial kind of within me.

And it wasn't until a couple of years ago when – I wish I could remember how I discovered Smart Passive Income but I do remember that I saw – I read an article on your site once and then a few weeks later, I somehow stumbled across your site again and I had remembered that I had read an article earlier and I said, "Oh man, yeah, I remember this." And then from there, I just kind of started becoming a regular follower.

**Pat Flynn:** But at that time, you were still a carpenter.

**Matt Donley:** Yeah. I mean I've been – I was doing carpentry up until about three or four years ago and where I switched over to more of a project management position with a commercial cabinet company. So we would install cabinets and stuff in schools and laboratories and hospitals. And I was working in an office and I would get to go to job sites and stuff here and there. But mostly, it was like an office job and I would get to use this program, Sketchup, which for those who don't know, Sketchup is a 3D modeling program.



So 3D modeling is like creating an object on your computer but you can like spin it around and actually interact with it as if it's like a real three dimensional object.

And the big thing nowadays is like 3D printing. So like if you want to make – if you want to print something out on a 3D printer, you would model it in a 3D modeling program first like Sketchup and then bring it out to a 3D printer.

So yeah, so I was using Sketchup here and there. And I guess the thing that really kind of triggered me to start a website about Sketchup was when I found your site and really – I really connected with what you were doing and I thought, "If I can only emulate this in a different niche, I know I could make it work. I know I could do it." And I needed to find, "What's my unfair advantage?" And I know you wrote an article about this last year, [unfair advantage](#). And I said, "OK, what is the one thing that I could create a website about that I know I could absolutely just knock it out of the park and just be the best at it?"

And I just figured Sketchup is the thing that I'm going to do. It wasn't a decision of like, "OK, this is how I can make the most money or what's the best market to get into?" This was like kind of the happy medium between knowing like what I could do the best at and I knew that there was somewhat of a market there for me to earn an income and then I just went with it.

I think actually the thing that kicked me off was you did like a [reader challenge](#) where you challenged your readers to interview someone. And there was a big construction convention coming up in my area. I live in Rhode Island and there was a convention coming and there were going to be like these kind of like superstar carpenters who kind of travel the country in that niche. Everyone knows who these guys are.

And I said, "You know what? I'm going to go and interview these guys." And I just went to the convention and I had like a letter prepared to explain about my website and everything. And I just went for it and I went up to the guy after he did a presentation and I said, "Yeah, I'm Matt and I'm launching a website today on Sketchup. And I'd love to interview you." And he said, "Sure." I was like, "Oh, OK. Cool." So yeah, that's how I launched the site.

**Pat Flynn:** Was that Gary Katz?

**Matt Donley:** Yeah, that was Gary Katz.



**Pat Flynn:** Yeah, I'm looking at my email. The very first email was from you about that reader challenge. And it seemed like just – you needed something – I mean I felt like it was always in you. You just needed somebody to tell you to go and do it. And that was your first step. And sort of what happened after there? Like what was that interview like and then how did you take that and build your site around it?

**Matt Donley:** So – I mean like probably everyone else who is listening to this episode, like not much happened. Like I launched my website and for about three or four months, nothing really happened. I really didn't get a lot of traction.

**Pat Flynn:** Were you producing articles or were you creating videos at that time?

**Matt Donley:** I was doing a little bit of both. So most of my content strategy – well nowadays, I tend to try to create like all of my – most of my content are tutorials. So they're actual step-by-step instructions on how to do something in Sketchup. And what I tried to do is create a video and a written tutorial and launch those at the same time. So it takes a lot of time to put this stuff together because I'm doing screenshots and annotating the screen shots and stuff like that. And then doing the videos takes a lot of time because you have to plan it ahead of time. You have to actually model what you're going to teach and stuff like that. But that has been my strategy.

And I think part of what I think got me to gain traction was just having the mindset of what I want my site to look like when I'm successful and then just acting like I'm already succeeding like acting like I already have thousands of people coming to my site. If you do that from the start and you treat your website like it's already getting all that traffic then that's really going to show when people do show up to your site. They're going to see the level of quality that you're producing and it's just going to grow from there.

