



**SPI Podcast Session #169 –
How Nathan Chan Built a
6-Figure Digital Magazine and
the Marketing Strategies We Can All Use**

Show notes: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/episode169>

This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, Session #169.

Intro: 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 took singing lessons over Skype, Pat Flynn.

Pat: What's up everybody? Pat Flynn here. Thank you so much for joining me in today's episode of the Smart Passive Income podcast. I hope you're doing well. I'm really excited because today's episode features a guest who's built an incredible following, and really an empire, from zero.

Obviously everybody who builds something starts from scratch, but this person did it in a way that is different from how other people are doing it. He's not using blogging as the primary platform. He's not using podcasting as the primary platform. He's not using video as the primary platform. He's using a digital magazine and he's crushing it right now.

This is Nathan Chan over at FoundrMag.com. He's got a lot of strategies under his belt that are quite unique actually, which I'm really excited to talk to you about, and one of those strategies is utilizing Instagram to build his following. He reveals some incredible numbers in terms of how many email subscribers he's getting from Instagram specifically, and he gives us a lot of very actionable Instagram follower advice and just a lot of other great things too.

Without further ado, here's Nathan Chan from FoundrMag.com.

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Pat: What's up everybody? I'm so happy to welcome Nathan Chan from Foundr Magazine. What's up, Nathan? Welcome to the SPI podcast. How are you?



Nathan: I'm great, thanks, Pat. I'm so pumped to be here. You don't understand how excited I am.

Pat: Why are you so excited?

Nathan: Because I started Foundr on March 5, 2013, and this is my first real business, and your podcast and everything you do – that was like one of the first things I found. I remember looking at your income reports when I was in my day job before I even started the magazine many years ago, and just being super-inspired and listening to your stuff. To actually be here and see it, I'm really really excited.

Pat: You deserve it. You've been doing a lot of great things. We talked a little bit before recording about what we were going to discuss and I'm really excited to pick your brain a little bit about these things, not just for everybody else out there listening but for myself too. You're doing a lot of things very differently than how I've seen other people grow audiences and build tribes, so we'll talk about that.

Your brand is at Foundrmag.com and it's a beautiful product that people can pick up in terms of the way you're producing content for people. For most people their primary platform is a blog or a podcast or a video channel, but you have here a digital magazine. What made you decide to go down this route?

Nathan: That's a great question. Pretty much I always wanted to start my own business, but I didn't know where to start. The cold hard truth is that putting the magazine together was actually a course. It's like off-the-shelf software, so that product that you see is a piece of software called [MagCast](#). MagCast teaches you step-by-step how to create your own magazine.

There's actually a lot of people, like you said, that have started magazines, but for some reason it never took off or just didn't go the way they planned, and then they just finished things up.

The reason I started Foundr was because I wanted to read a publication that I could relate to, and then I had the opportunity to create a magazine, and the rest is kind of history, man. I knew podcasts were really hot. I knew this interview thing was really hot. Much like you, when you get on the interviews, I wanted to be able to pick other people's brains and find out how they were doing it, and I just thought the magazine could be a really cool play that would allow me to differentiate myself in this space.



I knew there wasn't really a magazine targeting young entrepreneurs, early-stage start-up founders, novice and aspiring entrepreneurs, and I just felt that there was something there. I didn't know that it would work but I was just so frustrated with my current situation. I was working a 9-5 job, so there were a number of reasons I launched it, mainly because I thought there was a need and I thought it was an interesting play compared to everyone else that were doing things.

Yourself, you've got a podcast, you've got a blog and stuff like that, but no one really had a magazine, and I was pretty much just given the opportunity to create a magazine.

Pat: Did you see other magazines before you started yours, and you were like, "This might be kind of cool if I did it in a different way for this particular audience," or was this just something that came out of nowhere for you?

Nathan: There were a couple of magazines that I did see, but for the most part it just came out of nowhere. I knew nothing about publishing, design, apps, you name it. I just winged it, man.

Pat: There's a lot that goes into a magazine. I've known a lot of people who have started magazines in the past and they're not around anymore. There's a lot that goes into it – the content that goes into it, obviously, but not only that but the imagery is very important that goes along with it, plus the constant publishing dates that have to keep coming out. Then there's the business model and all those sorts of things, which we'll get into.

How did you wrap your head around really how to do this, or was it MagCast that helped you figure it out? What were the hardest parts about getting it started?

Nathan: I guess the hardest part was just wrapping my head around it, working out what people want. When I first launched the magazine it was actually called something else and I got sued for trademark infringement, so I had to change the name. I was sued by one of the biggest business magazines in the States. I can't say who. That's as far as we can go, unfortunately, but I had to change the name.

