THE INSIDE STORIES:
HOW FIVE ENTREPRENEURS LAUNCHED WILDY SUCCESSFUL PRODUCTS AND HOW YOU CAN DO THE SAME...

The Product Launch Success Story Series

AN EXPOSÉ ON HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCH YOUR FIRST OR NEXT PRODUCT, SERVICE OR SOLUTION BASED ON A SERIES OF IN-DEPTH, MONEY-CAN'T-BUY, UNDERGROUND INTERVIEWS!

Orren Prunckun

First Edition

Contents

“How To Make A Popular Viral Marketing Video Campaign With 100,000 Views In 72 hours…”

In this interview you’ll learn how to create and distribute a viral video with 100,000 views to get more exposure for your project. We discuss how to:

- Identify your target audience and create a release strategy centred around the way they use the internet;
- Set up your Vimeo or YouTube page for maximum impact, from page branding through to searchable keywords and video thumbnails;
- Analyse statistics from your launch in order to focus your energy on the areas that are working, and re-strategise those that aren’t;
- Get your video featured on major blogs and websites;
- Release your video on Facebook and Twitter and utilise your existing fan base to spread your content across the globe;
- Engage with your fans via social media and keep them wanting more;
- Launch your video at specific times of day in order to reach your online audience in ‘prime time;
- Utilise your film’s success to build your Facebook and Twitter followers and mailing list subscribers;
- And much, much more…

Ella Macintyre is the Producer of Marketing and Distribution at Epic Films and the Marketing and Head of Marketing at Mighty Kingdom, a mobile app development agency in Adelaide, Australia.

In her role as PMD at Epic Film, Ella oversees the online marketing of Wastelander Panda, an online series about the last remaining Panda in a post-apocalyptic wasteland. She was instrumental in the release strategy of the Wastelander Panda Prologue, which saw it receive 100,000 views within 72 hours online.

It has now done more than 185,000 views which is impressive. These numbers helped the team triple the size of Epic Films' Facebook fan base and also start a highly successful crowdfunding campaign, which raised more than $25,000 and attracted the highest number of supporters for a film project on Australian crowdfunding website Pozible.com.

Since then, Wastelander Panda has continued its successful journey, with the release of three web episodes and an interactive website in May 2013. They have now entered into a co-production deal with Madman, and together are writing six new episodes, with development financing from the ABC and South Australian Film Corporation.

Orren: Hi Ella, thanks for making time to talk today. So your story is pretty interesting, I heard about it first through the Flinders Partners team and I met you in about mid-2012 and I was really impressed with the Wastelander Panda's launch and the numbers you were able to achieve. So I want to kick this off with the big context of who you are and what you are currently doing.

Ella: Well, as you said I am Ella Macintyre and I do a few things. Primarily what I am up to at the moment is working on Wastelander Panda it's a continuing project and lucky enough to receive rounds of funding and support from fans since early 2012 launch that I handled the online marketing for the project, since that would have been in the past couple of years since I first met you, we have partnered with Mad Man production company and the resources they have in their staff. It's a bit more of a larger team than the one man operation I was running back then but yes that's my job there and then I also kind of work in the film industry which doesn't put a lot of money in my bank account. I also work as a developer in the city called Mighty Kingdom and I handle their marketing and user acquisition for them.

Orren: Right. Can you give a bit background on yourself and how you got started in film and perhaps start with what you studied and how you came in contact with Kirsty and the Epic Films team and then what brought you to the points of getting involved with Wastelander Panda.

Ella: Oh, yes so I studied a Bachelor of Creative Arts at Flinders University in the films. When I was in high school I had a massive passion for both films and television that is really where my interest lied and I wanted to get into that and then there I met Victoria Cocks who directs Wastelander Panda and hanging out with all my film friends I met Kirsty who graduated a few years before Vic and I started, we were sort of old friends for a while and I guess how I got on board the project was, I sort of aware that Vick and Marcus who plays the Panda in the episodes had this idea that they were kicking around called Wastelander Panda and I sort of that's cool but I was doing my honours year at that point and I wasn't involved with it and by the end of the year they manage to secure some funding from the academy, a couple thousand dollars for a short year and yeah so they had shot that and had it sort of to show at films and I watch it and I was sort of blown away by it. I had written it off – how were they going to do it but they did it so number one was really impressive, number two I love the vibes in it,

the idea was really interesting, so then it's sort of a strange coincidence. We were sort of hanging out at my house one night and I ask them what they were going to do with the video because they were working at it so long and it's one of those things where we finish a project and it's done, especially in the film industry there are a few narrow avenues to go down and encouraged to go to film festival route and if you go to the right one, press pays attention to it, it was sort of a traditional sense, kind of like the stepping stones. This is kind of like a 3 minute concept for the idea, it's kind of clear that that wasn't the way to go with it and I sort of thought, I was looking at it and there was just something about that Panda doing things that you don't normally see a Panda doing in a world that kind of have a richness to it, you can look at it and kind of extrapolate like that's a waste land and these kinds of people aren't going to live here and it sort of gets the taste of this potential from 3 minutes of this trailer. So yeah I have I ask them if it would be alright if I should it around to some people with some blogs who I thought would be interested in it, because it's kind of thing I could have mentioned coming across online and seeing it and thinking it was amazing, so I sort of thought we were would I mention seeing this and they were kind enough to let me do that and that night everything took off from there and I haven't really get back in.

Orren: Sure, so one thing that jumped out to me in what you are saying that I find really interesting was that you knew a lot of the people that were involved with Wastelander Panda before your involvement. How important I guess was testing those relationships before actually getting involved in a formal working capacity with the team?

Ella: Yeah I think it is an interesting one. I was really close friends with both Kirsty and Vic and pretty much everyone else who worked on that project in that initial 3 minute video and I guess, yeah Epic Films was started as basically sort of an entity to be able to receive money for funding by Kirsty and Viv Madigan who is cinematographer on the project, because Kirsty comes from a lot of senior photography and they initially sort of set it up just to save money for their own projects that they could shoot themselves, like they wanted to shoot on 16mm film which is an opportunity they knew they really wouldn't get unless they tried to peruse that on their own. That was kind of all set up and we really never expected this to happen and the Epic Films to become something more than that, so I think it was sort of a lot of it being, I would say on the back foot but it's kind of taking it as it comes come and we

do want to go further with this and there was some potential here. So to go back to the original question, I think what influence my choice to come on board was, like the strength of the project I think that it's a strong compelling idea and I love TV and I obviously want to be a part of that but I don't think that either of them would have let me experiment the way I do to stress relief unless they were my friends and I definitely, I mean at the same time not that I could make this go viral but I don't think I would have spent the time that I did if they weren't my friends and see them succeed so yeah, they do see relationship definitely important. There are some companies definitely involved since then and didn't stop helping it wasn't a play to try and get in it was just sort of, this was something I really liked doing can give me the opportunity to keep doing it I guess.

Orren: Sure. So some of the things you just mentioned there were the richness and some of the qualities of that proof of concept video and that really jumped out to as being something that was compelling and from there moving on to showing it to some blogs or outlets that you would think that you would naturally, organically stumble up on that, It ended up doing around ten thousands views in the first twenty-four hours and then a hundred thousand within the next seventy-two hours and then today it done something like a hundred and eighty-five thousand views which is incredible, can you give a slight break down of what happened in those initial three days particularly?

Ella: Yes, so I guess what happen was I and started contacting people at about 9pm Australian time and that turned out, not really planning this, it was a coincidence…

Orren: And what time was it actually released on that same day?

Ella: I think it was about 4pm or something like that and it really just went around to our friends on Facebook, and had some dinner and do you want to go further with this? At that point I started contacting places I though was a be receptive to the idea at about 8:30-9pm which is wake up time in America for those blogs and when people are checking their email of what happened over night or what am I going to chuck on the blog today. So that kind of was really helpful because it positioned us at the top of the inbox that make sense? If you contacting someone and that's one of the first email they see throughout the day.

Orren: What day was it do you recall the day of the week?

Ella: In fact it was really hard to say because it was the day before the 22nd or the 23rd I can't remember.

Orren: I had it down as the 23rd but……

Ella: It must have been the 23rd because that third day was Australia day, yeah so that would have been. It was mid-week which was important it's the same thing these outlets can't operate, it's moved on since bedroom blogging. They are legitimate news sources that have payrolls and 9 to 5 and all of that kind of thing. So if we release on the Saturday for instance we probably wouldn't have got as much traction because it was just not happening on the internet that time and there is fewer people checking stuff out, work and things like that which about I have to say that was not at all intentional on our part just a coincidence.

Orren: So in retrospect that launched though the timing of that in particular was pretty important?

Ella: I hesitant to do a tribute, too much of the success to that but I do had it recognized that now is something that we have been quite helpful, yeah so that night I was sending things out and I have identified a few places that I thought would do it but I was also think that when do those places get their information from, it is online it's all about content, the move content you have the more content you have the more views you are going to drive the more revenue you are going to get from however you are monetizing the site.

Orren: So you're basically looking up stream, for sources up stream.

Ella: Yeah, that's a great way of putting it, so I was thinking about that but I was also kind of acutely aware that I couldn't just go straight to Buzzfeed and say right put us on the front page, you know what I mean? We had to have a groundswell and prove that this was something people interested in and I knew that instead of going a first couple out there and having the first couple of stories that there was going to be snow ball from there. So I can't remember who exactly I contact here, I think I contacted io9, Neatorama and a few others, I singled out those two because I think were one of the upstream websites for a lot of people and that quite a few other people expose to it and then from there, the other thing I think is worth learning is that I contacted the

websites and a representative of the film makers in the sense that I'm connected to this up front and all that kind of thing but a few other friends of ours both known to me at the time and unknown just contacted them without disclosing and saying I found this and I really like that.

Orren: And they were friends, associates and so on?

Ella: Yes, I was maybe one of the friends who was following up to make it appear more organic, they're just doing that to basically make appear that this is something someone like so much they needed to go out of their way to tell someone about it to do some social proof on that video.

Orren: So they would have you know, sent an email say "hey I found this looks awesome, you should check it out, here's the link."

Ella: Yeah, my pitch was a bit more, my friends made this I really like your website it's something I can imagine seeing on that page, I think you should check it out or share it with other people. So there were 2 tactics there, from there thinking about what were the wider sources of sharing one thing and instead of looking at aggregators. So we submitted it to the Daily What which is the Cheezburger Network. And Buzzfeed was another one and a few others again I pull out these ones because they were the successful and forget the ones that fell on their face. The whole time I was kind of addicted to looking the numbers like I woke up and it was on Neatorama and it had jumped thousand views since that day and things like that, so I kind of like really into it and not paying attention at work and I was all about this video. We released on Vimeo because we're film makers and that's what we see all the really great high quality high quality films and we could get back to back if you want but yeah we released on Vimeo and one the benefits of the Vimeo backend and the analytics and the information about who is watching your video is that they show you were the views are coming from in the sense of if your video is embedded on a particular website that show you how many people loaded that page and then how many people went to go and click on your video. I was looking at and I noticed most of the videos that was kind of like a two percent conversion rate or like a five percent conversion rate for some of the big websites, which is you know that's fine when you're talking about hundred thousand people loading it in the couple of hours and things but one of the ones I

noticed about Buzzfeed was we were getting a 25% conversion rate there and that's telling me something about Buzzfeed's audience, so at that point we sort of had made some tractions, this was day 2, there's quite a few people finding Epic Films Facebook page, at that point we didn't have a Wastelander Panda page, yeah and we were able to move our support network both family and friends and the fans that had popped up since and say go comment and up vote this video on Buzzfeed we want to get their attention, the audience is really enjoying it so being able to do that and move our channel across, channel our audience across to their, that ended up being on the front page of Buzzfeed, which is one of those upstream websites, it's a bit more circular now but it used to operate in a much in bit of a different way 2 years ago but yeah see that was one of the ones that the minute you get there you start getting syndicated on Salon.com and Huffington Post and I knew that would happened because I've seen that kind of, we got this from Buzzfeed sub title in a lot of their articles. I know that would have been a big guess and it was, so yeah and then at this point I think they too was the peak day and day 3 was Australia Day so I was les involved with the checking everything out constantly 24/7 we were all on our phones and checking things throughout the day and we knew it was on the downward curve as well. With viral videos there is a 3 day hump (peak day 2 and tail off from day three onwards.

Orren: So really those first two day?

Ella: Yes.

Orren: They're the most critical?

Ella: Definitely.

Orren: Ok. And that's where all the time should be invested and resources within that very fine…

Ella: Yeah and definitely, so just be aware of that as well, everything has a used-by date on the internet I guess and you are competing with seven hundred other Wastelander Panda's for people's attention plus all of the big news that is coming out of about "real films" and things like that and cats that have sad faces but you have to deal with as well it's a constant battle for attention so I think that's one thing to be really aware of it's not just going to go up and up it's rare for that to happened, you'd

more likely to see a blip on the radar and that's you sort of opportunity I guess, so yeah we aware of that and that was that day three we hit a hundred thousand views which was awesome but we knew that it was on the way down. Yeah so we knew the intention was waning and we were just going to go back into obscurity again so we kind of thought ok we really need to capitalized on this opportunity it's really rare and it's not something that we're going to be out of easily replicate any time soon, so we got together and thought there is this new thing called Crowd Funding let's try and see what this audience can give us in terms of how much are they going to back us to make some more. So yeah from there we were scrambling to I think it was even that night we were scrambling to sort of put together a champagne and work out with our budget, what we can sensible expect from this attention in terms of like people putting their in and wanted to see more I think we came up with a number like, our goal ended up being twenty thousand but we sort of worked out the between us we had a couple of thousands that we could chuck in if we didn't meet our goal. Instead of being pessimistic we just had no idea what to expect for there and that leads into the next phase of capitalizing on that opportunity and making 3 more episodes.

Orren: Sure ok, one thing that mention as I want to rewind back to was you're talking about submitting to sites like the Daily What can you give some practical examples of how you did that was it through an email address, was it through contact form?

Ella: Yeah it's kind of those case by case basis some of them do have big submit buttons and they're aggregators and they work on other people just handing them that content and then filtering it through, others you could dig a bit deeper and go there's the person that writes about online videos I need to find their email address listed on the website somewhere or make up what I think it could be and hope for the best and others just have context and tips pages where they say or have you seen something like this so I guess the message there is like don't be afraid to tell people about it because they wouldn't have tip boxes if they didn't want to know what the content their audience is interested in, I guess.

Orren: Sure, you came across the outlets like the Daily What and Neatorama, they are obviously really niche to your audience, how can people go out and fine outlets that are relevant to their audience, their product or their industry?

Ella: Yeah, once set of rules that I like to love my life by is, if somebody is interested in something, someone somewhere is talking about it on the internet. There's so many community that do so many different things online you just need to spend more than first two pages of google looking for them, I was really fortunate in the Wastelander Panda release because I was already part of that audience so I had a strong idea of where to look for things and extrapolate further, I get one piece of advice I would say is spend time not only creating the video but learning about that audience because if you create a video that you want to really capture the imagination of a particular audience you need to know what is it they find interesting or what is going to capture that attention rather an a guess to being with. So yeah it would be following link on particular blogs or forums and really getting to know that audience working out where it is that congregate what it is they're talking about.

Orren: Previously you mention in the key metrics that you were monitoring during the launch, you mentioned views and conversions was there anything else that was important to guide what you do next?

Ella: Yeah, I guess you may know as I say conversion as much as we're looking at conversion I was also looking at where the video was popping up, to look pretty quickly to see who is interested in it and who's not interested in it and being able to go right these persons isn't interested in it, where can I find more of this type of outlet or where the audience of this website what else do they like?

Orren: You said because they weren't responding to emails they just went publishing, is that what you mean by their interest level?

Ella: I guess yeah, there were some website where they don't even reply to email they just throw it out because they got things to do, some of them they'll ignore it and they won't even post it but the ones that do post being able to say io9 seems to like it, where do io9 readers also read? That kinda thing. And then from there looking at how that audience is converting and obviously spreading resources and time to looking at things similar to those views that's a really fun one.

Orren: Was that just through the Vimeo page?

Ella: Yeah, we were just using Vimeo which is actually in comparison with YouTube it's probably changed a little bit since then but YouTube as fanatic analytics to really dig deep into how you are capturing the audience's attention.

Orren: But you also used Vimeo because film makers, that was the platform of choice at the time?

Ella: Yeah, I mean on one hand the Vimeo audience because there is a really strong community they were really supportive and really big factor in the success of the views but at the same time the sheer number of people who're just searching for things on YouTube and doing that same kind of thing, it's also huge so I wouldn't, I would say think about who your audience is before you choose platform over the other but yeah the YouTube is a bit more based on really in depth analytics in the way that Vimeo isn't. Yeah so I mean those are the one that I was testing that those are the ones I was testing but that I've had access to more front and centre.