**Pat Flynn:** Wow! I love that tip because I see a lot of people who start new sites and their first post is a very timid-sounding post like, "Hey guys, I don't know if this is going to work. But I'm sort of just doing this because I feel like it might ..." And what kind of impression is that giving to a first time visitor? You want to be confident in what it is that you are producing and the content that you are pumping out there right from the get-go. And I love that that is the mindset you had. And I also love that you said that nothing happened at first and it took you time.

**Matt Donley:** Yeah.



**Pat Flynn:** Was there a few or maybe even just one specific moment when things just started to sort of blow up for you and explode in a good way?

**Matt Donley:** Well actually, I want to tell you a story about my first comment on my site, just talking about like getting started and stuff.

**Pat Flynn:** Sure.

**Matt Donley:** Everyone – you always get those spam comments coming in to your site and you feel kind of – you feel down when you realized that you think it's an actual person and then you realized it's just kind of a spam bot. But my first real person whoever commented on my site was like the absolute worst person I've ever come across and it scared me half to death. It was a comment – so Sketchup used to be owned by Google and I – so the thing that's somewhat risky with what I'm doing is like the trademark term Sketchup is in my domain name.

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah.

**Matt Donley:** And I know Pat, you've had that trouble with Green Exam Academy. It was in the LEED.

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah.

**Matt Donley:** It was in the LEED before and you had trouble with the trademark. So I definitely was taking a risk by having that there. And so, I got this comment from this guy and he was like, "I don't know who you think you are putting that trademark in your domain. I work really closely with Google. And if I were you, I would take that down straight away unless you want a nice big lawsuit on your hand." And I was like, "Oh my goodness! I am in so much trouble right now."

**Pat Flynn:** And we've had email conversations in the past about this specific issue.

**Matt Donley:** Yeah. So I ended up – you get obsessed over those things and I just Googled the guy's name and I found some other comment that he left on some other site that was just totally off the wall. And then I start to think, "OK, he's just a little bit crazy."



So the moral of the story is don't let stuff like that really bring you down. Just focus on putting out the best content and the quality. Just set your mark as to – set your bars to what you want your quality to be at and then just go from there.

**Pat Flynn:** Sure. I mean that's great advice. But I want to ask you. I mean it is a risk to have a trademark in your domain name. I know this from experience like we just said. Was there something you did to be comfortable eventually with having Sketch Up in your domain name?

**Matt Donley:** Eventually, as I grew, one of the big things that started happening for me was Sketchup started noticing me. The actual company, Sketchup, started noticing what I was doing and their social media department started seeing what I was doing and they started sharing my tutorials and stuff like that. And once I got to a certain point, I had conversations with them and there was never any real like legal statement saying, "Yes, you have permission to do this." But we just – we have sort of a loose relationship where they're kind of OK with me using it because they see that I'm definitely helping out their program and stuff like that.

So I mean it's still a risk. It's definitely a risk. I wouldn't recommend people putting trademarks in their names. So yeah, it's definitely a risk that I took.

**Pat Flynn:** Right. I mean I think the big lesson here is that you were able to contact this company or actually eventually talk to them. They knew who you were. They knew you were using it and it was OK with them. The scary thing is that any time they could switch up if they maybe change CEO or go on some legal string where they target everybody which is what happened to me. But still, it's important that you talked to them and you sort of knew and had this understanding.

There are a lot of companies out there that will be OK with it. And I think – I mean there are mixed feeling in my head about this because when I had a cease and desist letter in my mailbox from the United States Green Building Council for using LEED in my domain name, it just didn't make any sense to me because like you, I was providing a ton of value to everybody. I was actually helping people take the test. I was helping people feel more comfortable to take the test which means that they would actually end up making more money because some people didn't want to take it because it was so hard. But they were – that was what they wanted to do. And so, I had to deal with that.





But anyway, moving on, you've got Master Sketchup and you started to produce more content. And how are you doing now? Give us some numbers as far as how well the site is doing?

**Matt Donley:** So for the first like year and a half, my site primarily, I would make money with AdSense and that's how I started out. I started making money with AdSense and the big – I was actually obsessed about rate. Like I started – like that was – I think actually part of like what really helped motivate me is like getting that dollar a day like that first goal. Set your goal at a dollar a day. And once you get there then you set a higher goal, a \$100 a month. And doing that really just helped me have a goal and keep moving forward because it was really important for me to build up a brand and an audience before I attempted to create my own product.