I took a little bit of a pivot. At first when I launched it was a little bit about really self-development and less about entrepreneurship, but when I got sued four months in I kind of re-did everything. I had to change the name, I had to change the website, I had to change the magazine issues, and I kind of pivoted a little bit to this whole entrepreneurship start-up scene. I felt that was something that I felt would be a bigger



hotter market, and more what I was interested in, too. I was interested in the entrepreneurship stuff, but also the personal development stuff. I guess it was a little more sexy, this whole entrepreneurship stuff. Everyone wants to become an entrepreneur right now and I really tapped into that.

When I started it was difficult. I went through three different graphic designers. I'm lucky enough to have one designer who's absolutely amazing, and I've been working with him ever since I started, so two years ago. We've been working together and I've been to his wedding, so that was a hard part, working out the design.

The content play actually isn't as hard as you think. We're a monthly publication. We publish the middle of every month. We have 2-3 interviews and then probably about 6-7 pieces of content, and that's packaged up. What you see is an amazingly designed PDF. Before you even see that PDF it just goes into a Word document, so it's just all this text and it's fully edited, then goes to our designer and he knows exactly what to do. He's got access to all these images and he knows what order it's going to be in. He knows the segments. He knows just how to lay things out and he just works his magic,.

Then we put it through the MagCast platform, add all the interactive elements, and that's how we publish it out.

Pat: Then from MagCast after you put all the bells and whistles into it and have it be interactive, what do you do with it from there? Do you sell it off of the Apple platform or how is it being distributed?

Nathan: We leverage the Apple platform and the Google Play platform. Most of our traction comes from the App Store, and pretty much Apple takes care of everything in term of payments, so you don't even have to worry. Once you publish it through the MagCast platform, add all the bells and whistles – the interactive elements – that's it. People will get a notification that it's ready on their device – we're exclusively for mobile devices and tablets – and then that's it. You move on and start working on the next issue.

Pat: That's cool, so I would say it's a lot easier than putting together an actual magazine, a physical magazine, just because it's purely digital. Once people subscribe, it just gets automatically delivered to them, so that's pretty cool. How much is it to subscribe to your particular magazine?

Nathan: It's \$2.99 a month, direct debit auto-renew, or \$21.99 a year, or because we've been going for a while now we have an offer where you can get a back issue



pack where you can get 24 back issues for \$39.99. Or you don't even have to subscribe, you can get one issue for \$4.99.

Pat: That's pretty cool. So it's all driven through Apple or Google Play. Can you give us an idea of how well the magazine is doing? For example, how many subscriptions do you have or any ballpark figures in terms of income?

Nathan: We're a profitable 6-figure business and we've got 20,000 monthly active users reading and consuming our content.

Pat: Wow, that's incredible. Congratulations.

Nathan: Thank you, dude. It's been a long hard slog, you know. I started Foundr when I was working my day job and it took me a while to work it up. It took me just over a year to build it up so I could leave my day job and replace my income. For a long time I'd been doing stuff underground. Nobody ever heard of my work and I've just kind of been really persistent and patient, man. Every single day I'm just moving the needle forward. It might be one little thing that I do, but it's kind of growing.

Pat: That's what this is all about. Just keep moving the needle forward, keep pushing a little bit every single day. You said it took maybe a year until things got to a point where you could quit your 9-5 job. Could you give us a rough timeline of since the day you started the magazine what it was like to promote it and market it and when things finally started to really gain traction for you?

Nathan: When I first launched, even before I launched, it was so difficult, Pat, for people to even want to be on the magazine. It's crazy looking back. If you look at the front cover of the first issue, we had a stock image. We didn't even have a successful person.

Now we've got Tim Ferriss, Barbara Corcoran, Seth Godin, Tony Robbins, you name it. It's not an issue to get these hard-to-reach people, super famous and influencers in the entrepreneur niche, but in the early days no one would get back to me. The first issue was super embarrassing.

One of my favorite quotes is, "If you're not embarrassed by the first version of your product, you've launched too late." For me, I just had to launch. I'm still to this day super embarrassed by it.



Pat: That's okay. You should see some of my older YouTube videos and my very first few podcast episodes. I cannot listen or watch them. I kind of cringe, but you're right. I think it's very important, like Seth Godin always says, just ship it. But also ship it and follow through and keep going with it, and you've obviously iterated several times in terms of how you've done things and who you've gotten on the magazine.

Going back to that first one, why would people want to be on the magazine, because nobody's ever heard of it before. How did you finally come from nobody to somebody where people want to come on your magazine?

Nathan: I just worked my way up the chain really, man. I did a couple of interviews. I finally got people that would want to speak to me. I showcased what a front cover looked like and I just grinded it out. I cannot stress to you enough, Pat, the amount of work that I've done, just waking up before my day job. I was even doing interviews sometimes on my lunch break at my day job. I was doing all sorts of crazy things just to interview as many people as I could, whoever would speak to me, and just worked my way up.