Orren: And we you using things like Google alerts to see what was popping up in how much real-time?

Ella: Yeah, back then in real time and Google weren't really found in the same sentence for a little while now , yeah was still interesting, had a tweet, tweet a bit of checking up and things like that, was tracking the tag on Tumblr, all that kind of thing that wasn't mostly focused on getting it to me on both sides, because I knew that that kind of, I also knew some people were tweeting that on Twitter, at the time I didn't, I was using Twitter so I didn't have the ability to sort of direct an audience in the same way I did by contacting the specific gatekeepers of the content (overlapping conversation) yeah, yeah, I had no real influence on Tumblr, I had no influence on Twitter because I didn't have this page as much so anyway it's going to be starting from step 1 there and take a little time, just black post it, these days I definitely propose to do it again I'd be much, much more interested in those 2 platforms because their potential is huge but if you're not there and entrenched, you can miss the audience and not even be able to get anything off the ground, but you can also make miss-steps and instead of throw pass, and have your content ignored as well. So it sort of a knowing, I was confident about a website, I was comfortable about goals the because I knew how

they operated but yeah as a consequence I was sort of neglecting to Twitter and Tumblr and socialize much.

Orren: So with Twitter and Tumblr then was the big opportunity sees there is it about voting platform, having that following there, that has the new distribution fire hose?

Ella: Yeah, definitely. Yeah, I mean it's a bit more about self-starting kind of thing where you know you type into a blog, someone else is writing all that content for you someone else, is like piggy backing on their fire hose as you say but definitely on Twitter and Tumblr, you know it's the audiences there are huge again its one of those things where if someone is interesting in it they probably talk about it on the internet somewhere and one of those things you know just by share odds, they probably going to be doing it on Twitter so it's another way of just finding those audiences and if you can, if you do have the time and the inclination to build your audience on Twitter and Tumblr you know on social media in general beforehand, that's great, but if you're starting from zero don't try and build a massive audience to begin with that's sort of something that kind of follows on from you kind of create that content in the first place I think.

Orren: Yeah, it's really clear in the strategy that you took that it wasn't that initial audience and platform to start with so I was looking to, I guess alternative means to get that same end.

Ella: Yeah, I mean, and having said that I learned this back in England on Twitter, you know what I mean, I did actually sort of have a stab at them, I did realize that it was going to take a lot more time than I have had was working against a 3 day clock basically.

Orren: Yeah. So you've mentioned resources previously you just I guess touched on it then, once that video was live, what were those main resources that you have, was it just time and attention and how did you focus them in those couple critical days in the areas that were winning and the ones that weren't?

Ella: Yeah, I guess sir, when I say resources I sort of time and attention definitely one of them but also the ability to raise help and use it so obviously your immediate network and our immediate networks but also looking where we kind of jumped on

board and just got rid of some to see what was going to happen next and we were able to pull a day off here in the project some where I became, you know and we did that with necessary Facebook being able to communicate we'd go in awkwardly so going party tour, you know comment on these things, see how much likes I got kind of thing yeah and then again time, time was the other one because we were dealing with it so just being able to you know throw, not necessarily throw everything at the wall but instantly work out what's working and what's not or work out as quickly as possible, work out what's failing, abandon it, work with what's working.

Orren: And was that done through your personal Facebook accounts for example I know you have mention that you have large platforms and audiences on some of those networks, was it just through the teams personal accounts?

Ella: We were kind of pushing through, well pushing a message through the Epic Films Facebook page…

Orren: And that was small at the time yeah?

Ella: Oh, yeah it was tiny; it was like 300 fans or something. Yeah just through Kirsty and Viv's personal networks and some industry people supporting Kirsty and Viv's upstart, and that obviously grew as more people discovered us and things yeah so we had about 2000 likes by the end of the day and that was really grubby, that was clear we can see that people were, we had a link underneath the pen dangle there which when we realize that it was sort of doing something and we wanted a place to sort of caught up with store, I mean I wanted them to, I wanted their eyeballs looking in there, yeah ability to sort of, to check in the project actually because it's that kind of thing where you sort of very rare that option like that comes along so you want to capitalize on that as much as possible.

Orren: Right. I got you. So it seems like the west end appear trailer appeal to multiple niche audiences and I know you mentioned that it was very focused but to my mind you know there's things like science fiction fans and film makers and post apocalypse fans, I'm sure there are probably other interest groups as well. When I initially saw the trailer I found it very captivating that's something you mention previously and also that really high production value. Having said all that though, I'm saying you weren't directly involved in the creation of the trailer so how important was the quality of the

film both in terms of film production, the storyline and the market research in making a film that people would get excited about?

Ella: Well, I guess, one of the things that Victoria is really interested, the director is really interested in is acting laws, like the heart of the movie, trailer, I guess it was really in her mind when she was cutting it, but yeah, I have to say that it was, it wasn't at all created with the intention to go viral. It was something that was just you know, the interesting, that was the idea and they wanted to showcase the fact that it could work as something that people were interested in, not, this is not something that, not to cast a wide net and then grab as many people as possible it was sort of for me the niche television and satellite, satellite general audience viewing in mind you it just sort of happen it was able to reach a slightly wider one but, and I think in terms of the market research, again goes back to an understanding of the audience. Victoria is you know she is the audience for this project love those cousins, those words, really rich words of vibes inspirational I guess that's where that all came from so yeah I mean I'm sorry I can't give you more data cause it was just one of those things where it just happens to work out well rather than being engineered I wouldn't be here if there wasn't things I we can learn from that and walk away from.

Orren: Ok. So then do you think the quality of the product in this case the film does that matter or does the skill swing towards distribution as being the important aspect or is there a combination of both?

Ella: One thing that was really important is that we had that quality there and I think that is important in this very specific instances, for instance our pitch was, you know this is an idea that we think other people would like and that's something we can deliver on so that had to be of a high quality to convince people of that fact and cause it would be presented as its own product if that makes sense. So maybe to be of a very high quality if it was something you know but I think there is sort of an attachable element in being sort of rough around the edges cause that some people perceive as being a bit more authentic so like if you're trying to produce something more down footage or people's reaction to a product or something like that if you get to manufacture that side of it, it can't appear manufactured it has to have absolute amateur quality to cause that impression, this is a high quality piece of film making that we'd want you to take seriously, it means try to position it as a drama, high drama,

people would, we're aware of the fact that people would think it was a comedy, because that's how Pandas have been portrayed, this is pretty pretend area as well so familiar with that, people would think I'm pretending and that's not at all where we're willing to go with it and you say that more of that absolute cute funny thinking handle that kind of thing rather than very few cause I'm really imposing scary animals so it had some sort of working hard against that so because of how would we be doing that, yes, it really needed to be of a high quality but having said that I don't think that that's necessary to be there, it's definitely a case by case basis for sure.

Orren: So what you're saying is really context specific (overlapping conversation) And I bet the distribution obviously is also super important if you don't have your own distribution, finding another distribution channel that you can leverage as well.

Ella: Yeah, definitely and finding other people to broadcast your message and that's what we were doing. We were about to best way to do that for other people probably going to be more individual influences on social media that kind of thing but it was yeah finding that distribution channel and being able to piggy back on it, it's really important because its very unlikely, unless if you're on mailing list or it's not your first media or product your launching its unlikely you're going to be able to reach that many people that you're going to need to be able to get that background in action.

Orren: So if everything is content specific, is there simplistic or formula, step by step process for creating something and then distributing it?

Ella: Yeah, I mean there is definitely things that you know can look at or viral videos that have been really successful in the past and worked well, there's quite a few common friends that can be found in all of them and can be included one of the set of jokes is that general thumb had to keep a herd of animal during something extraordinary that would get people's attention but I would really like to encourage everyone to maybe think a little bit more outside the box but in time get away from the kind of entirely if an animal doing something we wouldn't think of or you haven't seen before then again I guess that would go to what I would think of as matching together something ordinary with the extraordinary which goes into I guess one thing that I think is really important is the need to have a story: the video story as well as the sort of the pitch to get people what they value from this thing, what I gather they have to

say, in the case of Wastelander Panda it's a crazy machete wielding anthropomorphic Panda walking around a post-apocalyptic Wasteland, even if that's not right up my alley I'm still curious enough to see where that's going. Where is, you know there's could be another line there's lots of different things that you can come up with for where it could be handled and if that one is the one that we said hey keep this, I guess this is what you'd say I think from there the other thing that I think is still important, I think more people are trying to pushing away from it at the moment but I think it's still a something that I think still holds true is make it less than 3 minutes and it's a bit slow to get started even with that 2 or 3 minutes cause it get some pet review if I was to truly engineer this worth going viral to get that Panda running in the first 15 seconds still have a reveal but have it, get it go right to the film he doesn't run until about 30 seconds into the film , you see his hands and things but that could be done much more effectively cause they didn't just drop off and you can see it in the YouTube stats, since we have put it on YouTube that's where people fall away. It was sort and I think that was further illustrated by then to release that was sort of out of the next 3 episodes would be after that prologue they were all much longer and have a narrative and that's big ask, the shortest one was 8 minutes and I was freaking out cause I knew that that wasn't going to have that same viral hold on someone cause people aren't going to stick around to be taken on a story they won't let a blot rather than a meal of a story mean on a story so there, that would be my big thing yet, the biggest thing is help make it something that you want to talk about. Think about the audience that you're targeting, think about what they are going to be interested in and give them something organize that they would want to show other people.

Orren: Great. Excellent! I want to go a bit more granular now. What's the best way for someone to set up either Vimeo or a YouTube page for maximum impact you know going from things like branding, keywords, thumbnails.

Ella: For sure, sure. I mean, for Wastelander Panda obviously kind of hard to find a really good front and centre for those contender only find a couple that we are having to use at least from those list of 35 minutes of contender that we had for a while yeah I guess you value the competition front and centre that should be thinking about your page and your fun now especially after videoing something else that's the sort walk in sign I guess the joy that people are going to come through to look at that video so if you can kind of tease that piece of extraordinary video that you going to film that's

really important. One thing that we've discovered was that the Vimeo image, cause Vimeo was kind of random add links at the time I'm not sure if it does now, it kind of randomly assigned a variable and it wasn't of a Panda and it wasn't, it needed to be so that was like the first thing that I've changed so yeah that was something that we think about further down so yeah but having that fun now, but having that fun now will be relevant to your, like you kind of manufacture one, YouTube will let you upload your own from now so you can add to extra branding on it and things like that but if you value proposition doesn't match what's in your video then fall away and that's going to affect your rankings all of that kind of stuff cause I think you should pay attention to that kind of thing so having it be the sort of the welcome mat I guess is about what you do because its real important.

Orren: Ok. So it's kind of that snap shot or that instantaneous snap shot that then brings them into the next 3 minutes.

Ella: It's the kind that makes people ask the question like 'what the hell is that?' probably makes people sort of go 'Oh that looks like something I want to see more of,' Yeah, I mean obviously it's hard to give more of an example without you know, cause there's so many things of what a video can be but something that asks a question and then invite a quick that kind of thing, think about it from that perspective.

Orren: Ok. You briefly mentioned previously and I just wrote down some note, how do you capitalize on the video success you mentioned that you expanded your existing fan by some subscribers and then you launched a crowd funding campaign. You then got you know some subsequent production dues. Can you go into some of the details of how those dues originated and then how they fit into the long term picture for what Wastelander Panda is and can be?

Ella: For sure. As I mentioned before was we were on the back foot when we were thinking about right we got this opportunity, we need to do something about it. As we say crowd funding were very new we hadn't done it before, were kind of in the dark about what that would entail, which was a lot of work. Yeah so we basically set up a crowd funding campaign asking for $20,000.00 but in the mean time we were talking to the funding buddies in south Australia this is actually the name of the South Australian Film Corporation this example was very specific to a certain pathway like

Australian film, film makers that have a network of government support its not entirely don't write it off if you're in America that's the thing to me I guess it's not something to be learnt from its not something that can be easily replicated unless you have this kind of network of support so we approach them actually with that and the fact that we having this dues it was our first approach and people want to see more of this. So the SA Film response was when you don't meet your goal come and see us and we'll top it off for you by which way we were like alright if that's how you're going to play it and that even felt lead to reach the goal and ended up exceeding the goal which was great. That just created more proof and it showed the people who number 1 wanted more Wastelander Panda and wanted the idea but they were willing to pay for it to enter and that was really important from a government funding perspective because that's just very risky for us most investors are especially film investors very risky but they would approve the market with this small, and prove there was a market which was willing to pay which obviously very important in the world of film making yeah so from there we were able to write, we were able to apply for grants, we had that $25,000.00 that crowd funding help us obviously a bit of that went to fees and rewards and things so it was a fair chunk of money that we were able to get and convince the SAFC to come on board and support us there from there we made those three episodes they obviously as I said before didn't do good they didn't go viral but we weren't expecting them to, it was important that that was the expectation was sort of set that which show that we were able to sort of prove on that, prove that we were able to do without the narrative episodes of these west end of the world, so yeah that proof of course they wanted an audience, the audience was willing to pay it was really important to offer government resource was their risk at this and you know from there we were able to, we released, we didn't go viral this time but that's fine cause we weren't expecting it to, we didn't engineering to sort of do that but we did kind of you know we were always playing for a larger bit of air time to borrow a phrase we always knew we wanted to make longer episodes and we want to make sort of continuous narrative arcs the three episodes that we did make was sort of bites of the wasteland to see who would be interested in which parts and where the story could go and we so we sort of had 3 snapshots that said this is what we can do basically in terms of the budget, this is what we delivered on. Nick Batzias who was the producer at MadMan Productions saw Kirsty pitch at a Screen Producers Association pitching competition and he was impressed with her and contacted us and suggested a co-production which

was fantastic because the minute you should have get larger company on board with that infrastructure that much more help that we need been in the industry for a while and this open doors that we didn't have access to so that was really important as well but yeah I guess the main take away there is just delivering and over delivering on what you promised and managing risks in sort of, managing risks in an incredible risqué industry.

Orren: Yeah, sure. You mention Twitter and Tumblr before, about being some key lessons learned but are there any other take a ways or anything that you'd do differently next time beyond those two?

Ella: I mean I would never ever do it again without a plan, unless it was another Wastelander Panda is a lot doing or else this is going to blow up in our faces, I would want, haven't since look at all about the planning and having a strategy and trying to build those not only having a strategy in a sense but to read in the content and where is the audience and who is the audience and etc., etc. but having a plan in the sense of trying to do that same support so you have like a foundation to work from cause we were working from zero foundation in the sense that nobody knew what Epic Films was, nobody knew what Wastelander Panda was, we went we borrowed from a tech industry thing and we didn't have Twitter, we didn't have Tumblr set out, we didn't have anything, nobody knew what it was so we had two problems that we had to overcome so we had to educate and we had to motivate. We had to educate them as to what Wastelander Panda was and we had to motivate them to watch it and like it and enjoy it and share it with everyone else. If we could have taken, if we could have just spent all of our energy motivating, that would have been double advantage. The minute you try to split your message then it becomes dull you did basically. I think that also is another big lesson learned we were also trying to direct a lot of people all at once and giving them several different messages what to do. If we were sort of you know trying to build a Facebook fan, trying to build a following for the Wastelander Panda idea, all that kind of thing, if we were able to be streamlined but I guess what is important to note is that that actually takes a lot of confidence in the idea and all of the time and energy and effort involved in that preparation is very risqué cause your time is valuable. So yeah, I guess keeping that in mind but I guess at the same time if you're not confident in your idea then why spend how you are going to convince other people to be confident in that, so yeah that sort of just one thing that I would flag is to, you

know you can sort of launch 100% properly, you never going to get 100% ready but try and think about it for like 30 seconds before you do it unlike us.

Orren: Yeah you got through blind so to speak from the get going.

Ella: Yes, you know it didn't hurt, we had a lot of luck on our side but I don't think that we'll ever be that lucky again the things that we have no idea of knowing and being able to look back and go wow that was actually really important.

Orren: So turning the attention to listeners now, under what circumstances should someone try to create, distribute or borrow videoing and when shouldn't they? I guess what time of projects would get some really good mileage out of this form of distribution?