And recently, I wrote a book. And I was actually – I actually got approached by several publishers to write a book about Sketchup. And if that's not a sign that you should be writing a book, I don't know what is. So I was kind of kicking myself for not doing this sooner. But – so I wrote a book. I decided to self-publish. And just because as far as you know, you just make more money by self-publishing and I was able to reach more people around the world by having a digital – it's purely digital too. I don't have a printed copy.

So I launched the book at the end of January. And within the first three days, I had over \$13,000 in sales.

**Pat Flynn:** Nice.

**Matt Donley:** And yeah, it was definitely – it was a huge success. I mean it was awesome. And now, I'm averaging about \$260 a day. So it has been really awesome. So I was able to quit my job and use this as – I look at this as like just the beginning. So I'm using this just as like a launching pad to allow me to be home full time and focus on this. I'm working on a video course next. That's going to be probably launched next month. Yeah. So it has been really exciting.

**Pat Flynn:** That's awesome, Matt. Well, congratulations to you with that. And I want to talk about how long until you launched that book since you started? So how many years was that until you started to monetize that way?

**Matt Donley:** It was about a year and a half, a little over a year and a half before I launched my product. I spent four months writing the book. So it's a 280-page book. I



wrote it as if it was a real printed, professionally-published book because I wanted it to look that way. So I spent my time – and all of this was while I had a full-time job. So I did all this after I got home from work and on weekends and stuff and I would write this book all while trying to keep the site going and stuff like that.

**Pat Flynn:** That's really cool. How did you promote this book when you came out with it? Did you just put banners up on your site? I mean that's what I did because I didn't know better. I built an audience. And it's really funny that you mentioned the year and a half because that's how long it took for me to monetize Green Exam Academy. It's about the same amount of time that I took to really get going with Smart Passive Income in terms of earning and affiliate income. But I've seen over and over again this sort of year and a half to two-year mark being the real moment when somebody can start to begin to generate a good amount of income from their particular audience that they've built over that time.

It's going to be different of course across different niches and on a case by case basis but generally speaking, that's about how much time I feel it should take before you start really providing your own products down the road.

Now, there are other people who start with a product and then they build the audience around that. Caleb Wojcik from DIY Video Guy – [DIY Video Guide](#), actually both of those URLs work for him, he started with a product and used his existing network and the people he knew including myself to help launch that. And now, he's starting to build his audience.

So there are different ways to go about it. But I'm curious to hear how you introduced your book to this audience that you've built over time. And the big question is, OK, how – you're giving stuff away for free for so long and then all of a sudden, you start to charge for something. How did you launch and what was the reaction like?

**Matt Donley:** So the biggest – the most important thing about what I did is I'm not an expert at Sketchup. And there would have been no way for me – and I'm a nobody. I'm just a regular guy like nobody knows who I am two years ago. So if I were to create a product and try to sell it and promote it, it never would have worked. By building an authority site like I did, I'm essentially proving to the world that I know what I'm talking about and that I'm building credibility with other leaders in the niche.

So I'm not the only website out there that teaches people how to use Sketchup. There are about two or three really strong authority sites out there that I slowly and gradually



earn the respect from so that when I finally did launch a product, they were happy to become affiliates. So that's another thing I haven't mentioned but I have an affiliate program with my book where I share 50% of the profit with some key select affiliates. I only have like five or six affiliates. But they account for about 40% of the sales of the books that I've made.

So by building that and doing all the free content upfront and getting the attention of Sketchup and have them share my stuff, I become the expert by doing this. I wasn't the expert first and then taught all this. I became the expert by creating this. I mean you don't need to be an expert in any particular niche to do this. What you do need to know is you need to know how to learn so you need to know how to break things down in a way that you can teach it to somebody.

And I'm actually coming from an advantage by not being the expert because like when I write a tutorial, I even do this today, I don't know every little single thing about how to use a certain tool in Sketchup. I actually do a lot of research as I'm writing a tutorial like most people do. When they write an article, you're doing research and stuff. You don't just know this off the top of your head. But the thing that's great is because I'm not already an expert at it, it gives me the ability to approach it as if I don't know anything about it. And every time I come up with a question, I write it down.