I guess the big game changer for us was Richard Branson. Once we got Richard Branson on the front cover, that was a game changer in terms of social proof and getting more people to come on. That happened very early in the pace. We interviewed Sir Richard Branson for issue 8 of the magazine.

Pat: Not bad. That's still pretty early. How were you able to get him to say yes?

Nathan: There's some great take-aways here. If you want to interview hard-to-reach people, first things first. There's a few different ways you can go about it. We got Sir Richard Branson because we worked out way backwards. We contacted the book publishers. Then we found his head of PR, so we found somebody at Virgin, and then we pitched that person at Virgin.

The first piece of the puzzle if you want to reach or get in touch or interview any of these hard-to-reach people, you need to find their gatekeeper, whether that's an internal head of PR person, whether that's their personal assistant, or whether it's an agency that represents them.

For example with Tony Robbins and Tim Ferriss, I got those interviews through an external agency that Tim uses to get him press. They're the three sources of how you're going to get these people.



With Richard Branson I pitched the head of PR over a phone call. I had her number. I had her email too, but I called her up. I was so nervous, man, as you can imagine, and I was persistent.

That's one of the biggest things that I want people to take away. I get pitched every day now. People want to be on the magazine, they want to be on the front cover, and like 99% of those pitches I have to say no to. Our editorial calendar is full for 2015 and has been for a while now.

I say to people, "Look, come back to me. I'm happy to speak to you again or whatever," and do you know how many people actually come back to me, actually follow up, Pat?

Pat: I'm guessing hardly any.

Nathan: Exactly, and it's all about the follow-up, man. It's all about that persistence. I called that PR person at least 4-5 times. I left voice messages saying, "Hey, I'm Nathan from Foundr Magazine. I'd love to talk to you about featuring Richard on a future issue."

I remember being on the phone with her when I finally got on to her, and she was just about to catch the tube, because she's based in London. She's like, "You've got 2 minutes. I'm just about to catch the tube." So I pitched her and I was stumbling and I had such a big emphasis that I really, really wanted to feature him on our magazine so people would take us seriously, man. I felt that no one was taking me seriously with the publication and what I was trying to do.

She said to me, "Please understand we get asked this like 10 times a day. Shoot me an email. I promise I will get back to you, but it might take me a while." Then a couple weeks later I just sent a really, really good email, and I'm happy to share that email with your audience because I played on the fact that his first business venture was, in fact, a magazine.

I pitched for a Skype interview, funny enough, and she said, "He's super busy, but we're happy to do it over email," and I took that and ran with it. I sent some questions, he worked with his team and got a whole ton of images, put together an image for him on the front cover, and that was a game changer for us, man. For anybody going forward, I could use that because it was a beautifully-designed issue.



Anything going forward I could say to people, "This is what you get," and show that example. Then we kind of just built up our numbers slowly as well. I could over with you some marketing strategies on how to grow the magazine, but that was a real big turning point for us.

Pat: That's awesome. That's a great story. Thank you for sharing that, Nathan.

Nathan: You're welcome.

Pat: A few questions. Do you feel that this magazine strategy is an under-utilized strategy that a number of other niches can likely get into?

Nathan: It depends on your play. You want to talk about long-term strategy and stuff. What I've realized is the magazine is an amazing tool as a front-end product. People look at Foundr and they're like, "Oh wow, you feature all these amazing interviews and all these influencers."

We have a whole ton of gold. Everything that we do is all about actionable, strategical, tactical based content, so it's not the kind of stuff you get in a regular magazine. Our magazine is very unique and different compared to any regular business magazine, but I've realized I'm not going to become a millionaire off the magazine. If I want to take Foundr from a profitable 6-figure business to a profitable 7-figure business I need to build up a back-end, man.

A magazine is a really, really powerful tool for building influence. It's also a really powerful tool for having a part of your business model that has continuity, which is popping up a lot now. A lot of information marketers, people doing digital products, a lot of people are moving to this recurring revenue model. SAS (software as service) is really hot right now, and just these recurring revenue models.

I think it's really powerful because it's quite predictable, and that's the whole play for me really. It's like use the magazine as a tool to get influence and to build up our authority in the entrepreneurship and start-up space, but then feed that through for the podcast, content for the blog, and then also put people through some sort of sales process.

Our community wants more. One thing I can tell you is we're killing it on Instagram right now. We've built that from 0 to 170,000 in just under 7 months. It's super engaged. We've got a massive community there. I'm rapidly building an email list like



crazy just from Instagram, and several people are joining our newsletter from Instagram.