Ella: Yeah, I guess I mean that's a really smart question, I guess one of the things I would say is if you don't have a really strong idea, don't launch with something a bit weak. Because that's going to be, it's so much effort and to spend your effort doing something that is unlikely to capture people's attention, don't spend time on it. I would say if you're doing something that is or can be, I'm sorry I'll rephrase that, don't try and shoot one thing, do video you know I say kids and animals like don't think you can make excuse for a kid or an animal, try and make it kind of really matter and relate to the video…

Orren: So pull those elements out that capture people's attention from those types of content and engineer it into whatever…

Ella: Yeah, that really works for your product because at the end of the day if it's not working for your product people are just going to remember the video, they are not going to remember your message afterwards I guess, which is really what the video is, and it's a vehicle for your message. That being said if you're in this sort of social good space, non-profit, all that kind of stuff, if you can make it be uplifting, people will love it. Like there's a reason that Cliff beat is so popular, it's clearly something that that sort of culture is grabbing on to and enjoying something that people will share. I guess the other thing I would say is if your audience is not online and its you have a very neat product, like super neat and it's don't go the video route with that one because to really be truly viral, you need to have that large, large audience that's going to be receptive,

if you're just aiming at academics who buy tweed and leather patch jackets in North America then you're 45 years and older then it's unlikely that you're going to find something that is going to really hit cause there's not enough of them to be sharing it within networks. Again if you try to make something that , sorry or if you can't even find your audience online, then don't do it because it might reach a wide audience but if it's not reaching your audience, then it's not working for you either and I guess I would just say that the other thing is, yeah don't put something together without the acknowledgement that it need a lot of time in it you know if you hit the ground running fast and you're trying to get something out really quickly, then the time that it takes to sit down and really make a viral video well you know put the money in and you have time again, and just cropping it so that it does work for what you want, that is a lot of time so yeah just don't underestimate that factor as well.

Orren: Ok understood. So if someone has got a strong concept what should they do after listening to this, what immediate next actions should they take to get some momentum?

Ella: For sure I think they really need to test their idea, they need to think about it and go, does it have the qualities of a viral video? Does it have something that I think can capture an audience, my audience? From there definitely find out where your audience is, that's the biggest thing, if you don't already know and spend time really learning your audience learning what they like, what they dislike, when they are online, when they are not online, who the influencers are in that audience as well like that's a really big one as well obviously blogs and things and influencers for Wastelander Panda that maybe not necessarily the case for the other ones. Actually just going back I think people sort of forget what an influencer is like they'll just blindly tweet beyond getting to ask every tweeter like that's not just going to happen think about it in a much more sort of realistic terms you know, somebody with 500 Twitter followers might not be you know the best, you know the most ideal candidate but they might 500 followers at least have 500 followers themselves, so sort of think much more I guess don't shoot for the stars right away you can do it from there and create some social group again with some smaller outlets that's something that can be taken to a wider audience and I'd say also just know that audience and have that audience view the plan before you even get the video cut and edit, like shot and cut, know what you're going to do with it

so when it's done you can go right, these are people we contact, this is our story, this is the story that we're telling and these are the people we're telling it to.

Orren: What are your thoughts on test audiences I know this mention so briefly around that what are your thoughts on providing that video in small batches to your groups of friends and things like that to see how they react and what their response?

Ella: Yeah, I think that definitely that's something to do; it's definitely something that is something to do, that Vic and Kirsty did and getting their response, I would say definitely do it in a private way though, don't put it up on YouTube and everyone say yes and then you promote it because that's sort of, you know you might get a bit of a burst and then one person might find it organically and write about it or something by the time you direct a larger website to it they are going to say its two weeks old then they're going to be less interested in it than if it was something new. So do it you know, make that sealed and also I would say just show everyone with the context that it is a test and respond to that feedback and take that feedback on board but also make sure that they are members, they are representative of your audience because you can show it to mom and dad but if they are not likely to be interested in what you're selling, then their opinion ultimately means nothing as much as you prefer you can let them it's actually what they think is not important if it's not for them, so make sure that your audience is of the target audience.

Orren: That's great. Thanks for your time. It's really been good talking and hopefully we'll chat soon.

Ella: Thanks Orren.

“How To Create A $3,000,000 A Year User Community Driven Business In 12 Months Using A Simple 3 Phase Process…”

In this interview you’ll learn how to create a $3,000,000 a year user community driven business in 12 months using a 3 phase process. We discuss how to:

- Balance market power, reduce service dysfunction and fragmentation in the entertainment and hospitality industry;
- Get big by starting small and going under the radar;
- Create value by being different from the incumbent system;
- Utilize military strategy, command and control structures and evolutionary biology for creating communities;
- Find clients, create relationships and win deals based on previous successes and reputation;
- Pre-launch, including psychologically optimal room size and orientation, foot traffic flow and look and feel;
- Move to Phase 1 using Seral Progression and facilitating an organic approach to market research;
- Focus resources on the areas that are winning and identify non obvious metrics;
- Find the natural market and native users and use Climax Community and Mono-culture theory;
- Go against common wisdom, discover the influence of room set and hack lighting and audio;
- Pursue points of difference to create a niche;
- Move to Phase 2 using egress, thresholds, loyalty, metrics, tools and abandoning advertising;
- Move to Phase 3 using ingress, the self-perpetuating cycle, ambassadors and Occam’s Razor;
- Keep the conversation going through social media and appeal to different personality types;
- Successfully transfer an established user generated community;

- Abandon disruption thinking and explore sustainable business models with short user generation cycles;
- And much, much more…

David Bartholomeusz has grown 3 bricks & mortar businesses in the hospitality industry with zero bank or investor finance. He has failed to take a business from small to medium 3 times and counting, and has managed to make a good living in the process. He is the Entrepreneurs Organization's Global Director of Virtual Learning and a graduate of MIT's Entrepreneurial Masters "Birthing of Giants" Program. David is fascinated by bricks and mortar business user communities as well as on line user and experience communities: how they form, divide and dissolve. He has received a Bachelor of Science specialising in evolutionary biology and a Bachelor of Laws. Business Influences include: Roberto Cardone (Cibo Group), George Naddaff (Boston Chicken), John Ibrahim, Darth Bane, anyone who is awkwardly suspicious of the things that Seth Godin writes. Business Approach: Conservative, Organic.

One of David's companies, Griffin Alliance, did the outsourced marketing for a hospitality venue called the Dog and Duck. Originally, this was the Royal Admiral Hotel which was boarded up for several years. David and his team worked with the owners in 2006 before it was rebuilt. An impressive renovation was completed and Griffin Alliance did some basic metric observation for the first 12 months without deploying any products. After gathering the data they needed, it took another 12 months to build venues attendance to capacity on Friday and Saturday nights which at that point Griffin Alliance was taking in revenue of $60,000 over the both nights.

Orren: Hi Dave, thanks for making time to talk today.

David: My pleasure.

Orren: The Griffin Alliance story is one that hasn't been explored very publicly before. It's one of those businesses that goes about what it does with very little publicity. For an outsider of the launch of the Dog and Duck seemed pretty organic, but I know that there was a lot of strategy and moving pieces behind the scene as that, I guess guaranteed the venue would be a success and probably a starting point for Griffin Alliance to accelerate its company growth. So I wanted to start off with a bit of context of what Griffin Alliance is, who you are and what you are currently doing.

David: We noticed that there was a really big imbalance of market power in the entertainment and hospitality industry where those too meet. Between individual DJs and the venues and it was really interesting to watch it because I was managing Synagogue nightclub this was may be 20 years ago and just seeing how dysfunctional that was for all parties involved, what it meant for me as the venue manager, because I was managing a venue at that time was that I was able to get the labour for quite a lot cheaper. But what it also meant was that there was no coherence or cooperation between the DJs and what that meant was that I couldn't create a seamless experience for the customers on the night because all the DJs were completing. And arguing and wanting to play these songs or those songs, they wouldn't work together to create what was best for the customer and also the other side of that was because they were all fighting all the time, I was unable to create any community around the DJs, because that would be all working against each other and all having different factions and different people that were loyal to this DJ and wouldn't attend that venue because that DJ was there and all sorts of things that might for a very, very fragmented community. So, what I did was I created this alliance of DJs. And we said look, if we all worked together, then we should be better off and the venue should be better off. So let's cooperate and let's see what we can do.

Orren: So it really came from the understanding, 20 years ago when you were a venue manager of looking at how the community of entertainers were working and the hierarchy and the power that they had and the dysfunction and then working a method

around controlling or containing that natural dynamic and how you could use that then for other venues.

David: That is what the whole thing was to me it seemed like, because, there were three things which were quite interesting which made a controlling option completely impossible. Firstly, people aren't DJs for a long time generally. So there was a huge amount of temporal fragmentation in the market. So, a DJ who would be effective and useful this year wasn't necessarily effective and useful next year or the year before. And also, because the DJs were all put in a situation by the venues where they were constantly fighting with each other, there weren't any cooperation with DJs to do any sort of community around the service that they were offering. And so the idea wasn't to create any control mechanism. I've seen venues, the bigger super clubs, had already created good control mechanisms which was "these DJs at club and only our club and we get their people" but it wasn't optimal because of the fragmentation. So you'd go to all this effort of getting a DJ and contract like that, they'd be really useful creating a community for 12 to 24 months but then you are stuck with this DJ who was in your community, wasn't supper effective, wanted to get out, but you didn't want him to leave because that would fragment the user community's internally within the super club. And so it meant the super club tended to stagnate over the period of two to four years. Because of the situation where I needed to keep the DJs they contracted to keep the community together but in that process of keeping the community together by not fragmenting then the new DJs that would enter the market would fragment the community anyway from the outside.

Orren: So what you are saying is that there was this control dynamic from a lot of the other service providers out there and you saw that market need.

David: I see the opportunity to move from the control dynamic through to creating a structure that would evolve naturally to create a better result. To create the right environment around these DJs. Then you can create an environment where you can create some communities that doesn't fragment overtime. And they don't fragment between venues either.

Orren: And I guess it was probably a 10 year period between Synagogue and doing the outsourced marketing for Dog and Duck. What sorts of things did you put in place or learn during that 10 year period that moved away from that control dynamic?

David: I think the first thing and a lot people think that the Dog and Dog was first big success of Griffin Alliance but there were five large successes before that, but Griffin Alliance wasn't well known, so people would go "Oh wow that venue is quite big, that's really very interesting" they become quite busy and seems to be quite coherent. And, so I was able to learn from working other venues and also I was very fortunate that I found venues that weren't seen to be competing with the key venues, the big super clubs or the very cool clubs in the city. So I started working mainly in suburban venues where I was able to tryout so many different ways of operating, without attracting too much attention from the incumbents in the system that could have knocked me out of the industry practically at the start.

Orren: Sure, it is doing a lot of risk to tests and keeping yourself under the radar while you are doing that learning.

David: That second thing is, it was keeping myself under the radar, and I remember one of agents spoke to me when the company was about four or five times the size of their company, but mine was still contracting work to us thinking that we were this tiny little company. And he said to me, "are you really super big? " And I went, "yeah." And he was like, "you didn't tell me." And I said "no you didn't ask." And that company was then sold in probably a moth of that conversation because the owner realized that the market control that we had generated by cooperating was not something that he was going to be able to compete against so he took the opportunity to hand the business to someone else before it went downhill really fast. And it was so interesting how much control we were able to create in the market. Without having a control structure for our DJs.

Orren: Sure, do you think that was because you were reversing what the existing structure was in the marketplace, and providing value to those entertainers that wasn't currently being on offer?

David: I don't think the statement of "providing something that wasn't on offer" would be accurate because I don't think we were providing something of higher value

to DJs and a lot of the DJs that we trained didn't end up working for us and a lot of the were advised not to work for us because we were designed to work with a specific type of DJs and specific type of host and a specific type of community creator. Not everyone. It was designed to be not better but in the incumbent system, it was designed just to be different.

Orren: And you were the only one that was doing that in South Australia at the time?

David: Yeah.

Orren: Can you talk a bit about who you are where you have come from? Do you do quite a lot of work in the Scout? Do you think that background or your university education had much to do with trying things differently or trying things that were taken from different industries and applying it to the one that you are operating in?

David: I had ever really thought about that but now that you mentioned it, particularly the Cadet core of growing up in a command and control structure and seeing that evolve over the period of sort of 20 years, seeing this massive shift in military tactics toward creating an organic structure where information flowed up, not down. And I really took that to heart and then I was fortunate enough to be involved in studying evolutionary biology in university and I was able to create significant insights for myself at least between the things I was learning in evolutionary biology and have that model apply into economics.

Orren: Ok, so it has been a about a 10 year period between working at the Synagogue, trying out a lot of different things, with many different venues until coming in contact with the Dog and Duck. It was probably around 2006 that you and your team when in there and then an impressive renovation was done. From that point on the centre, took about 12 months to then build to venue capacity on both Friday and Saturday nights, can you give me a synopsis of how you came across the venue owners at Dog and Duck and how you had the conversations with them to go in and start working with them?

David: Yeah, so the way Wally Hodgkin the owner there is a highly experienced hospitality person who had pooled his assets to take the venue that essentially looked like a condemned building when he started with it and he completely rebuilt it to create something that he hoped to become first of all a highly frequented at hotel during the

day and secondly, he hoped that he would be able to make a lot of extra money by creating a night club of experience on the Friday and Saturday night. I was introduced to him by a security guard and someone who had worked with him at some of his venues. So, I met with Wally and be made it immediately very clear to me that he would really need my help on the nightclub side of things because he that wasn't his forte. Much older guy, in his day, he was an excellent, I guess a promoter, I'm not sure what you would call them back in his day but he was quite well known for arranging excellent parties but he was now at an age that he was not in touch with the youth so, he asked our team to come in based on the performance that we had created at the venue right next door called Red Square so we had taken over with Red Square from the outset and built that venue to the busiest venue in Hindley Street over the period of about 2years. And he asked if he could do the same thing there and I said to him "I thought there was about a 30 percent chance and that was the highest probability that anyone was going to be able to honestly offer him" by comparing success of other teams with the events they would do. We had been running at about a 30 to 40 percent success rate creating user communities that was going to sustain.

Orren: Ok. So once you had come across Wally, what was the conversation like with him convincing him that you could perform and also once that conversation had happened, what did it look like during that prelaunch period and then at launch period?

David: I'll explain the cause of it that led to us being invited to be there because it is not as simple as walking in, in a suite and making a good pitch. In this case, I'm not saying that is always the case. But we had a track record that we had previously done had been significant and successful. He was inviting us to be involved based on a previous success. So he seen what had been done based on Red Square and at The Office Bar and quite a few suburban venues and based on that previous success he was asking if he could have an attempt to replicate that style of success in his venue. So it wasn't really a pitching and convincing situation. It was much more a reputation based situation. That reputation that had been built up over ten years of just creating reliable and sensible results for people and the other side of it I think might had influenced was that he had also seen us fail and seen how those relationships had been preserved after a failure and I think that was important to him knowing that these things aren't a certainty and that he wanted to work with someone who if things weren't going well

would be cooperative in a hand over process and would be willing to accept if things weren't going well and that it would be opportune to someone else a crack at the titles.

Orren: Sure, so you are coming from a place that have been known, a place of credibility and also place of trust if everything went sour that could be maintained and turned around.

David: Yeah. And I suspect that weighed Wally's mind more heavily than anyone because he had been in the industry for so long.

Orren: So, once you had that conversation, it sounds like there was a quite a bit of a foundation of trust there. Once that had to be created what was the very first thing that you did within that venue and I guess some calling that the pre-launch period.

David: Yes, I still remember walking through the venue. Wally spoke to use before he made any kind of decision about how he was going to design and build the venue. So, we walk into the front door and it was kind of a half of off its hinges and I remember stepping straight into probably a foot deep of pigeon poo and all floor boards are broken up and you could see what squatters had been living there from time to time. The venue with essentially a wreck and there was not aware of level of funding that Wally was creating to renovate the venue but then when he explained the funding level that had to renovate and that he had like my input into to how to create a venue so that could work both at the hospitality venue servicing a busy street during the day and also at the night club at night. Then I was able to work with him and we were able to create a venue that was able to perform that due function.

Orren: so at that point before they had done a renovation, what were the types of things that you were doing within that venue?

David: Well, within the venue we were looking into how to utilize the space. And it was luxury that we hadn't been afforded before. Was to say, what is the optimal room sizing that we want? Because we actually had a unique opportunity to create psychologically optimal room sizes and people would say, "why would the Dog hold better and Reds?" As we were able create optimal room sizing and also optimal room facing from the street. And because we were able to get those two things right, it massive difference for the people inside because we were able to create room sizes that

made people feel comfortable with quite varying numbers of people within them. And, secondly we were able to create a flow of traffic so that we were able to always have people in that front window so when people looked into the venue, even if there were 20 or 30 people inside, it looked full and people would come in. And that was a huge opportunity that Wally afforded us. And a big part of the strategic success was to be able to create the foundation for a venue that first of all lets itself feel really good inside regardless of what was going on in it and secondly a venue that looked really full from the street with even if there were 20 or 30 people inside.