And so, by recording that process of what questions do you ask when you're trying to learn something new, it becomes invaluable because that is exactly what hundreds or thousands of other people are going through that same process. They have the same exact questions. If you're an expert already, sometimes it's hard for you to see things from that perspective and to be able to break it down simple enough or to miss just one or two key things that really makes it click with people.

I've had so many people email me who have said, "Thank you so much, Matt, for everything you do on Sketchup. I tried Sketchup before and I gave it up. But once I found your site, I gave it a second chance and it clicked for me." And that means so much to me. It just shows like approaching it from that angle, you can provide so much more value.

Now specifically talking about how I launched the book, I learned a lot from you and from [Derek Halpern](#), from Social Triggers on how to launch a product, [Yaro Starak](#), he is another one that I took some tips from where basically I spent about – the last two months of writing the book, I started a separate email list. And so, I already had an



email list that I created from when I launched my website and so a lot of those people got on to the new list specifically about the book.

And I came up with an autoresponder that would send out an email to new subscribers. I think it was like once a week or something. And I would ask some questions about how they use Sketchup. And I would ask them – I'd ask them for feedback, "What do you want to see in this book? Send me examples of things that you do in AutoCAD that you'd like to do in Sketchup." And so, people would email me files and it would not only provide me great feedback on to things that I should tweak and include in my book but it also made them feel like they were a part of my book like I was writing the book for them.

So I think that really helped a lot. And towards the end like towards the launch, I launched with a webinar. So I did a lot of promoting about the – with the webinar and I said that there was going to be a promotion for people who attended the webinar and stuff like that. I had my affiliates get involved and I gave them banners to promote the webinar and stuff like that.

And yeah, the webinar launched and the first three days were the best days that I've had. It was a really successful launch.

**Pat Flynn:** You said 13k in those three days.

**Matt Donley:** Yeah.

**Pat Flynn:** And was that like three days of consecutive webinars or did you just have one webinar to launch and then you had sort of that three-day process?

**Matt Donley:** It was just a one day – it was a one day webinar that I used Google Hangouts to do the webinar. And the thing that was really cool – the reason why I like using – I use Hangouts on Air which I know you just did [an article](#) about that, that the reason why I like that so much is you can embed the video right on a website. So what I did is literally had my sales page which is [SketchuptoLayout.com](http://SketchuptoLayout.com), that's where I sell my book. I had that.

Originally, when I set that up, it was like landing page where I capture an email. And then a few days before the webinar, I had like a place holder that showed what looked like a video screen and it said, "Come back right here on January 30th for the webinar." And so, when I was promoting this whole thing on social media and all my emails, I



said, "Go to SketchuptoLayout.com on January 30th blah, blah, blah." So that whole time, I'm promoting my sales page which actually served as my webinar page as well.

So when I did the actual webinar, there was a little bit technical stuff you had to do where I went in there and pasted it in the video so the webinar could be viewed right from the sales page. But at the end of the webinar, I literally just said, "OK, to purchase the book, you just scroll down." And I walk them through the whole process on how to buy the book and stuff like that.

So I think that was really cool to be able to do that. But then also, all of the promoting that I had done in the previous week or a couple of weeks all had that link there too. So people who are coming there after the fact were still – I wasn't losing those people. They were landing on my sales page.

**Pat Flynn:** Very smart. I mean you did a much better job than I did when I released my book on GreenExamAcademy.com. I didn't know anything about launch processes. I just had it up there. I mean I think the coolest thing I did was I able to figure out because I tried to do everything myself in the beginning, how to place a button at the end of every post. So I went in the back and just went in to post that PHP file and had a button there.

**Matt Donley:** Oh yeah.

**Pat Flynn:** And I thought that was super slick. But that was like the extent of my launch process. And I got trickles of sales and I started to understand more about promoting and then I started to finally build my email list which I didn't even do that when I first started. So I made a lot of mistakes but I love what you said. I mean I want to cover a few things you said.

First of all, the way you teach and that you can still teach stuff that you don't know as long as you do the proper research and understand what it's like to put yourself in the shoes of somebody who is also just starting out. And I think that's – like you said, there is a little bit of an issue. If you are an expert at something and you're trying to teach, it's really difficult to know what it's like to not know that content.

And so, it's hard to know exactly what you need to say or what you need to teach or the steps that you need to provide. And that's where – there's a book called [\*Made to Stick\*](#) by Chip and Dan Heath. And in there, there's a whole section about this thing called the curse of knowledge. It's when you know something and you can't un-know it.