Our community has said, "Nathan, how are you doing this? Can you show us? I need more customers, I need more sales, I need more leads, I need to build my email database." Our community is actually asking for this more 'hold your hand' video stuff, training, found an academy, found a university training type stuff, so our business has kind of evolved as I've spoken to our community and found out what they've wanted.

Look, I think a magazine is a brilliant way to build influence. It's a brilliant way to build authority in any niche, but I think people need to realize that it's not an easy game, man. It's definitely not an easy game. It's a hard slog and you have to hustle really hard.

Pat: What are the costs associated with starting a magazine like this?

Nathan: I bootstrapped Foundr from the ground up, and I outsource pretty much everything. The only writing that I do now is the Editor's Letter. You've got costs for content, you've got costs for editorial, and you've got costs for design.

To put together the first publication I got some really, really talented people on before we launched. Including the cost of building the app in MagCast, because MagCast builds the app for you and maintains it and teaches you how to do it, to put together MagCast at the time, the magazine and launch was \$3K. It cost me \$3K and I got us at breaking even in about 4-5 months.

Pat: That's not too bad.

Nathan: It's not too bad, and then ongoing costs you're looking at anywhere between – it depends on the quality that you're putting together – but a few thousand dollars a month are the operating costs for the magazine.

Pat: Are you working with people locally or working with people overseas? How did you find the crew that you're working with?

Nathan: Our design team is in India, and me and them are such great friends. I even went to his wedding last year, and this was in India, and we're catching up in the States. We're traveling in the States together next month and we're really great friends. I have to mention Karan from [Enamus](#), they're brilliant.



I've got an editor in the States. I've got writers all around the world. I've got an AV editor in Hungary. We've got content writers all around the world, just fully through Elance and Odesk really.

A great place to find designers also is [Behance.net](https://www.behance.net). A lot of creatives hang out there and they showcase their best work, and you can pitch them cold, as opposed to [Elance](https://www.elance.com) or [oDesk](https://www.odesk.com) where you put up the job, then you get spammed like crazy. You can kind of pick talent from Behance.net or [Dribbble.com](https://www.dribbble.com). They're some great places to find designers.

Pat: I've heard of those sites before.

Nathan: They're really great. You can find some really great designers there.

Pat: Very cool. Thanks for sharing that. Let's get into the marketing of your magazine. Obviously a lot of these tips can be used for marketing anything, but let's talk first about Instagram, which you mentioned earlier. To go from 0 to 170K followers is quite a feat.

I've had my Instagram ever since Instagram started and I'm only at 7K, and that's with a large audience in other spaces. How do you go from not even really having an audience to 170K on Instagram? What are your top strategies to growing your Instagram following?

Nathan: Instagram has really been a massive match made in heaven for Foundr because anybody that's looking at Instagram is always on their phone. You can't even create content from your computer. For a while there, like the first 3 months, I was just pushing people to the iTunes landing page, which opens up straight on your phone if you're on an Apple device. That's a really good source of customer acquisition for us for the magazine.

Our top 5 strategies are I think first things first –

- You've got to be very, very clear on the goal of your Instagram account because you only have one clickable bio link, and that's what people go to.

You'll be very hard-pressed to get people to go a link that you put in your caption that's not clickable and it's really long or whatever. You want to make things as easy as possible for people, so whatever your clickable link is and whatever your goal is, that's what you need to be 100% focused on for your Instagram account.



- The next piece of that puzzle is you've just got to work backwards, man. What's the kind of content that really resonates with your audience? You need to know your audience so extremely well.

For our audience, Pat, and for a lot of niches for some reasons it's this quotes game. I do understand it but I don't understand it.

Pat: By quotes you mean these images that are essentially words in different designs that say something maybe motivational or inspirational?

Nathan: Yeah, that's it, like Start Up Facts. I try to do the Start Up Facts and business quotes to differentiate ourselves a little. For us, our audience loves quotes. They are very, very shareable, and a lot of people want to tell their friends.

A great way to grow really, really fast is to post a ton of quotes – not just post quotes, but post a lot. We post sometimes 9 times a day, and the more you post the faster you grow because the quotes have that virality aspect. If you're only posting one time a day, one quote as opposed to 9, imagine how many more people are tagging their friends and doing the @ symbol. "@patflynn, hey, check out this account" or whatever. That allows you to grow really, really fast.

With that content as well you can do little tricks like asking a question. Asking questions can be really powerful, like "I will be a millionaire...." and you get someone to fill in the blank. You can get 1,000+ comments just by asking a question like that, because it's something that a lot of people aspire to. If you're an entrepreneur it's a big metric of success.

- Another thing is your design. Your aesthetics need to be great.

I take a lot of pride in the content that we put out across the board. We didn't really touch on the magazine itself but it's beautifully designed, man.

Pat: It is. It's great.