Orren: Sure, so it is a stage roll up of the different rooms opening up at various points throughout the night. Because that venue is quite large – two story, multiple rooms.

David: Being able to design a venue from scratch that was designed to fill up from the front to the back to the top, and had the room sizing optimized around that and also being having direct, the visual from the street. I couldn't ask for a better opportunity than that. There is no better opportunity than that when you can get to design that from scratch.

Orren: So what kind of key metrics were you monitoring during that period?

David: Well, one of the things is that Dog and Duck wasn't from the outset designed to be packed to the boards, pay a lot of money to get into venue. The initial strategy was to provide Wally to be ability to generate cash flow on the weekend and it wasn't my immediate vision to say "ok let's open this venue up and pack it full of Hindley Street eighteen to twenty five year olds", that certainly wasn't the strategy. In the first instance, we said "let's open the door and see who comes in and likes the place first." That that for me is the fundamental of creating a community, is that it is like if I'm going to grow a certain type of crop in a certain area, if I don't have 100 years of rainfall and soil data then probably one sensible things for me to do is just throw 100 different seeds out on the ground and then see which ones crop naturally with the natural rainfall. This is a very organic approach in terms of going, who will naturally come into this venue and what demographic of people would naturally flow into this venue without us having to do any marketing at all.

Orren: So you are basically doing a product for the people that are there rather that forcing on a product to a demographic that you want to be there?

David: Yeah absolutely. That's the organic community growth model and that came from something that I learned during my time at Flinders Uni studying evolutionary biology was that the things called Seral Progression were things that naturally grow and certain things grow out at the start aren't there when the community is fully established. But if you watch a community as it forms you can predict what sort of end community might be forming one step at a time by saying the things that first colonize.

Orren: Ok, so what sort of resources do you have at this time and how you were you to focus them on the areas that were wining and the areas that were not and I guess the community creation that you are talking about was organic but how did you steer that or not steer that in the direction that was naturally going.

David: Well, when we first started, I was very fortunate – Daniel Toop who manages Griffin Alliance in Melbourne offered to supervise the venue which meant he was doing the DJing from the very first night. And what that meant was we had somebody in there that had intelligent and trained eyes and ears to create some sensible metric tracking for us and to actually see what was going on and report in weekly. And help us deploy some basic metric tracking systems in there. The most important metric that we were tracking when we first started wasn't a number that a lot of people would think of, it is a post code. People think of metrics like how many people come in or how long did they stay or how much money did they spend per head and those sorts of things. Often, what was really important to me in the first instance was "where do the people who come here live?" Something that we found out very quickly was that a lot of the people lived at Flinders University. Which was fascinating to me. They didn't go to Flinders University, they lived there.
And so, that gave us a really big early clue about the demographic that was going to be naturally coming in there.

Orren: Ok, was there anything that you did with that data?

David: The main thing that we did with that data was to get curious and to do a drill down. And say, "Who are these people with this post codes?" Let's find them in the venue. And then Dan's task was to get to know some people and find some people that were residents at Flinders University and then find the circles that they were associating with the outside the university.

Orren: Right, and would that be within the night club scene or would that be just in general

David: Absolutely not within the night club scene. We wanted to know who these people were, and what they did. We weren't interested in going who do they go out with on Saturday night, we wanted to know what do you study, what sports do you play. These sorts of things were very important to us and we wanted to know particularly what do you do on Saturday night when you don't go out clubbing. That was very important to us as well.

Orren: Ok, so it was really getting to know that person as a person rather than just number that was walking through the door.

David: So when I'm talking to my staff, it was important to me to explain to them first of all what phase of the development the community is in and if it is in phase one which is the phase we are discussing now, we are really interested in what is the archetype, what is the person who is absolutely typical of the native user. The user who you really don't have to market to, who will just walk into a venue like that as say "wow, I have found my place." If I can have every member of my team know what exactly what that person may look like and how they might speak, the things they might say during a conversation, it really helps my staff to find out who the key community people might be to move into the second phase of developing a club.

Orren: So, Dan was really on a reconnaissance mission to find those people. Find out what really made them tick and then communicate all that information to the rest of the people that we were working there and say "find more of these people and less of people aren't that are fit that same demographic."

David: Yeah, absolutely. To paint that picture to the rest of the team as we started to deploy more and more staff into the venue. They knew when they spotted that sort of the person like that and greet them as they came through the front door, to really make the time to get to know that person and it was never really for us about pushing away the wrong sort of person. A Climax Community which is a community which is fully developed, naturally, has a space for the weeds to grow. So it's not worth worrying about spraying out the other ones. And that is one of the big differences between the model that I had in my mind of what a stable and dynamic night club community looks

like compared to what most of the I guess what we call the “Boom and Bust” night clubs that most people are used to, “this venues cool for six month on a Thursday and now this one is cool, this is the place to be on Saturday night and oh no we are going here now, because this is the new thing.” I was really interested in creating a stable state community that would endure over period of five to 10 years because that was dynamic and not a mono-culture.

Orren: So, just to discuss the few different things, the natural market, Dan as being the host of the night for lack of the better term, and also things that room set and a staged roll out of the physical venue. Was there anything else that you were doing during that first initial phase that really helped seed everything for the later stages?

David: One other thing that you mentioned which I haven’t really discussed, room set, absolutely fundamentals, so this is a things that we see in the middle of, in a mono-culture situation were the real is to get people so similar to each other but that I feel immediately comfortable in a volume that just makes the venue completely full so that there is a line-up. That is what we see in most night clubs – what we do is find out how to lay out a venue so that with the lowest possible number of people in there, people wouldn’t leave. So were able to create a situation where you might only have 10 to 20 people inside a night club that can hold 400 people, but most people wouldn’t leave. And that was really, really important to us to know how to do that. Because a night club is going to remain full for a long period of time in terms of on the night, and secondly a long period of time overtime, is still going to have ups and downs, so if it is a quite weekend around town even the busy club might not be full. And so it was very important to us to experiment wildly with how to layout the chairs, tables, where to put the DJ booth? All these sorts of things like how much lighting and how little lighting to use and also what are the genres of music to play at different times in order to make it a situation where the lowest number of people would leave even with the smaller number of people in the room.

Orren: So, you were given quite a big license to go out and experiment with room set lighting without investing a lot of money in infrastructure straight up and once you got it right, then you can go out and spend that money in investing in best room set?

David: The thing that was really, really interesting about that was, we discovered that usually the optimal room layout and optimum lighting wasn't the biggest or the best. At the peak of Dog and Duck, the lighting system of that venue was worth $875, the entire lighting for the main room was $875 worth of lights. We had tried more lights. We had tried more expensive lights. But the optimal lighting solution there was less than a $1,000. So, it was really interesting that once we stopped being in a situation where we were required to impress and started focusing on what actually causes people to stay in the venue most and we focused on the result rather than trying to be desperately impressive. We actually found some really good economic solutions for our business as well.

Orren: Ok, do you have time to discuss a handful of those?

David: Yeah, I mean absolutely. So, one of the things that we discovered was that module sound systems made a lot of sense for us than standard front of house P.A.s. So, some of the common wisdom in night clubs is that the sound in the venue needs to be absolutely the crystal clearest and the most powerful you can have. Because that would give people a real pop and a real wow when they walk in the venue and it will also impact on them emotionally. And what we found was that we were actually getting a better room hold using a low fidelity modular system. So that was really interesting. I'm still not absolutely sure why but what I suspect was that it was just different. So, people came into our venue and it just felt different from the other seven venues that they had been to that night. And that is one of the things that really stood out for me is that most of the venues that were created weren't the best venue, they were busier there because they were just different.

Orren: Sure, that seems like a very common thing throughout everything you have been saying until now. There is a common denominator that everything else has happened in the marketplace and then you are doing the opposite.

David: Yeah. And not necessarily the opposite because to me the opposite is also the same. So we saw a lot of people saw us being successful and either try to copy or do the exact opposite. And on of the things that I used to impress upon my team time and again is that just copying what someone else does is not differentiating us. But also seeing what someone doing and then presenting the opposite to the market is really

only intensifying the sameness of the market by creating a polarization. So, once again in nature what we see isn't the opposite. We see things thriving just because they have a slightly different strategy or something that is slightly different about them which means there are just not competing, it is not the opposite, it is just not competing.

Orren: Sure, ok. So then moving on to the next phase, what were you doing next within that lifecycle of Dog and Duck?

David: Dan came to me and said Dave, "We have a club here." And he said "you've got a great street view. We've got a very, very low thresholding venue because of the street view and the room layout that we got and we got a core community here that is really precise and highly loyal. But also their user base that they communicate with and interface with, first of all is very large and secondly it is not catered to on this street or really anywhere else on a Saturday night." As it turns out he was absolutely correct. And we started generating some phase two numbers. So in phase two we became much more interested in first of all how many people come in one week, were coming back the following week and also of the people that are coming in how many of those people we can have a communication with that causes them to bring new guests the first time. And what we noticed in this particular venue was we saw number we had seen before and we know this was a community that could build very, very quickly as long as we were willing to move with them and nourish them as they grew. So in phase two what we want to establish is, is the product we have something that people want to use a second time because if they don't then we are probably going to struggle and as we start to move into phase three what we want to start asking is, is this product is created or is the community around this product in a way has them want to tell people about it. Because if they don't we are going to wack a fair amount of advertising into this to get it moving.

Orren: And that is something you haven't done. And that is something you haven't done a lot of with most of your venues, just to throw in a ton of advertising behind it.

David: Yeah. And that for me has been the fundamental difference for us and has been very, very important in the success of a lot of our venues is that that, sure a Climax Community doesn't made to weeded but also a Climax Community doesn't want to be fertilizing either. Because when we start fertilize a community like that just helps grow

the weeds because a Climax Community doesn't need that. It is just artificial and it doesn't help nourish it.

Orren: So, can you give me an idea of how you were tracking people coming in for the first, second, third, fourth times and what were some of the tools that allowed you to do that and also allowed you to communicate with them if you weren't using advertising?

David: Absolutely. So, we were building some very, very specific and tailored internal infrastructure. We bought an application called Microsoft Excel and we also upgraded into this amazing CRM called Google Documents. And using those amazing custom built, customized fully functional CRM and CMS systems we were able to give someone a plastic card with a number on it. So then we were able to, when people bought the plastic card, we were able to write that number down on a piece of paper, compare all the numbers that we got for one night to the week before and see how many of them matched. And we continued using that system in one form or another pretty much the whole time. There was never a time when we found any of the digital systems to be particularly superior to that because we weren't dealing with a more that say 1,500 people in a night, of whom, maybe three or four hundred might be a member. So we did try to use some digital systems in some other venues but they really didn't for the amount of time and money mucking around we spent building them and customizing them and getting angry when they broke on the night. It wasn't any better for us that Excel and plastic printed cards from a standard printing company with numbers printed on them.

Orren: Ok. And what was some of the tools that you used to stop people from leaving the venue?

David: This was where we come back for circle and rely on the Alliance. When DJs and hosting staff are all feeling threatened, they don't share in the community spirit and they don't connect each other to each other's loyal people. And they don't work together to create a community experience. The DJ who is finishing wants to play some really, really bad song in the venue so the next DJ would have a harder time looking good because if the next DJ looks good then maybe then the previous DJ is going to look bad and lose their set. What we did was we made very, very clear to both the

venues and the DJs that once a DJ was incumbent in a set, there was a set of metrics that we would review that related specifically to their ability to hold people at the venue during the set and no other metric would be used. And no venue manager could say "Oh I don't like that set", we don't care about that and I can remember some managers that became quite mad when they became hired because it became a choice between me and them. Because they would say "this DJ is not right" and my attitude was, "well their metrics are right so they stay." And that wasn't just because the DJ might be performing well, it was because if we were constantly using a consistent system that would require a style of performance that held people in the venue and we refused to fire someone, he was abiding by that system and using it, it created an environment where all of the DJs were pulling together to try to hold the maximum people inside the venue all night. So when all the DJs are pulling all together to hold as many people inside the venue from the moment you open the doors to the moment you finish, it creates some very, very interesting results that we don't see in other venues. For instance, the standard wisdom is that you've got to have a two hour rotation; you've got to play all the big hits every two hour. Now what we found that at most of our venue we could have a five or even a six hour rotation, so you wouldn't see the same song within six hour period. Even a big winners that you hear on the radio all the time. So the idea was that all of the DJs would get the play all of the big hits and that was the only way to make it fair for them and make them all happy. But we were able to create a situation where a huge amount of more musical diversity over the night. What that meant was that we were able to then create a huge amount of less musical diversity from week to week. And create a situation where we had quite a predictable offering of music week on week on week so people could always go for the sort of sound they wanted week on week on week but they weren't forced to listen to the same songs every two hours. And that meant that we could create a longer term consistency in product but creating less repetition.

Orren: So you talked about how you keep people in that venue, what about in reverse, once people are actually in there, how do are you then pulling people in? You are not using advertising. What are the tools and metrics that you were using to get more people who are attending that venue and then grow it?

David: There was no point in trying to fill up a leaky boat. So in phase one, what we are seeing is where are the holes? What is the lowest number of people that we can

have inside this venue and still hold people? So in phase one, we stuff all the holes and we found the way to create this boat as something that people don't just naturally like that. And in the second phase we ask the question, "who comes here and what do we need to offer to cause those people to have those people to come back the second time." And that whole focus of having people to come back the second time, is the absolute core of the second phase. Some what we are monitoring there is simply if they came in this week and inviting them to come back in the second week. So when someone would come in one way and would get the details and then actually seeing from those people that had come in for the very first time, we would have a special system for inviting them back in for the second time, and actually monitor how many of them who then come in for the first time in one way, would then come back the next week. And we were constantly building that percentage so say if 20 people came in for the first time this week and 30 came back next week then that's a 50 percent return rate. So what we would try to do every week was to have more people return for the second as of the percentage of the people that came in. If that number was lifting we knew that our product knowledge in terms of the customers that we had native in the venue was building. Because people who were come in for the first time, and then come back again. This was a very simple rough and ready system. Because we weren't tracking if someone who was coming in for the third, fourth and the fifth time. All that we were interested in tracking in that second phase was that if someone comes in once and we deliver them the experience on the night and have them come again, and is that number going up? If that number is going up at phase two, then we know that we are building that product. So when we come in to phase three and we now know that we have a boat that doesn't leak and we know that we have a product that people are going to use for the second time so when we finally do call someone to come in for the first time they are actually going to come back. Then in the third phase we do what most venues do in the first phase. And we go out and say, "Let's attract new people into this venue." But the difference though is that when we attract these people in for the first time, we are confident that they are going to return. And secondly, we don't need to do the broad scale marketing. And this works as a bit of a virtuous cycle at this stage because what it means is that someone from within our user community is going out and inviting someone new in who is similar but not exactly the same but within the same demographic. And that then provides the person who we know is very likely to return and that person then becomes potentially another promoter for us. So this

creates this virtuous cycle that as you can see that is something that can then naturally and organically snow ball without any advertising and the beauty of that is that it allowed us to move into that third phase were we have this self-perpetuating cycle without other venues noticing that we were doing it because what be normal when any other venue wanted to busy was to advertise publicly which would then therefore attract the attention of the competitors who would then also advertise and that would both end up in the mediocre result. While with this system we were able to grow quite explosively without attracting the attention of our competitors.

Orren: I see, so how did you move people up that loyalty chain?

David: So, once again Occam's Razor is just my life. Can this be done in a Google Document? If it can be done in any simple way that has even one less step let's do it even if it is not quite accurate, we are not quite sexy, not quite as good. So the system was very, very simple. Someone comes in for the first time and we'll just put a little tag on them of which we'll have their phone number and we can send them a text message. If someone shows that text message, then they can become a member with a card. Then it was very simple for my staff because once we have a card if they see that card coming back into the venue to begin a communication with that person of would you like to become an ambassador to what we are doing here? Would you be willing to share the experience you have here with few friends and bring them back, because if you would, we would really like to celebrate that with you and make you feel special. So it is a very simple, single flag system, very much nominal. You see a text message, is it this text message, if it is this is a person who is returning for the second time. This person needs to be given a card. Then if the person has a card it is just this conversation that do you want to be a part of our community in a more active way? And that was it. Not very complicated at all.

Orren: Ok. So beyond the night how were you using things like social media to keep that conversation going?