And so, I think if you are in that case, you are an expert and you are teaching stuff, the best thing to do is to sit down and talk and actually converse with people who are just beginning to understand exactly what those questions are.

But like you, Matt, with me, and Green Exam Academy and even Smart Passive Income still today, I'm trying stuff. I'm learning as I go and I'm just putting it out there as if I'm just brand new just like in this whole Food Trucker niche that I just started with Security Guard Training, I had an advantage because I didn't know anything about where to start. So I made calls and I talk to people to figure out exactly what I needed to do because I was pretending or not pretending but I was – as if I was somebody who was brand new to the site and I wanted to know that information.

**Matt Donley:** Right.

**Pat Flynn:** And so, I really loved what you said there. And also, what you said about the launch process and how you got people on to an email list and started to build buzz, you started to create sort of a list of ambassadors there which when you can get people involved like you did and I did that when I launched my book, [Let Go](#), as well. It worked tremendously. And while you're also providing content and providing value at the same time and getting people involved, you're building buzz for your book.

And so, of course you have people on your webinar and of course people bought it. And of course, you made it really easy to do that using Google Hangouts on Air and just having people scroll down that page. It's really, really smart.

I also want to talk about – I'm on your site, [MasterSketchUp.com](#) right now. And on the right-hand side bar, I see a picture of you. And is that your wife there?

**Matt Donley:** Yeah, my wife is behind me. Yeah.

**Pat Flynn:** I mean I love seeing that. I mean this is a website about a web application that helps you create 3D objects. And here you are putting yourself, your face here for people to see who is actually behind this website. And I'm on the about page now and it starts by saying, "Why I love Sketchup" and you introduce yourself, "Matt here." And you just talk very friendly. And we see a picture of your smiling face. And I could scroll down and see you interacting with people who have left comments.



I mean you could see that that Matt is behind the site. And a lot of people when I tell them about Green Exam Academy, they're like, "Whoa! Well, that sounds very professional. Why would you put your face on it?" Well, it's because like you do, you're able to make a real connection with people.

Tell me about some of your audience members. Like how has it been as far as developing a relationship with them in terms of actually being a business that teaches Sketchup versus being Matt?

**Matt Donley:** It's funny that you bring it up. I have had one person in the past two years that I've done this who emailed me and was like super offended about that image like, "I don't know who that girl is behind you but this is unprofessional." But that aside, I think it has been a big part of the success. And I'm sure you can identify that I emulated that off of what you do on your site. I really connected with that that you are a real person and you're actually giving real advice from your personal experiences. And so, I made a conscious decision to do that.

And one of the things I love the most by doing this sort of online business because there are so many different ways you can make money online, one of the most rewarding things is to get an email from someone who just is totally enamored that you would do this and offer all this advice and stuff. And it's like something like Sketchup like I never would expect – I never expected to get like those emails from people. I got an email from someone who was retired and you could tell he was like really depressed and he used to be an architect and he found my site and like learned how to draw in Sketchup and it's like his hobby. He does it every day now.

**Pat Flynn:** That's so cool.

**Matt Donley:** Yeah. It's like I never would have expected to get something like that from someone. And so, you get emails like that and it just really makes you feel like you're doing something special even if it's something like Sketchup. It's not – you can touch people in your own way, however minor it maybe. It's still great to know that you're affecting people all over the world.

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah, absolutely. And you are. I mean I'm here on your page and I see 3,600 Facebook likes. I see a Twitter count with over a thousand followers. And this is the big one here, I see a wonderful [YouTube channel](#), a YouTube presence and I see some videos that have nearly 200,000 views. I see some videos with just your face and all these Sketchup tutorials.



Actually, where did you get the ideas to create these tutorials? Obviously, it is a big component of how you're driving traffic and creating authority for your audience. Are you just – how do you know what to create next?

**Matt Donley:** That's a good question. Sometimes I'll create lists of different ideas and I'll just kind of keep a list. I use [Trello](#) to kind of organize my thoughts. It's like a free – I don't know if you've heard of it but it's like a free service where you can do task management and organizing.