Nathan: Thank you. We get complimented quite often for the level of design for our website, our magazine, or any of our collateral, and I think that's a really big take-away for people. I'm a big believer in a brilliant and amazing design to stand out.



If your work is not designed well, people won't trust it. If it's designed amazingly well and you've paid more attention than most, you'll stand out. That's another way to get noticed. That's a brilliant marketing strategy I believe in itself, just creating something that's cool, kind of funky, that catches people's attention. They're like, "Ooo, what's this?" It triggers some emotion where they get excited and stuff like that. So design for the quotes and the content that you put out there on Instagram is massive.

- Hash tags are a game changer.

Here's a quick win for people. When you post an image on Instagram, do me a favor and max out your hash tags, and put those hash tags not in the caption, but write it in the comment. If you post an image and then you write as a comment and you put in 30 hash tags relevant to your niche, I promise you will see a difference in engagement as opposed to not using any hash tags at all, or 1-2 hash tags.

It might be a little spammy, but because you're writing it in the comments, if you get more than 4 comments it will be hidden so people won't see when they first come to your image unless they click "View all comments," so you can hide those hash tags. It can be just a little 1-2% that helps the growth of your account, so that's a quick win for everybody.

- Another quick win is to use a tool like [Wordswag](#), or if you're on Android you can use a tool like [Fonta](#), so it's really easy to create these quotes. There's another one called [Typorama](#).

People probably think that to create this content they're designed in InDesign, and some are designed in InDesign, but for the most part most of them are designed on your phone. I don't use Canva or anything like that, man. We use apps on your phone and they're so easy. You just type something in, you choose a background, and then you just click the dice and it just gives you all these different font styles and then you just choose whatever you want. It's really easy. It's so simple, and you can get something really, really good.

So there's some tools – Fonta or Wordswag. They're brilliant. Then hash tags, as I mentioned.

- Another piece of that puzzle is getting other accounts to share your page.

Pat: I notice that happening a lot with some of the people I follow. I follow some basketball highlight Instagram channels where they show little clips of basketball



highlights from the playoffs and stuff, and once or twice a day they give a shout-out to some other channel. It's a really cool video, but it's always like an endorsement almost for following somebody else.

Nathan: What you've just described, there's an acronym for it. It's called an S4S, Share 4 Share, and that is a game changer. We try to do 3-4 S4S a day, and that's part of our content strategy. People might be overwhelmed that, "Oh wow, you're posting 9 times a day, Nathan? That's a lot of content!"

Four of those images might not even be ours. They might be somebody else's quotes or Start Up Facts or business-related content, so that kind of takes off the pressure to produce so much of your own content, and you mix it up.

Am I allowed to plug a landing page with a cheat sheet for everybody?

Pat: That would be awesome. I'm going to download it right away.

Nathan: I've created a custom cheat sheet which has got all of our best Top 10 strategies on Instagram. If you go to Foundrmaq.com/instagramhacks, you'll be able to download that. I could talk about this Instagram stuff all day, but please pick my brain, Pat, because that's for the most part how I'm doing it.

There's a lot more with that, but they're our top strategies. If you follow that stuff alone you will see some great, great growth with your Instagram account.

Pat: This is so incredible because Instagram to me – before I'd seen all these people do incredibly well on Instagram – we have a few other interviews coming up where people have also used Instagram to be a primary channel for the sales that they do, some for physical products, some for information products all across the board –

When I first got into Instagram it was more like, "Hey, here's my family and here's what I had for breakfast," and people enjoyed that, people who wanted to get a little glimpse inside the life of Pat Flynn, which is what my primary strategy was for this. I wasn't ever going to go hard with promoting it because I didn't see any real benefit from really trying to grow it as big as I could. It was just kind of there for people who wanted to get deeper into the life of Pat Flynn.

It just seems like, especially based off of your numbers, that it's an incredibly beneficial way to get results. It still hasn't set in for me that it can actually do that for you.



Nathan: Pat, I am so big on Instagram it's not funny, man, in terms of how much I believe in that platform just because I've seen the stuff that we're achieving. I probably shouldn't be telling anybody in your audience this because it's such a good channel – keep in mind I built this 7 months ago, so 7 months ago we had 0 – and last week alone we did 2,700 email signups in one week.

Pat: Email signups from Instagram?

Nathan: Yeah. I probably shouldn't be telling you that, man, because it's that good. It is insane. I don't know why I told you that. [laughing]

Pat: No, thank you. That's my job to get that kind of stuff out of you. Let's keep going with this. If I want to build my email list off Instagram, building your following is obviously important, but then giving people a call to action to get them to subscribe – how do you get them to do that? Do you get them to do that by going to a specific link?