David: Particularly, at Dog and Duck social media was a real boon for us. It was the time that Facebook chat was just becoming the way to spent time. So you just lie on your bed, hung over and tired or procrastinating from your study or avoiding your spouse or I don't know what people do in their homes but just jump on Facebook and

just get some head space. What we did was we paid someone in our team who loved to sit at home doing that a bit of cash to sit on there as the Dog and Duck instead of them self. What was really, really important as these were the staff of Dog and Duck. People who were there every Saturday night. So, picture would pop of a person who they would be having a conversation with, and they would know this person and so for hours and hours we would sit on that chat and would just chat to people and would just talk to them and the objective of Facebook chat for us was never, ever, ever to try to convince someone to come into our venue. In fact there was nothing in there scripting or all around that. All we ever did on Facebook chat was just talk to people and ask them questions and become interested in them and learn things about them and what that allowed me to do was to pay my staff a small amount of money to enjoy what they were doing anyway on Facebook chat. But to get to know all the people that were actually coming to the club and also one thing that was really important was that a lot of people who really wanted to be part of that club experience were being introverted and on the night they wouldn't necessarily come out of the comfort zone and have chat to this big DJ guy or this girl on the front door who everyone seems to think is supper popular or whatever. But you get them one on one on a Facebook chat and then chat to you for two or three hours then you and you find out all this stuff about them that you already supported in the community and that sort of stuff, so it gave us access to a whole demographic of people that were once again different to the people that were targeted by everyone else.

Orren: Ok. So it is really a different communication channel for a different personality type that wasn't being catered for on the night or in the market.

David: This is a good example of not, this is not a better. If you are in night club, these are introverted, quite people, they are not better in terms of building a community. They are actually worst because they are a bit shy and they won't necessarily go out of their comfort zone as much and it takes them a long time to pluck up the courage to invite people to their birthday and you know all that sorts of stuff. Not only to pluck up the courage, are they less bothered by rocking up with just only two people instead of 10. They don't take validation, so this demographic that we are tapping into on Facebook chat was different. It was definitely not better. And it was just different and no one else was really tapping into them.

Orren: Did you find on the nights that those people were of valuable contributors to that community?

David: Most people's view of a night club is accurate. It is a whole a lot of narcissistic extraverts feeling great about being out in this amazing crazy atmosphere and being big and loud and wearing amazing things and that sort of stuff and these people are not bad people, don't get me wrong, those people are just normal great cool people like anyone else. But what it creates is a mono-culture. And introverted people are really intimidated by an environment like that. And the community at large is made up of all different types of personalities. But a night club quite often isn't welcoming to people who are a bit shy or quite or who really enjoy music and enjoy dancing but don't enjoy people dancing all over them and that sort of stuff. Or, people who really like to go out and socialize, but prefer having a little bit of a chat with friends not running over them on a dance floor with their tongue hanging out. So what we were able to do was we were able to empowered by those sort of people and create a club environment where yeah, there was a dance floor but there was also there was a huge amount of bar area where people who were just sitting around and having the conversation that they wanted to have all week but they hadn't been together with their friends and created an environment where some of these introverted people were the social leaders within the group and therefore people that were a bit more shy or people who were a bit more introverted who would just like to sit around and have a conversation in a group of two or three people were able to access that experience within the club environment which they weren't getting at a super club or super cool little niche club.

Orren: And that is because the staff of that venue were willing to take the time to go out and have conversation with them whether it is on the night or through other communication channels.

David: Well, the thing is that these people wouldn't necessarily even speak to us on the night. They come in and go "Hey how are you going?" and then they just want to come in with their two or three friends. But they took their validation from a deep and meaningful conversation with two or three of their friends. Now that for most venues would be suicide to have these shy people sitting around the bar and chatting. What it allowed us to create was a diverse and interesting experience for a board set selection of the community where people didn't feel board but allowed then to be a little bit of

extraverted than they wanted to be, but if they wanted to chill back and not be out there and running around crazy, they could actually retreat back to the bar or to the sitting areas and have a meaningful conversation and a chat through six in the morning. And that was one of my greatest pleasures. Particularly at Dog and Duck, was to see the groups of people that would come in and they would not set foot on the dance floor all night but they would be in the Pokie room which was a huge benefit for us at the Dog and Duck where there was this Pokie room and we would do $20 worth of trade in there. People were just sitting around there and having conversations for two or three hours on a Saturday night. But inside the venue, nice and warm, you are drinking and having a great time but connecting really deeply with people, not just kind of running around on the dance floor and doing that surface connection. But really deeply connecting with one another.

Orren: Ok. That really makes sense. You built a venue that has a very broad community that are bringing new people within that social structure back into the venue. Once you are at that stage what do you do from there? Do you how do you capitalize on that venue success?

David: Yeah. So, one of the things that is not obvious, is that once a venue has a self-perpetuating community inside it that is not there because of the venue, but is already an independently coherent community is that that community is transferable. So, most venues when they get full, the promoter is in a bind because they can't go start up another venue without dragging that mono-culture across to this other venue. Which means they kill the initial venue. So the biggest problem promoters have is that they can only have one busy venue one at a time. And this creates an argument between the venue owner who wants to maximize bar trade and the club promoter who wants to get people just moving through the venues as quickly as possible, getting as many people to pay that door charge. Whereas what we were able to do was we were able to fill a venue up and just leave it full of people drinking hard inside the venue so that the people inside the venue were providing good cash flow for the venue and also having a good time but then with the overflow we were able to seed that community, that same community out into the other venue. A good example of that was having the Ramsgate full and over flowing on a Friday night but back in the graphic wasn't really going anywhere on a Saturday night and that's how we seeded the Duke of York. We were saying to these people, we know you are not going to go to the Ramy on a Saturday

night, because that is a band night for thirty plus. So the Ramy doesn't lose anything, your coherent community that would be at home at the Ramsgate or at the Sandbar or anywhere, would you be interested into pop into town on a Saturday night? We asked them that question and they said "we are in town anyway on a Saturday night", so we said well, come into the Duke and that is where we take a phase three community that's fully thresholding and fully comfortable on a Friday night and then we seed that into phase one into another venue on a Saturday night and just see how it takes. And in the case of the Duke of York, it took root and flourished into a venue that was a couple of thousand people were coming through there at its peak on a Saturday night. Very, very large suburban community. All frequently in the venue in the city on a Saturday night.

Orren: What do you think some of the most important take always or lessons learnt that you have got from this process of learning and what would you do different next time you would go into a venue?

David: Probably the biggest learnt thing for me across the board is different is better than better. So for instance we have a business that brides source good quality DJs for weddings and we created an accountability structure where the DJ's future work depends on doing good performance which is just different to what everyone else offers in that market. And it is not better. It is not a better system. It is a different system. And in all of the business opportunities that I look at, I take a little bit of a different approach that most other people look at and go is this sufficiently similar but tweaked differently. Whereas I think most people when they are looking for the new, new thing, I get so frustrated when people talk about, what is the word, it gets me so angry that I blocked it out of my memory completely, they talk about disruption yeah disruption. To me that just seems like the antithesis of creating something lasting and organic. And I'm not saying that disruption isn't a phenomenon that is spectacular. But for me as a business person, the idea of disruption when I'm creating to create something substantial for another human being to take advantage of and to make their life better, that doesn't seem to me like a natural way to be going about it. Yes spectacular. Yes really cool and yes may be instructive for people in a start up situations. But for me I don't ever look at disruptive businesses and ever want to get involved with them and I'm really interested in businesses that are just slightly different but in a way that is going to differentiate them enough that they can take root in a completely different way to the incumbent in the situation. The other good thing about that, that I like is

that the incumbents aren't intimidated by a business that just has something that is slightly different about it, and that doesn't hold itself out to be disruptive. And I think that is really, really important because I see so many businesses get crushed by the competitor.

Orren: This is a good segue. Under what circumstances should someone try to create one of these community driven type products? And on the flip side when is this just not a good model for them? And how could they get some really good mileage out of using this community driven approach?

David: What I'm look for in a business that I know that can work in this model, first of all it is a short generation times. So for instance this model would not work for selling washing machines. Because the cycle for customer conversion for a washing machine is about 20 years. So something like a night club is really, really good because in a night club situation every single year, has a new user community, that is fresh out of high school, turning eighteen keen to check out the night clubs. So a short user generation cycle where you are constantly seeing new cohorts is really, really important. So for instance something that is age based is really, really good. So if you have got a product that people use only when they say, acne products would be a good example. That is something that people use for certain numbers of years and then stop using them. So this model would work for an acne product. And it would work online or offline. Because that has a short generation cycle. It is something to you all of the sudden need and all of the sudden don't need. And you try to create a community around that that endures overtime because as people leave on the back-end those people in the middle are recruiting people on the front-end. Does that make sense? So, that is the number one thing for this model is short generation times. Unless you want to be an entrepreneur for 230 years, you are not going to be able to do this with a washing machine.

Orren: What would be the immediate first steps or next actions someone would need to take if their product fits into a category that is very close to that?

David: So the first action to take I think is just flipping the script on what you are doing and going "who is doing this really, really well, and how can we be a little bit different? Not the opposite, but how can we be a little bit different?" So, I'm thinking

in acne space, it could be something as simple as a different type of applicator. That to me, if someone came to me and said “I have this new acne solution that is better,” I’d be well like “that is interesting go away from me.” But if they say, “hey Dave, I’ve got this new bottle, for the same acne cream” that would probably actually interest me more because a revolutionary new acne formulation is first of all something a bit controversial to bring into the market, it is going to be something that has investment on the front end as a pharmaceutical. But a new applicator or just a new container, to me that is something that we can very quickly deliver to market and go “hey we are in phase one.” Let’s just see who naturally pulls this off the shelf? Let’s just put up a landing page and go “hey check it out.” This is the same stuff that you have been using for the last 20 years, now come in a brush instead of a tube. Let’s just pop a landing page up and see if people tap on that and give us their details. That is something we can do for $600. We don’t need to get a new patient.

Orren: Awesome. Look Dave, thank you very much for your time and hopefully I’ll chat to you soon.

David: Yeah. Look forward to it.

“How To Build And Market A #1 Featured iTunes Mobile App, Get 1,000,000+ Downloads And 10,000,000+ Plays In 2.5 Years…”

In this interview you’ll learn how to build and market a #1 featured iTunes mobile app and get 1,000,000+ downloads and 10,000,000+ plays in 2.5 years. We discuss how to:

- Identify target audiences and create compelling apps;
- Produce great looking user interfaces and a logical user experience in app design and creation;
- Balance the quality of an app both in terms of production, game play, market research, making a game people want and distribution and marketing;
- Launch an app and what makes a launch successful and how to bring that learning into subsequent launches;
- Hack app store distribution, get featured and what works and what doesn’t;
- Monitor the correct vital metrics during the launch;
- Focus your resources on the areas that are winning and those that are not;
- Get your apps featured on niche and major blogs and websites;
- Utilize your networks for distribution ;
- Capitalize on an apps s success;
- Determine what to do differently next time based on takeaways and lessons learned;
- Think about a step-by-step process for app creation and distribution for new ideas;
- Decide when you should try to create and distribute a popular app and when you shouldn’t;
- Get started with immediate next actions for create and distribute a popular app;
- And much, much more…

David Truong is the Founder and CEO of educational games company Redu.us (Previously Broccol-e-games and Bitzerland.) Redu.us creates educational games on iOS devices and had more than 1 million downloads, with games being played more

than 10+ million times around the world. Titles include Newton, Sinkers, Maths with Springbird and Educating Eddie. David is the Co-Founder of Creative Coffee International which is a network of monthly events designed to connect & inspire creatives and an organiser and facilitator for Startup Weekend. Previously he was head of business development at App.io. In a previous life David tutored kid's maths and physics, founded a vocational training company, and worked with schools and teachers to integrate new technologies. David loves learning and helping others to learn.

Orren: Hi Dave. Welcome and thanks for making the time to talk today.

David: No problem. Nice to be here.

Orren: I've known you for a long time now; I really want to keep this into you of with you talking about who you are and a bit of your background. And specifically at the point of Startup Weekend Melbourne and how that got you started on your journey? For example "Maths with Springbird", "Educating Eddie" and the "Broccol-e-games" brand. And then how you moved on to "Angle Cube" on to "Startup Chile", moving to San Francisco and "App.io". and some of the other apps you did like "Sinkers" and "Newton" under the "Redu.us" brand.

David: All those feel like quite a while ago, I think two and a half years ago, or about three years ago, when we started on our "Startup Weekend" in Melbourne. I suppose that was a Hackathon essentially over the weekend. So, I went to Melbourne, met with the team there and we created this prototype of Maths with Springbird. Which is basically a little bird cartoon character that would jump up the trees to collect worms as you answered arithmetic questions correctly. From that event we won some sort of prize. I can't remember what it was. But we won some prize from it and we decided to keep going as a team. There was four people initially. Eventually one person dropped off due to work commitments. And then from Startup Weekend we decided to apply for Angel Cube and a few other accelerators in Australia. We got accepted in two and we decided to go with Angel Cube because it was based in Melbourne and two of the guys were based in Melbourne already. So, I made the move out to Melbourne to Angel Cube as an accelerator. Basically gives you I think 20,000 for ten percent of the company with network and resources and rather a structured program from over a three month period. From there we completed the Math for Springbird product and released it. We had a quite a good launch. I think about ten or twenty thousand downloads on the first week that we launched it and then as like most startups we had some co-founder issue and I guess us all within management. So, basically what happened was, I ended up taking over the project. Which at the time was called Broccol-e-games. We got accepted to a program called Startup Chile. Which is a government funded incubator in Chile. Where they basically give $40,000 dollars equity free. So, we continued that program for six months, produced a few more games and few more products. And once we finished that, I moved up to San

Francisco. By that time, Broccol-e-games turned into some sort of like a lifestyle business, I would say, that was making revenues, making profits. But it wasn't scaling as fast as and as quickly as I would want for a Silicon Valley based start up. So, I decided to join a friend start up that were coincidentally also from Angel Cube, called App.io. So, that is when I worked in Silicon Valley with App.io as Head of Business Development.

Orren: Can you talk to what App.io is, as well?

David: Sure, so App.io began as a developer portfolio. Sort of like, put developer landing pages of their apps. And part of the core technology of the developer portfolios was being able to have an interactive version of your app. So, you here is my developer page then here are the app I built and here is how you play with my apps. What I found was that people really didn't care about the developer profiles but they cared about the what the instructiveness of the app, of the demos. So, we basically ripped off that functionality out of the developer portfolios and we created a company around that. That was acting like an interactive technology. There was few products that came out of that. For example the product that we are passionate about was the ad tech product. Its having interactive mobile ads. Instead of a static video or static picture, you would have something interactive that would be an actual demo of the game. And there were other use cases for that as well. So, that was my role in the valley when I was there. And worked for them probably within about a year. And then after that I decided to move to London with my girlfriend which is where we are now based.

Orren: Can you give a summary of how Sinkers and Newton that you created? How they fit into the picture?

David: With Broccol-e-games, the focus with Broccol-e-games was always four to eight year olds. So, we created mathematical educational games, on iPads and iPhones for four to eight year olds. And that was always the focus. Hence, that is why the Broccol-e-games had the fun sort of child-like brand. And the games, Springbird and Educating Eddie, they are all around that concept, cartooned, friendly that kids would like it and parents would love it. And I always had an idea of… always had an incline that I wanted to created something more consumer friendly. Not just products towards children but also potentially adults or just the general consumer and just a

test to see how it would go. So, that is where Sinkers came in initially. That was sort of an experiment under a different brand called Bitzerland. That me and my colleague Diesel created. So, that was just focused on creating a casual game. Just as a test. Just to see what have we learned from creating educational games, what's our passion with design and user experience then use it to create a fun strategic game. And to see how we would do with it. So, we created that. And then Newton came after Sinkers. Newton was headed back towards education. But not just for four to eight year olds. It was probably trying to be more for general consumers. We were implementing the same sort of UX and UI and game gimmicks that we learned from Sinkers.

Orren: Excellent. So you mentioned just before that when you launched Math With Springbird, you did about 10 to 20 thousand downloads on launch and I know today, two and a half years later, a million plus downloads and just more than ten million plus players. What out of that suit of app products has been the most popular?

David: That is a good question. Depends who you are asking. If you are looking at a vanity metrics, from perspective of just raw amount of players, with a look at the raw amount of players of Sinkers. So, the Sinkers has been played a lot just because we were opened as a casual game. It started towards general consumer anywhere would pick it up and play it. But if you look at retention metrics which I think are more important, so that is how many people would reopen it, play it, and hence, it maintains a lot better. That has been Maths With Springbird. So, the level of success depends on what you are building or what you are aiming for. Sinkers has been monetized. Well, ad like it stopped at monetizing, but it had a very wide initial user base.