**Pat Flynn:** Yes.

**Matt Donley:** So I use that. So I have like a list where I've got different ideas. But I think for the most part honestly, I just get inspired and I'll get – I'll just have one idea in my head and maybe I'll come up with like a creative way to teach – like I was in Boy Scouts growing up and actually even before that, I was in Cub Scouts where you do these pinewood derby races where you make a car, like a little wooden car and you race it. And I thought that would be a clever way to describe the way components work in Sketchup because they use mirrored symmetry. So like if you model like half the car, you can just mirror it and it will do the same thing on the other side of the car.

So sometimes I'll just come up with like these little creative ideas and do it. But I guess in the past when I first started, I did a lot of keyword research and followed all those kind of common ways to find just to have better SEO so the search engines would find you better. But honestly, the best thing I ever did was to stop obsessing over trying to rank for my keyword because my keyword when I first started was Sketchup tutorials. That was like the keyword I wanted to just dominate.

And the minute I just realized that it accounted for less than 1% of my traffic like today, even today, Honestly I think I checked it the other day. It was like 0.86% of my traffic comes from the term Sketchup tutorials. And I ranked for so many other – I mean you just get to a point where if you're building an authority site, you're going to rank on so many other things.

But like YouTube specifically, a lot of people – I don't really see too many people talking about making money on YouTube. It's actually – I find it to be like if you're going to be using AdSense as a way to make money, I actually find YouTube to be pretty interesting because if you think about it, YouTube is a search engine.





So imagine if you do a Google search and before you can click on the page to go to a website, you have to watch an ad, like that would be absurd, right? But on YouTube, that's totally like the norm.

**Pat Flynn:** We're getting used to that.

**Matt Donley:** Everyone expects – you search for a video or something and you click on it and it doesn't happen every time but you watch an ad before you get to watch a video or it will be like an ad below. So like YouTube, it's totally kind of conditioned for people to expect these advertisements.

And I've got – like my most popular video makes over a \$100 a month. And that some people will build niche sites with a goal to make that much money.

**Pat Flynn:** yeah.

**Matt Donley:** So just by – you kind of have a lot of different avenues when you're building an authority site where you can – you have different ways of making money. And the majority like my top – I have some notes here, so six of my videos earn over \$20 a month and then like my top one earns about a \$100. So I make about \$300 a month through AdSense on YouTube alone and then I also have like my AdSense stuff on my website as well.

**Pat Flynn:** That's great. I love that. I mean because it's there anyway and it's providing value and you're able to make a little bit more money. A lot of people start out that way and they start small on the side and then they're also using YouTube to build an audience at the same time, getting people into an email list and then starting to create their own products from there. So they kind of take step by step.

And so, thank you for sharing those numbers. Matt, as we close up here, I want to talk about two things. One, I want to talk about sort of what are some of your biggest struggles right now in terms of trying to grow your business and get more traffic to your site and generate more customers and business? What are some of the top maybe one or two things that you're really struggling with right now?

**Matt Donley:** I would say my biggest challenge especially now that I'm doing this full time like before when I was working full time, I kind of had all day in the back of my head to kind of plan out like what I was going to do that night. And now that I have – so what I'm getting at is I was more focused. When I was working full time, I was



actually more focused and I think probably more productive because I was thinking about this one thing that I wanted to do that night. And when I got home, I did it.

But now, like it's so scary to think that everything is on my shoulders like I'm the boss, I am the one who needs to make the decisions as to what I should write, when I should write, what I should be focusing my efforts on. So it's really easy to get overwhelmed with that.

So I think the biggest thing for me was to just try to break things down into smaller chunks. And to have – and to try to separate my time into two specific categories so I would set time aside for planning where I would only be planning. I wouldn't be taking action. And then the other side of it would be following my plan and taking action. A lot of times I find when I'm not really focused, I'll be writing an email and then I will be distracted by something on Facebook and then I'll go and check my stats for something and then I'll start writing a post.

And so I find if I kind of take a break, step back a little bit and plan out specific things I need to get done, prioritize them and then just say, "OK, this is the one thing I'm working on right now." I find myself to be a lot more productive that way. So I think that's really my biggest challenge.

**Pat Flynn:** And then on the flip side, what is working really well for you right now? What's one thing that is just – seems to be giving you 80% of the results with 20% of the work?