For those of you who are listening to this who aren't really sure yet, the clickable link that Nathan mentioned is in your bio, and I've seen people do this. You tell them to click on the link in your bio, which is how you get them to click on something. But what is the incentive to go and do that? How are you getting people off of Instagram and onto your email list?

Nathan: First things first. I guess the first strategy is what's the goal of your account? It might not be to get them on your email list. It might just be to get sales, but whatever you do, you need to ask. You need to post an image related to tell people to do that.

For us it just comes back to online marketing 101, Pat. What does your audience want? What is their biggest frustration or problem or deepest desire right now? I know for a fact there's a lot of people on Instagram that follow our account, that are interested in business, but they don't know where to start. There's a lot of 'wantrepreneurs,' man.

That's what Foundr is all about. We want to show you what it takes to build a successful business. We want to crush that 'wantrepreneurship' mindset, saying you're going to create something, wanting to create something, then you don't actually put anything out there.

I did that. I was in that mindset. I was a wantrepreneur for many, many years, so I know that's something that our audience on Instagram specifically is struggling with, and I know it's a younger type audience.



We give away an amazing guide. Something we do at Foundr is we under-promise and over-deliver. Anything I do, I want to give away so much value, just like yourself. You give away so much value for free to build that trust. We give away this amazing step-by-step guide. It's like 60 pages. It's actually a special issue inside the magazine, a special subscriber-only issue.

If you want to get people to sign up to your email list, you have a link that goes to a landing page that's built in LeadPages that I've heavily split-tested. Still to this day I'm constantly A/B testing. It's converting at about 37%. It's really a minimal landing page, very simple. We've got testimonials. We've got case studies there of people that have actually read the guide, and we give that away. That's pretty much how I'm doing it.

I post images of that guide there on a phone or on an iPad, or I write some text saying, "Get the Free Guide to Start an Online Business." I might post an image or a variation of that image every few days, it just depends, but you definitely see a spike in email sign-ups when you post an image.

It comes back to old-school selling, dude. ABC – Always Be Closing. You've got to ask for the sale. You won't get the sale if you don't ask for it. That's something Derek Halpern taught me.

Pat: There's a great resource out there you just reminded me of called PlaceIt.net if you want to create different scenes with your product in it, different people with different platforms or different devices. You can just drop an image and it will be placed on their computer, on their iPhone, on their watch, on a computer, whatever. That's at PlaceIt.net. That could be pretty useful if you're trying to sell something or get people to download something off of Instagram.

Nathan: Awesome.

Pat: Dude, this is great. So beyond Instagram what else is helping to promote Foundr magazine?

Nathan: There's another one that has been a massive game changer and I have to mention this because anybody that wants to start a magazine has to get really good at this one thing, and it's better than Instagram. Keep in mind, Pat, it's for the magazine only in the App Store. It's not to bring people to our website, not to bring people to our podcast or anything like that. It's App Store optimization.



If you want to create an app in general, you need to get very, very, very good with SEO for the App Store. Pat, if you type in *Entrepreneur magazine*, Foundr will come up right next to it. It's #3. You type in *Forbes*, you type in *Fast Company*, you type in *HBR*, *Harvard Business Review*, Foundr is piggybacking off all of these massive magazines, and for the most part that's how a lot of people are finding us.

Pat: That's cool. I see you right here, right next to Success magazine, Fast Company, Modern Entrepreneur, Inc, and here's a picture of Foundr Mag with big bright letters that say IDEA on it, with a picture of Richard Branson on it. How can you miss it?

Nathan: That's right. I know for a fact that with Richard Branson on the front cover – I've tested this. I'm all about testing, man. I love testing stuff. I love data and stuff like that. I know for a fact that if we have Richard Branson as the first cover and the first thing you see when you find the magazine, we'll get 30% more downloads.

This is the lowest hanging fruit for anybody that wants to start a magazine or create an app. It's really just trying to piggyback off big apps and getting really good on ranking for key search terms that people are looking for, because you've already got that starving crowd.

Don't worry about getting someone to read your blog post and then being like, "Oh wow, this is a great blog post. I'm going to pull out my phone or I'm going to pull out my iPhone and download their app." It's way easier to get someone to download your app if they're already searching for a similar like-minded app and they've got their credit card on the back of their iTunes account or their Google Play account. It just works really well.

I have to also mention that to download Foundr the app, it's free, and even once you get inside and download and open up the app, we give away a complimentary free issue which is the Richard Branson issue. It's one of our best issues, just to showcase. I think it's rich to ask people still to pay for a magazine they've never heard of before so, much like you, you give away your best stuff, man. You give away so much, and that's how you build such a massive community here and so much trust that when you launch something, people know you're going to produce quality.