Orren: What was the monetization strategy used for Sinkers? And why do you think that worked?

David: Like I said before, Sinkers started as a test, so we really didn't know what we were doing. So, we were just experimenting with a lot of things. At first why we thought of doing it was having sort of like power-ups in the game. So, the whole concept was freemium games. my belief is that it should always be free for players that want to play these casual games. so, you can keep playing for as long as you want without having to pay. But you might get more difficult if you pay. But the way we

created the Leavers and the game mechanics was that the free players just could keep playing for ever essentially without paying for anything and if they did pay, it didn't give them a huge advantage in the game. So, there for there was no incentive for people to actually pay for another in-game uprights.

Orren: Was this something that you actually worked out during the actual launch and test or was this something that you had an intuition about prior to actually creating the game?

David: It has been both. I mean, it has been an intuition and sort of a thesis that we think that people would pay it this way and we did a bit of testing with people and they ended just keep on playing. We had a lot of internal discussions between us, between me and my colleagues as well and we decided to just leave it as is. To release it and see what happens. And when we released it, we found that, we got a lot of metrics in that said it just didn't convert well at all. And after we experimented with few other things, we said ok what if we just had in-game purchases for different modes in the game. So, everyone can play the game for as long as they want sort of arcade mode. But if you want to play timed mode or Zen mode which is sort of just play for as long as you want and then you pay a dollar for it. That had bit of a backlash count of people that downloaded the game, so that also didn't monetize too well. And yes the apps have a thing with people downloading things for free and expecting things to be forever. So, the people didn't quite like that there was an update and that they had to pay for the update to get to get the functionality of the update. Yes, and now we have just changed to an ad supported model.

Orren: Hopefully we can come to how the App Store works a bit later on in the conversation. I wanted to ask you about how you identified the target audiences for all you app products and I know that there is common thing that runs through which is education. Can you give me a bit of synopsis of what you were doing in terms of identifying those people but then also creating something that would match?

David: These were sorts of questions we were identifying. It is quite easy to detect from a business sense. And from an analytical perspective. I think where it should start is from a passionate perspective. So my passion was in education to begin with. So, it wasn't so much that I saw a market opportunity and went for it, it was that

I had a passion for education, work in schools doing technology integration and I saw where was the place that I could have the most impact. when I start targeting high school students, and why not high school teachers. There was a fundamental part that mathematical education was missing and that was fundamental mathematics, multiplication, addition, arithmetic and things like that. So, that is where it came from and that I went like ok normally children learn arithmetic when they are quite young. So, that is where the passion for my market was. And once I had that and then I said ok this is the market, let's create something around that area. So, I think all markets and all niches that you find will have some sort of market. There wasn't a specific that this market is worth billions of dollars and whatever else is worth more. It was the passion that there is a need or a problem that needs to be solved in this part of the market.

Orren: How did that insight then translate into how the app looked and worked? Because all of your apps look really great. The graphics and user experience is totally on the top-end of what is out there.

David: Yes, thanks very much. I think with games specially there is always a lot of intuition and a lot of gassings. So, there isn't much that we could do from a, you know, you can't ask a child what sort of game do you want to play? Or how do you think the game should look. You just sort of have to intuitively think. And that is what we did is sort of came up with this concept. We have had a number of other concepts as well. Well, we built many other concepts and when we played them ourselves, but when I played them myself, I just didn't like it. It just didn't stick with me. So, I just trashed that project entirely so, it is a lot of intuition and testing with myself and thinking would I have enjoyed it? If I enjoy it then we can ad in the part that would make a child enjoy it. And that might be making things more brighter and more funny parts and sounds. And things like that.

Orren: You've mentioned intuition a couple of time specially when we were talking about Sinkers from that perspective as well. How much of it has changed for those apps once they have been launched.

David: With Maths With Springbird and Educating Eddie, I think that was quite intuition based in those first sort of a games that we produced. But we just released

it. And a bit quite of a doubt that I had with things since I was quite new. And I guess, the customer education wasn't so high and there wasn't so much of a variety. So, students wouldn't know who. So, people went ok that is cool, let's play it and try it up. By the time Sinkers came around, the market changed quite a bit. So, with Springbird, from conception and creation to delivery, the user interface didn't quite change that much. I didn't go out to Federation Square in Melbourne with a prototype of this game. So, children and their parents let them play and watched them. And then simple things like, a child would try to press a key, do you know that but to press buttons while animation was happening, so I though take out the buttons while animation was happening. So they know that they can't press anything. Little UI things like that, it wasn't anything significant to the game mechanics. On the other hand with Sinkers, we developed that over a four or five month period. And we probably developed for about three and a half months, of going a certain direction for three and a half months and we kept testing it within the team and then one day we realized that it just wasn't working the game. It just wasn't working. It wasn't fun for anyone opening and sticking with it. So, at that point, we just decided to change it. We changed the game mechanics dramatically and the UI as well. So, that was the big thing before we had any customer for early testing. So, we changed it basically entirely. Probably 90 percent of it was changed within one month. And then once we released it to the public, it probably remained, I would say, about 90 percent of the game of what is now is how it was after that one month of us fully changing it. There might be very small tweaks to it like monetization and…With Newton, I released a Newton School's version and that was based on feedback where they wanted different timing instead of two seconds per say, they wanted to choose 5 seconds or 10 seconds. So, you get those small things and not so much UX or game mechanic changes.

Orren: Ok. So then in terms of game play production, market research, how much of that factors in do you thing as oppose to distributional marketing or is there sweet spot or balance between both of them?

David: I think that probably there is a sweet spot. From my experience it has been probably a sweet spot between both of them. There is half of the battle was distribution marketing and the other half was producing something that you love or other people love to play and engage with. Although I have heard other stories of where people were just fully focused on the product side. And if it is a fantastic product, then the

distribution would come with that. So, naturally all that works on the distribution of a product …

Orren: This is probably a good segue into distribution. Can you give a synopsis of some of the launches and why you think they worked the way they did??

David: One of the successful apps I intuitively feel is Math With Springbird for various reasons. What we did that went pretty well when we launched that was riding some market trends or trends just in hardware, and when you are working in iOS and with Apple, Apple make their money from pushing hardware and selling hardware, so when they are releasing new hardware like new iPads or new iPhones, they want us to be compatible. With that new hardware or if there is a new feature on a new ATA as part of iOS 8, you should use that if you can. So, a lot of the success for Maths with Springbird came with timing the release with the iPad Retina. So, when the iPad Retina released, we were one of the first education things to have a Retina version. That meant out game looked clear and crisp on the iPads. And then when the kid's category came up in the iOS we were one of the first as well to conform to the kid's category. So, that helped a lot. Riding those market trends or hardware trends. One of the things that I learned from releasing Maths With Springbird app applies to the other games was that with Maths With Springbird what I found was that it was, even though it was only in English, and the meta data and the description were only in English, there was still a lot of downloads from Russia, Europe, and a lot of none English European speaking countries. So that was quite interesting for us so with Newton, I decided to localize and translate the entire app based on the user's language settings on their device so that included the meta data and description the title and everything. And that resulted in pretty good success internationally with Newton. And I think Newton definitely wouldn't be as good as it is now… I knew that really Newton probably let's say maybe sixty percent of downloads and revenues comes from outside the Australia and the US. We've got quite a bit from Japan, Korea, and also other countries as well.

Orren: And that is because it has been localized for different geographies?

David: Yes exactly. It has been translated. So, it is not like Google translate. We actually hired professional translators to translate this phrase and this alert and these

things. I think that is really important specially these days, I think that is the market trend now, is that, there is something like 700 million iOS devices out there. Something like that, close to a billion iOS devices is out there and that is like all of the world. So, there is a lot of people that don't speak English that use these devices and they are looking for localize apps. So, that is one of the big trends that I see. So, that is what we applied with Newton. One other thing that if I can compare and contrast the launches between Newton and Springbird, it is a bit tuff because Springbird was free and Newton was paid. I think, those separate, paid and free categories are different beasts as well. I think in high side, if we only have experience in freemium, I'd probably try to stick with freemium, or if I had experience and knowledge in paid I'd stick with paid and just try to do one thing really well. I think it would probably be ambitious thinking that we could swap the models and test that is a whole different beast with its own different unique changes as well.

Orren: Ok that makes sense. What about Sinkers. Why did that get the volume of download and use within that small amount of time while Maths With Springbird may be took 18 months to go to where it was. What do you think the one thing that that was …

David: Absolutely. It is so I get some contacts on that. The Sinkers did really well. I think in the first one week we have about 200,000 downloads. So, it was massive compared to 10,000 plus on Springbird. The thing with Springbird, Springbird was launched and fated in Australia and New Zealand mainly, and quite heavily. Both markets are tiny compared to the US. With Sinkers it was featured and launched worldwide. So it's featuring in the US was that is a lot of reaches. 100x larger. And the UK stores are probably which is probably 50x larger than the Australian store. So, that made a big impact. Other part of Sinkers was that Sinkers is a casual game. A free casual game that buries downloading and buries entering really, really low. For someone to download Maths game, even for like Newton when we set it up free as a test, people just didn't, obviously not as many people downloaded Newton because it was a math game and you know when you are looking at games to be able to play, you are probably not going to download a math game. Unless you specifically need it for a reason. Obviously that is about the difference of Sinkers. It was just a different product category.

Orren: Sure, that is really clear. So, what was some of the bottom metrics that you were monitoring during some of these launches? Can you break some of those down? I know that you mentioned a few different things in passing, but what were the main ones that were jumping out for you? I know you were talking about retention, and the daily use and thing like that.

David: Before I jump into the metrics, it really depends on what stage you are at than different metrics matter. So, on the launch phase, launch time, for the first small start up, small indie developer like us the vanity metric that mattered and made us excited was just the download when we see that move and of course the revenue and I think revenues definitely came and we can still get a lot of revenues from free games, because people generally make in-app purchases on their first or second day of downloading the app. So, you do see revenues come in quite quickly. After the launch and all that sort of excitement is over, then the important metrics are retention, when retention is basically "how many people come back to you app after day one, day second, day 30?" or whatever arbitrary number that you want. The industry stand is like days you know, seven, thirty… and there is a lot of metrics that you can probably find on the internet that say like you should have X amount of retention after day thirty and that really depends on the category, say for games, if you want an engaging game like Candy Crush or Crashallcards or Angry Birds, you'd expect probably about 40 percent, I think to come back after day thirty. If forty percent come back after day thirty then you've got yourself a pretty successful product because a lot of the people wind up buying or converting. So, that is sort of the metrics that we look a bit as well and it will vary from product category. But we probably with Maths With Springbird and the education games were higher than industry standards. Just because ours were educational games that were downloaded by parents with encouragement to reopen them so their engagement was very high. So, yes the retention I think, retention, revenue, downloads just for the motivation within the company just keep our thing moving. We got retention and revenues are definitely the biggest ones.

Orren: Ok, so how did you focus your resources on things that were working and things that weren't? particularly on distribution and marketing and perhaps you could talk to some of those on the issue of downloads? What was the ratio between organic and stuff that were driven internally to get people to use those products?

David: well, people that I guess are new to the App Store and new to iOS and thing like that. I think a lot of people under estimate the power of these features. The power of feature is huge. It can overtake any sort of acquisition that you don't own unless you have like a hundred million dollar budget. So, the way we knew this and the way we measured was we released on something like a Tuesday or Wednesday and we got featured on Thursday or Friday. So we had it down instead of doing our own things to actually see the results. The acquisition efforts that we would make were tiny compared to what happened when it was featured. But for me, from my experience, the acquisition that we did that is sort of a long type things like personal forums or engaging the community, talking to teachers, talking to schools. Things that are more like long-tail marketing. So, that is what brings the downloads and engagement now and these days, especially with an education product, I have schools probably making purchases every now and then. Buying 100 copies here or two hundred copies there or like that. So, that does help me a lot but that is long-tail. So, that helps. The things that we tried. We did the Facebook ads. We tried Google ads. Facebook ads were by far the most effective for us. I think Facebook is doing a good job with their mobile ads. The great thing about Facebook ads, is that you can target exactly the customer. And we knew exactly who our customers were. We had mothers, children, staying home, trying these sorts of games or having this sort of activity on Facebook. So, that was really effective. So, that was the main thing that we did. We had an email blast. The email blast, though it went also a long-tail, it didn't have an immediate effect. But I think it help bring brand awareness.

Orren: So, besides the stuff that you did in between those couple of days of launch, would you say that the market dynamics things like the device and catering to those factors were the things that you hoped to get the Feature?

David: Yes, I would say, officially there is no real for success, for indie developers at least. There is no official process for featuring and well. So, that is sort of a black box. So, catering with certain hardware specs, it doesn't guarantee anything. Even contacting Apple doesn't guarantee anything. So, it is all a bit of sort of a guessing game and hoping and praying. So, it did definitely increase the probability that you will get featured. Catering towards that narrow new hardware or certain categories or features or something like that.

Orren: Excellent, so how did you capitalize on some of the apparent success like for example did you build an existing fan base? That gave you the ability to launch new products where they had been quite separate. I know you under the Broccol-e-games brand there has been a bit of continuity. How have you been able to capitalize on that? Or bring them into a cohesive hope?

David: Yes, under the Broccol-e-games brand, I think you are right that we do have some continuation of customers moving from Maths With Springbird, add and subtract with Springbird, Educating Eddie, maybe Newton down the line of that. So, there is some cross promotions between them. So, apps now in what we call a parents' corner which is basically the settings button, that is sort of above apps, so people can get there and download other apps. The thing with games, education games specially, but specifically games titles of which are children, you can't have ads showing to the children. So, that restricted our cross promotion a little bit. So, we had to put it behind what is called the parent gate. But with Sinkers, since it is not specifically tied up with children, we've been able to put up ads and other cross promotional things. So, with Sinkers we've been able to capitalize on that user base by putting sort of a button on the hi-bred screen, that is sort of a plus sign that says more games, so you can click that and it brings up Newton. If later on we release other casual free games, I think that would be a big drive up of downloads of casual free games. So, it is a big help to do that. I think from my conversations with customers and what not, what I found is there is a lot of organic cross promo that happens when people like the game and they go to the App Store and they look on the Broccol-e-games and see what other apps we have. I want to say, I've had other parents and users reach out to me and I suggest to them that hey have you tried this game as well? So, that sort of stuff happens as well. There is quite a bit of cross pollination. There hasn't been a lot that we pushed hard on. I've sent out email blasts to current users saying that hey we have just released this product and that this products have been released. So, there is awareness. Much of it is due to the nature of children's games. firstly, we can't track a lot of things that happen in children's games. and we can't advertise. Naturally we can't advertise.

Orren: Sure. You mentioned that you are planning on launching so many games in the future. Where are you at right now? What would be some of the main lessons

learnt? What are the takeaways to whatever you do next both in creation and distribution?

David: Besides the things that I've already said, like quality control and making sure that I love the game and the early testers love the game, the things that we are focusing our attention is that we are making sure that there will be a long period of testing between myself and the early testers. And, making sure that a month later I'll still be picking it up and wanting to play it. If I'm the creator and I'm bored of it then other people are definitely not going to pick it up again and not want to play it. The other thing I think will be the monetization model. I'll decide on whatever monetization model I think works best for the game and stick with it. With Newton, we dropped and changed quite a bit. The same with Sinkers. I think that was to the detriment to the game and to the brand and to users that had bought at certain moments in its lifetime. So, I'd choose a monetization method and then stick with it and just iterate to improve it. Yes, I'd just focus a lot on the product and the product experience. If there is another game, I think gaming is, specially gaming, is all about retention. And the fun aspect.

Orren: So, if you were to distil down almost like a step by step process from start to finish what would that look like or what would your thinking process be if you had a blank bit of paper and you want to create something new? How would you go about that in a kind of broad brush strokes?

David: For a new company?

Orren: Or a new product.