**Matt Donley:** I would say honestly, it's my YouTube videos. I think I sort of have an advantage in the sense that it's easier for me like it makes more sense for me to do videos because I'm doing tutorials and stuff like that. But I find that I get a lot of traffic from YouTube and they tend to rank a lot easier and a lot faster than some of my written content.

So I think there is not a lot of – there is not as much information on like how to create YouTube videos and there is definitely a technical challenge behind it but I think that's something that could be applied to every niche and really kind of ramp up your traffic coming in.

**Pat Flynn:** I think so too. I mean this reminds me of [episode 101](#) with Ken Kelly who is a magician. Most of his traffic and his audience is now viewing his stuff on YouTube. And I feel like I am not using YouTube as much as I should. And so, you'll see later this



year actually for those of you listening, more videos coming out and I'm trying to figure out a way to make it more regular as far as maybe kind of a segment.

You have your tutorials that are very specific for the different things that you do. A lot of people who are successful with videos like Ken, he does magic tricks every time. For me, it's sort of all over the place and that's probably why I haven't created a video.

So my plan in this point forward is to sort of create a plan. My plan is to create a plan for the videos I'm going to create and have some sort of, I don't want to say a show but more like a segment or a particular type of thing, sort of like AskPat because AskPat is really easy because I just get the questions coming in and I have a particular roles to answer those questions.

So it's not going to be a Q&A type thing but it might be some regular segment that people can look forward to, something that forces me to produce content more regularly on YouTube because it is totally on tap for me right now. And I have about 30,000 subscribers and I am not – I haven't created a video in three, four months.

**Matt Donley:** Right.

**Pat Flynn:** So I really appreciate you saying that. And I think people out there, that might be a light bulb for you, YouTube. And Caleb is a good resource for how to create those videos. And I'll put some links in the show notes as well.

Matt, we could talk for hours about this because I am so incredibly excited to talk to you not just because you're a student and you're doing really, really well. And not just because I have actually used Sketchup myself so I'm really – I'm actually going to check out some of your tutorials after this. Seeing some of your videos brings back a lot of great memories actually.

We use to build specific rooms that we're creating like I worked on a hotel in Vegas and I had to build the inside of that room. And what we did is we connect it with V-Ray to create some really realistic photo – photo-realistic shots of those things. So we would build out the room. We would spec out the all the furniture and the walls and all that and then we would apply material to different things in the room and we have to coordinate with the interior designer to get all of that figured out and had to scan them in. I mean it was ridiculous but then it would just take forever.



But anyway, I'm just so happy to see how successful you've been. Thank you so much for all the wisdom and the tips and strategies you've shared. I think it's really cool to see and to sort of follow your journey in the short 45 minutes that we've been talking.

If people want to talk to you more, where should they go? Where should they do that?

**Matt Donley:** Probably the best thing is to just leave a comment on the session page and I'll be on there to answer any questions anybody has.

**Pat Flynn:** Awesome. Yeah. So head on over to the show notes and we could talk more there. For those of you who have questions, Matt is going to be there. Check him out. And yeah, thank you for that, Matt. And best of luck to you and I can't wait to see where you and your business is headed in the near future.

**Matt Donley:** Oh, thanks a lot, Pat.

**Pat Flynn:** All right. Take care.

All right. I hope you enjoyed that interview with Matt Donley from MasterSketchup.com. Matt, I know you're listening to this. Just from all of us here at Smart Passive Income, just thank you so much for sharing your story and being an awesome student. I love hearing the success stories from people who have taken the content that we share here on the podcast and just put it into action. Matt, you're definitely an action-taker and I'd love to hear you and the action that you've taken.

For those of you who are listening right now, if you have a story to share, any way that I've helped you, send me an email, [Pat@SmartPassiveIncome.com](mailto:Pat@SmartPassiveIncome.com). Jessica, my lovely assistant will make sure I get a hold of any of those and I might potentially contact you in the future for a future podcast episode.

Now of course, if you'd like the show notes or if you'd like to leave a comment for Matt, just like he said, leave a comment right here on this post. Just go to [SmartPassiveIncome.com/session112](https://SmartPassiveIncome.com/session112). That's again, [SmartPassiveIncome.com/session112](https://SmartPassiveIncome.com/session112) and that will take you to the show notes where you can also get all the links and everything that was mentioned here on the show conveniently right there for you. And also, leave a comment. And if you want, just say thanks to Matt right there on the comment section.