I purchased that Smart Player, your special player. We have it on our site and it looks so good. It was a no-brainer for me to purchase that when you launched that, so it's a similar kind of play. When you open up the magazine you'll see, "Download your first issue for free." We offer a free trial as well. You can try before you buy, so it's kind of building that trust too.



We are a top 10 ranked business and investing magazine, sometimes even higher than Entrepreneur or Fast Company or Fortune in the rankings, but for the most part we sit next to those guys. We're now on the same level as them in the digital space, but still it's a very hard play to ask someone to pay for a magazine they've never heard of.

That's another thing too, Pat. That's why it took a while to build it up. If someone downloads Foundr and even if they did see Richard Branson, you get to Issue 7 and they download Foundr, they'll only see 7 issues. How do they know when they subscribe they're going to get another issue?

Now when you open up Foundr there's at least 30-40 covers in there, so the trust is there that when you subscribe you're going to get another issue. We say we're a monthly publication and a lot of people think we're a really big business, man, but the real truth is I'm just working out of a co-working space and we've got a global team that are all contractors, and I'm just about to make my first hire.

Pat: I think the design has a lot to do with it. It looks super pro.

Nathan: Thank you. The main thing is App Store optimization. For anyone listening, there's a great tool out there that I highly, highly recommend that has been a game changer for us to work out how to rank really well. It's called [Sensor Tower](#).

I play a lot of different games, Pat. I play the social media game with Instagram. I try to play the content marketing game with the magazine and the content we put on the blog, and the traffic's slowly building up. Then also I play the app game.

Pat: I'm looking at SensorTower.com. How does that help you exactly?

Nathan: It helps you work out the highest traffic keywords for your niche, but then once you've worked that out you've got to be testing. Then you've got to try and put those keywords in the name of your app, if you can. If not, put them in the keyword meta data section, which allows you to have up to 100 characters. Then with Sensor Tower you can kind of work out how you're going to rank.

We've got *Entrepreneur magazine* – "Foundr, a young entrepreneur magazine" – in the name and we've got around 200 reviews in the US store, and I know Entrepreneur Magazine has like 250. It's the same with the podcast, like you told me over our interview. It's all about the reviews, and since you told me that we've gone from 50-60



reviews to about two months later almost 180 reviews in the US store. I'm listening to what you're telling me, Pat. I listen. That's another thing. Listen and take action.

Same with the apps. You've got to get as many reviews as you can. Hypothetically, dude, if we get more reviews than Entrepreneur magazine, I'm not sure if it would happen because they're so big, but we might rank higher if someone types in *Entrepreneur magazine* if we have more reviews than them. I don't know if that would happen, but there's a high possibility because that's how app search works.

The first thing they look at is is that keyword in the name? If it's not they go to the keywords, and then they'll look at the reviews. If you have the most reviews and it's in the name, you're going to be the highest search result. It's pretty basic stuff. It's like old school Google stuff.

Pat: I'm looking at Entrepreneur magazine in the US right now. They have 247 ratings and you have 200, but they also have 159 of those 1-star. Yikes.

Nathan: That's because their app used to always crash. It's just basic stuff, man. I'm lucky that our off-the-shelf software is not buggy and it works really, really well, but for some reason they were using I don't know what, some sort of platform that was just always crashing and it didn't work properly and people were getting so frustrated. That makes my job easier, but we're a totally different play.

If you look at Foundr compared to Entrepreneur magazine, that's a massive magazine, dude, with 150 or 200 pages. Our magazine is bite-sized. It's like 60-70 pages. We put the interviews inside, obviously, and it's just something you can chew in a few hours. It's like \$2.99/month, the cost of a cup of coffee, and we're really focused on just actionable stuff, stuff that really helps entrepreneurs, the stuff that me and you thrive off, all the stuff that I've just given over this past 50 minutes. That's stuff that people can take away and apply into their business.

We're about the story too, but I guess Entrepreneur's biggest play is the story and not so much actionable stuff that you can take away.

Pat: Yeah, that's cool. Awesome. And just to verify, MagCast.co was the platform that you used to get everything up and running for your magazine?

Nathan: Yeah, MagCast. That's my off-the-shelf platform and it's pretty cheap.



Pat: I'm looking at it now and I clicked "Let's get started" just to kind of see what the process was like really quick which you were talking. It says, "To get started you would need \$3,564 a year," so maybe they've upped the price, but I can see everything that's included –

- 1 iPad magazine unlimited issues
- Unlimited changes
- Unlimited multimedia links
- Unlimited optimization
- App revenue is 100% yours

I can see that there's a lot of benefit to going down this route. Obviously it's going to cost a little bit more, and I know some people who have bootstrapped even further and created it on their own, but you also want that experience to be great for those who pick it up, especially if this is a long-term play and something that you want to look great that can lead into other things that you can sell down the road.