David: Let's say it is a new app in general. I'd probably find a problem that I'm passionate about. Or, something that annoys me. I've got another app that I'm producing at the moment that is not a game. It is just a general app. It is just something that I'd find useful that solves a problem for me. So, I'd find that problem and I'd just see what is on the market. And if this thing is out there, it doesn't mean that I won't do it. It just means that "how cool that" other people have that problem as well. So, it is a market validation in a way. Then I look at them and see what they are doing and most of the time I won't be satisfied with what they are doing because mine is quite specific. And, then I normally sketch out on my notepad, sort of sketch

out the UI and the UX and write out features. I sort of write all the features of how that app or game or product should be in a year or six months. And once I have that, then I step back and say what should I have in the first version? And I might cut it down to one core feature. That it just does one thing. And once it does that one thing, then we probably release it and it will be a prototyping stage. Then as friends and families will be able to test it and that is when I might add out other features if needed or I might release it as one focused product. So, that would be the main thing, that once it is towards being finished, I mean the UI and the UX and I'm happy with the experience and happy with some of the early metrics, and then I start to think about the marketing, the distribution and things like that. Because I've been in the game for quite a while, I have contacts at Apple and contact in various media outlets and things like that. So, that is where I start. Reaching out to them or letting them know. If I was just starting out and didn't have any of that, I would start that process a lot earlier. Or I'll be attending a lot more events and networking events and things like that.

Orren: Would you be an advocate of niche forums and niche groups that pertain to that problem as well if you didn't have those contacts.

David: Yes, absolutely, that will be quite question in process. So, as a prototype, if I have friends and families that this problem also applies to then they'll be in no doubt part of the beta testing group. If not, because a lot of times they are not, then I'll just reach out and apply my problem with communities and find people. And, if it is a problem that they have, and they will now be really passionate about testing it because they'll go "yes, that really helps me." And you are giving it to me for free. Absolutely. That is always a good tester as well.

Orren: Would you reach out to media or you've got contacts at Apple and or you start reaching some of the users that may want to use it? Is there any other steps in between that and submitting to the App Store?

David: Let's say I've reached out to some of the contacts and you say that in a months or two months in the future, that is sort of the release date, and you've got feedback, you've got feedback from Apple, and everything seems all good and gravy, and yes it is going to be launched and that is when I would definitely be looking at localizing and just translating everything. Translating doesn't take that long if you've built the

product in a way that makes it really marginal. It is basically ripping out all the text into a separate file and being able to just translate that file really quickly. So, I would definitely do that. Localize everything. Get the translations in to like the major languages. I think there are 12 major languages on the app store. You could probably do more as well. Probably 12 to at least 15 languages of localizing for. Because you can do that as the app is in review. So, yes, that is what I'll do. And, then just keep posting on to communities and forums and things like that. Let's say if you are planning to release your app in a month's time, you can submit you app, get it approved within a week, so they can be held, their developer held, for let's say three or four weeks. When it is in that developer held stage, you can handout coupon codes that allow people to download that app, so I'd give that to communities and give that to beta testers. So, it is sort of like a preview version. It is like it is unreleased but I still can go to the App Store and download and get it. I think that is a huge advantage and things that journalists love as well.

Orren: So, what circumstances or what type of a person do you should go down this path of creating and developing an app and under what circumstances and what type of a person should just give it a miss do you think?

David: That depends on how hard you want to jump into it? If you've got a quite a large risk appetite, and you are supper passionate about solving some problem and you have some savings, probably you could jump into it and just try to develop it and learn it. Depends on if you are creator as well. And if you have a team behind you. The other thing is, that if you are not a creator and you don't have the skills, you can go part time and if you have some money, you can pay for developers to help you develop the idea and they'll help you and do a good product development for you. I think for most people that will be an easily acceptable option to just fund it from their fulltime job and in their spare time just contribute to it.

Orren: Ok. So, if someone wants to go out and grab what they have listened to in this, what is the next one or two action steps that they should just go out and do immediately? To get a bit of traction and to get the wheels moving?

David: the first thing would be to write down a few problems that they are already passionate about. And that could be on producing a game it might be. I have five

minutes every morning when I'm at the bus stop and I have nothing to do. And all the games suck and I want something to do or a certain problem with that and that they are passionate about. So, writing that down and may be a few of those. And then once they've got some of those problems and thinking about does an app or mobile device suit this sort of thing. But those are probably the first few steps. Once I've got that, then they can start sketching out how it looks and how it feels and that is when you go to a developer or trying to mock it up yourself or create it yourself.

Orren: Cool. Thank you for making time to talk.

David: Thank you.

“How To Design A Physical Product & Raise $300,000 In Capital On Kickstarter In 45 Days…”

In this interview you’ll learn how to design a physical product & raise $300,000 in capital on Kickstarter in 45 days. We discuss how to:

- Identify target audiences and create a compelling product around that, both before and during a crowd funding campaign;
- Pick your reward price tiers, number of tiers, and rewards;
- Select rewards that attract resellers and retailers;
- Choose the length of a crowd finding campaign;
- Create stretch goals based on feedback and milestone;
- Design and develop a product concept which the competition are not supplying or are not supplying effectively;
- Find the balance between having a quality of product and marketing distribution;
- Demonstrate create credibility and make people believe you can pull the product off through video, copyrighting, graphic design and press kits;
- Identify vital metrics, such as view views, conversion rates and pledge amounts to monitor during the launch;
- How to spread your marketing message through networks, social media, paid ads, media and blogger outreach;
- Focus your resources on the areas that were winning and those that are not;
- Track where backers are coming;
- Capitalize on crowd funding success;
- Determine what to do differently next time based on takeaways and lessons learned;
- Think about a step-by-step process for creating, launching and marketing a physical product crowd funding campaign;
- Decide when you should try to creating, launching and marketing a physical product crowd funding campaign and when you shouldn’t;
- Get started with immediate next actions for creating, launching and marketing a physical product crowd funding campaign;

- And much, much more…

Joseph Chehade & Bartosz Kowalski are the Adelaide based Founders of Uamp. Uamp, or you amplify, is a link between your music player and your headphones. It's a tiny amplifier which can produce the kind of premium quality audio that you expect from hi-end audio equipment used by audiophiles and sound producers. Chehade studied a commerce degree majoring in marketing and Kowalski studied biomedical engineering and both DJed and ran night club promoters for Griffin Alliance. They then went on to create Umidi, the world's first custom DJ controller and went through Business SAs SAYES entrepreneurs program to develop the product. But after a failed attempt at crowdfunding the duo aged 28 used the lessons learned to create and launch Uamp – soul shaking audio for your ears – on Kickstarter out raising their initial goals by 1980% and ultimately raising $296,998 in 45 days for 3,623 backers.

Orren: Hi Bart and Joe welcome and thanks for making time to talk today.

Joe: No Problem.

Orren: So I've known you guys for quite some time now and I think we've reconnected when you were looking for a videographer for the project, so I kind of want to kick this interview off with a bit of background of who you both are and kind of specifically around your audio DJing and promoting backgrounds and then how that started your journey to where you are right now.

Joe: Actually my background in marketing just studied at Adelaide University and then I was doing that degree I was at Griffin Alliance doing DJ promotions or night club promotions and then I guess that whole atmosphere there which was very much I guess a little bit unorthodox but good in terms of the fact that it was a like a bit like a startup, transitioned into eventually doing our own startup which is what lead to this part of Uamp.

Bart: Yeah mine is a little bit different; I studied bio-medical engineering, so I come for an engineering background and I also worked with Joe and Orren, yourself. I mostly worked as a DJ so I wasn't really involved in the marketing aspect as much, but like Joe said the whole sort of startup culture and sort of just learning how the business worked just really opened up my eyes to what was possible so that's kind of I guess, where I sort of I developed an interest in developing my own business.

Orren: So post Griffin Alliance how did you come across the SAYES program and how did that fit into the bigger picture of the Uamp and then that startup before Uamp, Umidi?

Joe: That's when we first began doing Umidi, which was our first startup, basically we need help. We needed to get some advice and I guess the only thing available in Adelaide at the time was SAYES so that's how that came about and I guess we were just looking around for a way to get help and that popped up.

Bart: We're doing our first startup which a was a massive failure but we were looking basically at what Joe said. We just wanted to see what was available and at that time there wasn't really any sort of hardware startup community that we could find in Adelaide and the only real thing that stood out was the SAYES program so we just jump on to that and tried to get in. We actually thought twice before we get in.

Orren: Can you just mention what Umidi is, you mention that it was a hardware startup, can you just give a bit of background of what that product was.

Joe: Yeah sure so that was our 1st attempt in making a hardware product and putting it on Kickstarter and basically it was the world's first custom deejay controller so we designed a DJ controller that was on our end very easy to create different versions. So basically someone could come to our website and use our interface to drag and drop what things they wanted on their personal controller, they could choose colours, different layers of etching and all that short of stuff and then we would do it to order and then we would ship it to them and we put that on Kickstarter. Marketing wise it was a great success because it was shared everywhere. We got actually a lot more a big coverage than we did with Uamp but we just didn't really hit the right price of point and we didn't really get what the users wanted so in the end we didn't get anywhere near that support for that project to continue.

Orren: Okay so when you mentioned previously that it was a failure was that specifically of what you just mentioned around price point and Building a product that wasn't a match for what consumers wanted or was it more than that?

Joe: I think that's pretty much that would be the logistics of that, we made too many assumptions we didn't test enough with our assumptions before we went on to Kickstarter, we assumed that people were willing to pay a lot more for a much higher quality product but in the end people wanted more functionality for the press and also I think the custom aspects was over stated so you know we had all these different colours of the vast majority about 90-95% of people just wanted the two general colours, those were huge cost that was not necessary in the final product.

Orren: Okay and you also mentioned that it was shared more than Uamp we'd come to that hopefully a little bit later, I just want to then transition to what is Uamp and guess who is for and what problem where you trying to solve that in this instance you solve much better than you did with Umidi?

Joe: I think the problem with Uamp was that when you listen to music, the first thing when I was listening to music on our computer it was really great because I have a really good sound card and then I'd go outside listening to my iPhone basically it wasn't the same as I didn't understand why the discrepancy between sort of my computer and a good sound system verses my iPhone why is there such a discrepancy? It's the same headphones, the same music file because there is a big discrepancy in the sound, so I went to Bart and say why is that? And he was explained to me that it was actually to do with the amp inside and your sound guard and the way it processes the audio file and I was like "well can I get the same sound that I get on my computer on my phone?" And he was like "well yeah you can you just need to build something" and that's just that obviously be portable and that was what was sort of missing there wasn't really a devise that was portable that could do what we wanted, there is like 1 or 2 other portable amps but they were just extremely cheap and they really didn't do much so we needed to build something that sort of filled up that gap that's how Uamp was born.

Orren: Okay so you obviously both got quite different skill sets, how did you initially divide some of those tasks between both of you?

Bart: Well I'm definitely the more technical person but I think we sort of start off coming up with the idea together and the features and all the functions we both design the case and as a team and then obviously the circuit board is on to Bart, although I am helpful at finding parts and manufactures but you definitely buy some more technical one that can actually knows exactly what parts we need and how to lay it out and how to create something that is different and innovative.

Orren: Okay so how did you identify your target audiences obviously it was a problem that you face yourself and you're forming a solution that helps you, how do you expand that to find a common group and then create a compelling product around that and I know you join your campaign you were taking feedback directly from potential users

and then intergrading that into the product can you talk to me around how that process work from day one?

Joe: In the beginning I guess we didn't really know whether it was really something people wanted but I guess the only feedback we got was from people that we know who we talk to about the product and actually thought it was a good idea and the people that we showed the product out to and they want to buy from us so that's the first good sign I guess. But that's the whole point of Kickstarter is to just get it out there and just see what people wanted, I think the difference between Uamp and Umidi is that Umidi took us 2 years to get to Kickstarter with Uamp it took us less than 3 months and we probably could have done it in even a shorter amount of time so the main thing is to close down quickly and get it out there in front of many people as possible and then you get a feedback.

Orren: So the difference between and the 3 months and 2 years what do you put that down to was it an experience that you took from Umidi and all of the learnings from that?

Joe: I think it's down to that, you can pretty much do things like 1 is obviously the experience of having already a few manufacturers that we knew in China knowing about the processes and that sort of thing that whole section definitely save a good amount of time but the other thing was just different mentality going into it. This time around we went into the Kickstarter knowing that we didn't have to have the prefect product right off the back because we were going to get feedback from people anyway we knew that we didn't have to spend so much time like looking at all these little details that we could work out later we just focus on basically like the most important things and that saved a lot of time and in the end it saves makes it a better product because a lot of the assumptions that we had when we go to Kickstarter is actually customers that buy the product will basically try and tell us if it's right or wrong and there is no point of spending so much time before on these things that you really don't have much information about when is after the customers actually tell you what they want then it's better to spend the time there that makes more sense.

Orren: Yeah sure so is that the case also for your reward tiers, so my understanding is that you had 10 rewards and they were priced from 10 dollars up to 500 was that a process of guess work as well as working what the rewards were but also what the prices tiers were?

Joe: It was a little bit of guess work I'll say I mean when you work out a price for like a hardware type product there is always there that little bit of guess work in it but actually we started with a lot less tiers and we added quite a few of them because of feedback from the customers the twin pack the 4 pack we'll see life changed around like the ultimate pack and all that sort of stuff so that took away a lot of the guess work because we've got a lot of feedback. Just price wise obviously we looked at what we could afford to price it at with manufacturing cost and that sort of thing we try to make it as competitive as we could and affordable we want as many people as we can to experience a good a sound quality so we not going to try to like price it really high that normal people can't afford this so I think it was a kind of combination of all those factors.

Orren: Sure so the 65 dollar tier that was the one that had the most backers with about 3,000 and that seems obvious because that was the post early single product, you've mentioned the double pack or the twin pack that was the 2nd most back tier that you had why would people be interested in buying 2 of them?

Joe: Those are the small product discounts if you bought 2 verses if you just bought the 1, 2 times so I think it was just a cool way for someone to give to friends or maybe someone for their family together and to get 1 like a bit an incentive to share the product with someone else and I think that sort of worth both ways it helps the people buying 2 at once because they spend a little bit less money and it helped us because it reached more people if that makes sense?

Orren: And the 500 dollar re-seller pack did you choose that based on feedback or was it just kind of a part of a bigger strategic play for recruiting distributors or was it just kind of a test to see if these is a distribution model?

Bart: It was definitely a test to see if anyone would be interested in re-selling I guess and finding people who were off the campaign who would like to sell them on a long term bases and we saw other campaigns that done it and got a lot of good feedback and that's the main reason we did it, it's just a test and it went very well.

Orren: Yeah by the looks of it and then 45 days for the campaign, why did you choose such a long period of time when it could have been much shorter?

Bart: I think we would have gone longer had we known our campaign would have gone the way it went; we found it was a little bit different than most campaigns. We sort of fell into a weird category where I guess a few campaigns had fallen. Instead of getting most of the funding the start of the campaign we just kind of got a very bad day kind of like a little bit out of that 45 days out of that that's more like a lot but we did really get most of that money and we start to get things like 100 thousand and stuff and they don't give very much towards the rest of the campaign it just starts to go down. Ours was pretty consistent the whole time as I should say going up each day the consistency was sort of around 6 thousand a day on average.

Orren: Would you put that down to?

Bart: I'm not sure.

Joe: I think it might also be like exposure some of the bigger Kickstarter project they've got a lot of backing behind them so they've already got a 15 person team and investment from someone else and all that sort of stuff so when they go on to Kickstarter the 1st few days they already got kind of like the Tech Crunch article and all that sort of big sort of thing and they get all that exposure at the front and then that starts taking off. As we came a bit unknown to most people pretty much everyone so for us to build an exposure it was sort of like a gradual thing and that's why I think—I mean I can't know for sure but if I were to guess we had linear sort of exposure and that why our sales were kind of linear for the whole process.

Orren: Sure, I want to come back to that exposure in a minute but just while we are on the stretch goal. Were some of those bonuses pre-plan or were they done almost in

real time as they were hitting those goals. Obviously you did do some research on suppliers and manufacturers for that.

Joe: We had ideas on what we really wanted to do for stretch goals and we had some ideas of what we definitely couldn't do and but we found very quickly that the discussions especially on a Kickstarter was a comment section for our project they just naturally started occurring around—like people started getting involved in the project and they were just really into the project so now they were actually discussing what they wanted from the product and that just really naturally lead to like stretch goal, for example we started off with just like simple adding a bag and upgrading a cable and then (pretty soon people would want a different functionality, they wanted the ports on the same side, they wanted the clip, some people wanted crazy like if we could make them into new products but obviously we couldn't do that. But I think just being able to talk to the customers and letting them discuss it. A few times we just sort of said to them hey you know we can do another stretch goal and we're thinking of doing this and doing that what you guys think, they came back and pretty much said like "we hated it, we want this instead" and then we just went back and looked at what it would actually cost us to do it, if it was feasible and that sort of thing and we were able to do most of them. So it was just a very awesome experience for us because we are shaping and moulding the product to what the customers wanted, which I think with that fixed thought it would have been extremely harder to do yeah. So yeah I think it really good sort of thing.

Orren: Do you think having specific stretch goals allowed you to have that consistent fund raiser?