So that will be awesome. Also, as a reminder, get the Smart Passive Income app if you haven't already. Reviews are very, very helpful on iTunes for anything that involves the podcast or that application. So again, to get that application, go to [SmartPassiveIncome.com/App](http://SmartPassiveIncome.com/App).

And lastly, I want to do something a little funny here and something I haven't done on the podcast before but I think everybody is going to enjoy it. This is inspired by Michael Stelzner over at [SocialMediaExaminer.com](http://SocialMediaExaminer.com). He did this on the podcast and it kind of blew me away and I got really jealous. So I wanted to do it here as well.

So what I'm going to do is I'm going to ask you after you're done with this episode, when convenient, head on over to the show notes, [SmartPassiveIncome.com/session112](http://SmartPassiveIncome.com/session112), snap a photo of yourself in the location where you are listening to this. If you're on the car, obviously, don't take a photo while you're in the car. Maybe after you're done or whatever, wherever is convenient for you. I just want to see you. I want to see a selfie of you listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast.

What this will do is it will just allow us to all see each other because I talk to you all the time and I don't get to see your awesome faces. I would love to see your face. So embed your image that you take. You could do this on your smartphone. You can take an image and then plop it in there later. But you can actually upload an image into the comment system that we have on the blog. Again, go to [SmartPassiveIncome.com/session112](http://SmartPassiveIncome.com/session112) to head on over to the post, to the show notes for this episode. Plop your picture in there. Just say hi. I want to see where you're listening to this podcast and what your environment is like.

And I'm going to select one random person who uploads their picture to have a 30-minute Skype call with me. I did this giveaway a couple of months ago and I just had a Skype call with somebody a couple of weeks ago who had won that particular contest and it was awesome. I love that and I want to do more of that. So I'm going to do that again.

Upload your picture into the comment section. Share a little bit about where you are and what your environment is like when you're listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast. And I'm going to pick somebody a week after this episode goes live to have a 30-minute Skype call with. You will see it announced in the show notes after that week is over. And even after the week, I'd love to see you anyway.



So I love to see you. Thank you so much. I can't wait to see your pictures. You guys are awesome. I appreciate you so much. And here's to you and all of your success. Thanks. Peace.

Thanks for listening to The Smart Passive Income Podcast at [www.SmartPassiveIncome.com](http://www.SmartPassiveIncome.com).

**Pat Flynn:** Hey guys, I'm back and we were just talking after I shut down the recording about how he's using a tip that he learned through another podcast that I had. So Matt, why don't you talk about that and how you applied it really quick?

**Matt Donley:** Yeah. So listening to your podcast is like a huge thing for me. I listen to it every day on my way to work and the way home.

**Pat Flynn:** Thanks, Matt.

**Matt Donley:** Episode 84 with Derek Halpern talked about the [bonus sandwich](#). And it was absolutely key for me in my success when I launched my book. So my book is available for \$39 and that's just the digital PDF of the book and you get a couple of bonuses and sample files. And then I have a \$67 package which includes a ton of different templates and materials and all these bonuses and then I have a \$99 package which actually includes everything below plus a video preorder. So this is – they're buying something that doesn't even exist yet.

And to my surprise, like my average sale is \$67. So like the average person is buying the middle package and there's a ton of people buying the \$99 package as well. So it wasn't that much more work for me to like add these extra bonuses and stuff. I mean you are definitely doing yourself a disservice by only offering one option because people have different ways of making decisions on how they buy things. And by offering a few different packages, you can really maximize the value that you're bringing to your customer and the money that you get to make as well.

**Pat Flynn:** Totally. Perfect. Thank you because I remember when I created my sort of second tier product, it was an audio book that went along with my e-book at [GreenExamAcademy.com](http://GreenExamAcademy.com) and that thing sold like crazy and then it wasn't very difficult to create. It only took a couple of weeks. I actually paid someone to help create that for me after I figured out I couldn't do it on my own. And yeah, I mean it nearly doubled my income at that point.



**Matt Donley:** Yeah.

**Pat Flynn:** Cool, man. Thank you for sharing that.

**Matt Donley:** Awesome.

**Pat Flynn:** And for everybody out there, have a wonderful day.