Nathan: That's it, man. The prices definitely have gone up. I think that I can get a discount for anyone that's listening. Should I get people to email me or is that too crazy?

Pat: It might get crazy. Maybe leave a comment on this blog post.

Nathan: Yeah, leave a comment on this blog post. I didn't know it was that price. I know one of the guys that created MagCast so I think you might be able to get it for \$3,000 a year. That's a bit of money. If anybody is needing that, I can definitely help.

Pat: Cool. Leave a comment on the blog post and say that you're interested, and Nathan and I will find some way to get you that information if Nathan can pull any strings or something.

Nathan: Most definitely because last I heard it was \$3,000 a year. So hit me, what else can I do? What else can I help you with, dude?

Pat: We're at the 50-minute mark already, right at the cap of where I usually like to end the interviews, but I feel I could go for days with you. You said you were traveling to the US. Are you coming by San Diego at all?

Nathan: I would like to; however, I'm not.



Pat: How close are you going to be?

Nathan: I'll be in LA.

Pat: That's a couple hours. If schedules align maybe I can make a trip up there and see you or something.

Nathan: That would be awesome, dude. There's a lot of people I'm catching up with.

Pat: We could shoot a quick video to help promote this if we have the time, but we'll chat off the air about that. Again, thank you so much for coming on and providing all this insane information. This is a totally different way that somebody is approaching the idea of building a following and building authority and generating lots of income as well, using what he's doing as a platform to create other things down the road, and obviously providing massive value.

It's really cool that you were like, "Dude, I'm just running this from my co-working space." It's really cool that you've been able to achieve all you've achieved, and I'm super proud to have you on the show.

Nathan: Thank you so much, Pat. Like I said, I'm a massive fan of your work. For me it's such an achievement and accomplishment to be someone who didn't know you, saw your work, a massive fan of your work, and you've asked me to come on. I'm just so grateful to be here, and thank you so much. It was so much fun.

Pat: Thanks Nathan. I appreciate and we'll talk soon.

Nathan: Yeah, for sure. Ciao.

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Pat: Oh man, what an epic interview. That's Nathan Chan from FoundrMag.com. Nathan, I know you're listening to the show. Thank you so much. For everybody listening, after we finished recording Nathan was just wanting to make sure that this was great. He kept asking me, "Was that good? Maybe we can do it again." Dude, it was great and I think it's going to be very inspiring to a lot of people.

Maybe they've been playing around with different platforms like blogging, podcasting, and video and it's just not for them. This could be it for those people, digital magazines,



and it's really cool that you mentioned all the resources there. Also the Instagram hacks and all those sorts of things. Man, great job!

I can't wait to put a lot of that into effect, especially on my Instagram channel. You can find me on Instagram @patflynn. You can find Nathan [@foundrmagazine](#) and see what he's up to.

Obviously the show notes are always available at smartpassiveincome.com/session169. You'll get all the links and resources there.

I also want to thank today's episode sponsor, which is 99designs.com, an awesome website that allows you to put a job description up there for any design work that you need done, as little as a logo – I even did the logo for my son's soccer team on there – all the way up to a landing page or a complete fully decked-out website.

Whatever it is that you need, you put it up there and then within days you're going to get dozens of different designers from around the world who are going to be competing for your favorite design. You get to pick the one that you love. That designer gets awarded the cash from the contest, and you get to take home that design. It's great, a 7-day turnaround, sometimes less if you want to force it to a 3- or 5-day contest, and very, very affordable as well.

If you go to 99designs.com/spj, that will grant you access to a free \$99 Power Pack of services for free, which you can put towards your next design project, which will allow you to get even more designers to come in, and more exposure for your design contest. Again that's 99designs.com/spj.

Thank you again so much. The show notes are at smartpassiveincome.com/session169. I appreciate you. If you've got a sec, please head on over to iTunes whenever you have a chance and please leave an honest review and rating for the Smart Passive Income podcast. I read them all and I try to go to as many different countries as I can, because it's not always easy to find the reviews from other countries, but I want to read them. I want to improve and I'm always doing what I can to best serve you.

I can't wait to serve you in the next episode of the Smart Passive Income podcast. It's going to be a great one. We have a guest who's returning to deliver even more content. This is based off of popular demand actually, and even I wanted him on because I wanted to pick his brain. It's just amazing the content that was generated, so look out for that next one, Episode 170.



In the meantime keep crushing it online. I'll see you on Instagram and Twitter @patflynn. Love you guys. Thanks so much.

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

Links and Resources Mentioned in This Episode:

[Foundr Magazine](#)

[Instagram hacks cheat sheet](#)

[Nathan on Instagram](#)

[Magcast](#)

[Enamus](#)

[Behance](#)

[Dribbble](#)

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