Bart: I don't think it helped with the consistent fundraising necessarily. I think it helped but there were points where we have reached 1 of the goal and then we hadn't responded for a few days to the new stretch goals and we were getting just as many if not more pledges. And I think the stretch goals definitely helped, it was helpful but it wasn't really the big chunk of it.

Orren: How important do you think having a quality for that verses marketing distribution; is there a ratio or is there all of 1 none of the other or sort of a combination of both?

Joe: It's a combination of both and I think it is interesting to see that there is some kicks out of projects that have no products or way that the product uses as you can see and they really got a video and they do extremely well and sometimes it's a terrible video and a terrible marketing but they got a really great product. So somehow I can tell, I think if the product is extremely innovative and the sound that everybody wants and you don't have the best marketing, I think you can do extremely well, I think that's the better way to go. But then if you don't have a good product and you rather have some good marketing because what you say about the potato salad for example get like 50 or something like that. And you saw double fines did a game and they didn't even have a game, they just explained the concept and I guess you just bought the journey and the people so much you were willing to jump on board. And you see the campaign hadn't had a great video but they had this really great product and you just have to buy it. The video almost pushes you away from the product but it doesn't matter because the product is so good. I think it really depends but I would say you would really want to have both; that's the best combination, having a good product and good marketing but if I have to choose one I would say the product.

Orren: Okay interesting.

Bart: I think having a good product makes the rest much earlier anyway because it's much easier to make a good video and a god market campaign around a good product because you just have to basically show up to everyone and explain why it's good you've seen some of them more heavily marketed but crappy products they are really reaching for reasons for why people should buy it so it just makes the whole process much harder.

Orren: So both of you guys had obviously a very professional video copywriting graphics and press kits, how important do you think those ones specifically in your case were in creating credibility and making people believe they can actually pull a product?

Joe: I think the video was obviously-you have a potential customer that comes and watches your video. So that's us communicating with them and trying to take them on a journey, sort of say "hey this is what we are doing, this is part of what we want you to experience." And the great thing is that it was over 5 % of people who watch the video brought product and that was our metrics. So we seeing that people who watched the video were saying yes we want. I think the video had a very important impact on that and all the other press stuff is important but I think it really goes down as the video as the most important aspect of marketing.

Orren: Can you just outline some other vital metrics you're just monitoring during the launch?

Joe: Yup so obviously the video views as 1 the same work such as we were going from so Kickstarter tells you what website they come from even with Kickstarter where they come from did they find you through the popular section or do they find you through just searching for your name. I think that's about it; there wasn't too many metrics really.

Bart: We had email sign ups. I think it boils down to mostly just going on to the Kickstarter metrics page and basically monitoring from what sections people come from and just sort of making sure that we're hitting all the right of demographics. Apart from that I think the next we might have to set up more varying metric systems just to put less emphasis on Kickstarter ones because it would be good to have a bit more information.

Joe: The main thing was just watching for pledgees per day. Our thing was if it went under 4k and day which I only think happened once, actually twice then we basically do as much as we can to try and boost up our campaign and keep us in the popular section of Kickstarter that would be one of the best strategy for us get this on top of the list and the more people that came with Kickstarter would be more likely to see our campaign.

Orren: So how were you actually being proactive to get in the popular section of Kickstarter?

Bart: My thing was that if you fall down we would basically send an email out to any subscribers we have we would contact anyone we have even Facebook as well I started messaging people personally about it from the old campaign and anyone who have message us on Facebook regarding Umidi, we ran a Facebook campaign as well which helped a lot on advertising and basically we're tweaking and doing some of those things if it sort of dwindled down a bit. We also tried to get some PRs as well but we were not really successful with that. We were much more successful with PR with Umidi than we were with Uamp we got written about in many more places than Uamp and for some place Uamp was more successful. Go figure I guess.

Orren: Can you tell me how many video views that Kickstarter was able to provide stats on?

Bart: You know it doesn't provide much stats on that video it doesn't provide any stats on where the videos views come from expect for like whether the external or internal so that's 70 thousand views I think 50 thousand was from persons who were on the Kickstarter campaign and it was 20 thousand was external.

Orren: Do you know right down on the top websites, top channels people found campaign through sound like an 80/20 analyses.

Joe: Yeah so most of it came through Kickstarter about 80% of the people from Kickstarter found our project and about 20% was from for example featured in Gizmag and that gave us a few thousand in pledges and there was a few small ones and there was direct pledges which was basically just from email who we emailed and asked them to pledge to us.

Orren: Okay so all the activity you were doing to get into the popular section was almost a self-contain loop that was driving more traffic back to your campaign?

Bart: Yeah I guess.

Orren: Okay and why do you think you got more PR in publicity for Umidi rather than for Uamp; was it because it product base or was it just an awareness thing?

Joe: I think I was a product base because I contacted a lot of the places that I had contacted before. Umidi was just more sharable, it was real different and it was more innovative from that kind of perspective; people would just look at it and go "I don't know what it is but it's cool." Uamp was—you would have to read about and understand it and watch the videos. I wasn't as sharable from that perspective and it wasn't a good story. It did not create an angle that would get readers excited

Bart: One thing that helps make Umidi more sharable was we had a section on the website where people with a business model field could design their own controller and we build it for them but you can go on the website and design your own mini controller whether you were going to buy one or not 100s or maybe a few 1000 people get on there and just design their own and share the picture on Facebook and that was very sharable but I guess in the end it didn't really matter because the product wasn't something somebody was willing to pay for so if—just means you have to have all the things together just to make it successful.

Orren: And Joe could you give some examples of that outreach to bloggers and the media that you use for Umidi and why that was and what some of that language look like when you're reaching out to them.?

Joe: Yeah so with Umidi I found places that I had reviewed or talked about Deejay Gear. So some of them were like 1 of them was like deejay works which was a pretty cool site and I basically emailed the guy there whose name was Mark, "Hey Mark my Joseph; I'm working on a project that I think your leaders would be interested in basically it was the 1st custom deejay controller here is a link to our campaign and let me know if you are interested in write about it, I have also attached the press kit if you would have a look at." And basically he get back to me in less than 24 hour and he is like, "Yeah no problems I will put out the article and have a good day" and I just pretty much repeat that to other people and that just about everyone said yes who I wrote to. it wasn't too much of an interesting story with Uamp was basically the same thing or places I think it's just because it was a similar story so interesting enough it's a cool

product and people like it but it wasn't a story worth writing about I guess. But that's just my assumption anyways.

Orren: You mentioned that you had an email list that you had some social assets from your previous program project and obviously your network as well; how much of that loyalty with in those databases did you have?

Bart: We don't have the exact amount but it wasn't very high but it definitely was helpful at the start but anything that kicker starter put us into the start picks which help us get up to a lot of the initial traffic and then once we pretty much make it go within in the 1st 5 min we got our 1st pledge and them it just started steam rolling and it just going from there and within the 1st day we come and get 13 thousand and then there was an average about 6 thousand so I think that the networks helped but I think it was a very small amount from the networks it was less than 5% from our networks and majority of it came from external places.

Orren: So you're saying that your network initially put you into the start picks and then the….

Joe: No we got put into the start picks just because Kickstarter thought our project was interesting it was more just a random thing we didn't have too much control over that, Kickstarter says "hey we like your project we're going to put it in the staff picks" and they did and it helped get us a lot of initial pledges.

Orren: Okay, so then having an interesting product that solves a real problem for people is correlated to being into being in the staff picks and then the staff picks then creates that momentum that gets you into the popular section.

Joe: Both the staff picks and our network to help create that I guess but if I should choose one or the other that would be like 30% networks and like 70% of staff picks.

Orren: So how do you focus your resources on the area that were winning and then the areas that weren't so cutting the loses?

Joe: I put enough time into sending out emails to get PR and after the 1st week of doing that sending out which was literally thousands of email and differentiating them and making them hold quiet differently and various strategy from Umidi that had worked and that just wasn't really getting us much pledges at all and the best we had was from Gizmag which was from 2000 and that the rest of theme weren't even close to that so for the time and effort that we're putting into this is not really working so I looked for alternative sources and that's when the Facebook advertising came into play and also just contacting people and talking to people and answering questions and really working with the custom base that we had was the big reward verses time spent and another thing I about to mention is we did something which is called cross promo so it basically that Kickstarter the projects with similar amount of backers and we said "hey like you have a great project, we have a great project why don't we introduce your backers to our project and we introduce our backers to your project?" So basically in our updates which is sent to all of our backers we write to them about something about our project and they say "hey guys why don't you check you these awesome project check out these guys over here they are building this really great new watch or something" and so basically the other campaign would do the same and then we would get an extra couple of grand and pledges just from doing that one thing so that was another way of getting that those pledges as well.

Orren: Yeah I saw that in some of your updates that at the bottom of all your updates had about 3 or 4 different projects.

Bart: But then again that was a ridiculous amount I guess—probably brought in about 45 or 50k of the pledges so I guess it was quite substantial from that point but I guess it wasn't just that one thing it was that combine with Facebook combine with an email list from the start and all that together sort of kept us in the popular section so I just making sure all of those elements were always being done and balanced correctly to help us in the popular section.

Orren: I just want to go back to something that you've mention previously you said that you were sending out and almost thousands of email to bloggers and media was that about 2000 dollars' worth of pledges that came in from that?

Bart: It was more than that

Joe: It was about like 8 thousand or something we got more pledge than we found out we could.

Orren: And then Facebook ads were you tracking how they were playing out in terms of conversion?

Joe: Well we basically found an agency to help us do that I actually found them because they targeted me with a Facebook ad so I though "wow if they can target me with an ad, I'm pretty sure then can target for us" so I contacted them and they ran a Facebook marketing campaign for us. They charged us $200 dollars a day for Facebook ads and for any pledges that they got from that adverting they would get 12.5%.

Orren: And where do you think most of your back is or majority of the backers came from and then moving into the future how are you going to capitalize on Uamp's success on Kickstarter?

Joe: We are taking pre-orders at the moment and I think last week got about 2 thousand we are looking at the same for this week typically the main thing is finding stores that want to sell our product online and obviously people who were sitting on the fence and once they read the reviews and are happy with it now "yeah I'm going to buy one now because the experts said it was a good product" so I guess the main plan is to get out there as to many people as possible via in stores online and maybe in retail – keep the momentum going.

Orren: What do you think your biggest lesson or take away was and what would you do differently next time if you had the opportunity to do it all again?

Joe: I think that the biggest thing that we learnt from this campaign from our campaign is that you build something that people want so you start off with maybe you want or if it's a problem that you're having and create a solution to that and get it out to market as soon as you can and test you assumptions and if anything I'll do

differently it'll probably the PR I spend a lot of time trying to get PR to work and in the end that was resulted in very little so I think I would probably done the same thing or sort of tested that earlier on and go "hey this isn't working" and then just stop because I spent—it could be released a month earlier if I haven't been focusing on that element.

Orren: And if you were you to distil down almost a step by step process verses creating and secondly marketing for a physical product by crowd funding what would that look like or what would that thinking process look like and I think you just saluted to it then with starting with a product or a problem that you have how would you then from that starting point or what would the process be or if you could talk through the process up until your launch some of those steps.

Bart: Breaking down the steps, the 1st step is you identify a problem or some sort of innovation I think the best is the problem because that's the easiest way to come up with a product I've got this problem the 1st test was we can fix that problem well "ok yep we can fix that problem with an amp but I can't carry that with me so can we then put it to a portable size" so it was us working out if can be done and we're like "yes it can be done" and then look at the features we want to have in this product and so we'd write them all down. "Okay we want to have a battery that lasts longer and these connections and this function and how's it going to look and feel" and we go create all those things and then go okay "we've got a mock up, let's turn that into a prototype" so then we would design a case or design a prototype circuit broad and we get that out of the way and the next step would be to send that to manufacturer to get that built and that's what we did and then it got back came back and we tested it, we're happy with it, "so okay now we got a product and and now we got to release it," so okay now we need to, the 1st step is to create a video and I think people under estimate how long that takes just to take one of the biggest steps that took us in a more than a month to do we didn't found anyone to do the video so we had to do it ourselves and so the next step is to film that. So you create a script, a story board first, then a script then go out and film that video, edit the video and just keep filming anything that have to do with that, you could sign a page so then you got to have photos for the page you got to have writing the page and other things to fill out there as details like bank account details and that sort of stuff and once you're happy with all that you create a first pack in case people do want to write about you and when all that stuff in place then basically yeah

you get launched and can even email and interview networks and if there is any marketing going out around on out Facebook ads have that lined up as well and the main steps after that is answering you backers and once the campaign is finished then you've got to now finish your product get it ready for manufacturing and continue to take pre-orders.

Orren: So then under what circumstances should someone try to go out and fundraise for a product that hasn't been yet been created and under what circumstances is it just not the right avenue for them?

Bart: I think this is a bit of a hard question to answer depending on what the product is. I think most successes you should have already have the product created or at least 90% of the way there especially if you're a first time creator then you should always have a product be created because the price is actually much more difficult to finalise everything then most people would think that's why you see a lot of the hardware even some of the other things Kickstarter projects fail a lot because they under estimate just how hard it would be to finish it and also I think a lot of people are actually good at picking up how far alone the process you are people who are on Kickstarter they are very good at picking up how genuine, how authentic you are so you don't have a finish product and pretend that you do you'll find that it will come across in a way you present the product and the little details that you might consciously be thinking about it where it might be something you missed but you want to be able to trick people in thinking that invest in this we're almost done people just won't want to give as much money does that make sense?

Orren: Sure, so what would have if someone goes out takes the information that you've given today what the 1-3 perhaps the steps next immediate action steps they need to do a Kickstarter campaign regardless if they success or not.

Bart: I think the number 1 thing would be just to make sure they have products that people want and that they themselves want that would be the number 1 step for me, what do you think Joe?

Joe: I agree with Bart, so basically the 1st step is to create something that people want and one of the easiest ways to do that is that something that you want? I guess that is the 1st starting point it is easier to create a product that you yourself want and that's the mistake that we made with our 1st product Umidi is we said "people who want this, people will want that" but we never built a controlled for ourselves to DJ with, so that should have been the first red flag for us. Once you have got that do something as quickly as you can that addresses that problem and then creating a video and getting it out on Kickstarter because there I no real cost to you and make if you succeed you can deliver and I guess that's all there is just deal with the product and prototype because you can adjust the problem and then create a video and have a Kickstarter page.

Orren: Good and congrats on success and thank you for making time to have a chat to day.

Joe: Thanks Orren.

Bart: Thanks Orren.

“How To Write And Launch An International Best Selling Book By Pre-Selling 5,000 Copies in 4 Months…”

In this interview you’ll learn how to write and launch an international best selling book by pre-selling 5,000 copies in 4 months. We discuss how to:

- Write a book that gets you kudos, credibility and positions you as an expert;
- Use a book proposal to get clear on what you want to write about, discover your angle and message;
- Identify a market and identify a target audience for your book and get feedback on your book idea;
- Design a compelling information product for that audience;
- Discover your writing voice and get comfortable writing;
- Find and approach a publisher, get a favorable contract and retain your creative control but still get in bookstores via a distributor;
- Gain feedback and refine your book idea before it goes to publication;
- Go from blog to book based on all of your learning;
- Use a “pre-sales” process to make your book an international best seller before publication without physical book or mock up;
- Compile a marketing proposal with value adds and contact marketing partners;
- Choose key metrics to monitor your progress when you have no financial resources;
- Write your book in 6 weeks and make writing routine;
- Monetize the back-end of your book and create up-sells and multiple streams of income;
- Create an audio version of your book;
- Use book publishing as positive personal growth experience;
- And much, much more…

Miriam Castilla is a Bestselling Author, Effectologist & Certified Infinite Possibilities Trainer. She is also an Entrepreneur, Mentor & Keynote Speaker. Miriam started her working life on the corporate fast track in Petroleum Engineering and Corporate

Development. Some years later, as a newly single mum she dived into the more exciting – although sometimes frightening – waters of small business and entrepreneurship. Miriam has since built an award winning business, featured in national & international publications and written & published her bestselling book, "Today's Woman – Life Balance Secrets". She believes women get too caught up in pleasing other people and deserve to live a life of passion and purpose. In 2012, she founded Today's Woman Events with a focus on rescuing visionary women from a sea of overwhelm, helping them regain clarity, focus & momentum.

Orren: Hi Miriam, thank you for making the time to talk today.

Miriam: Thanks so much Orren, I'm really pleased you asked me.

Orren: So we've crossed paths numerous times over the last two or three years in various context but today I want to talk to you about the process behind writing, launching and selling your international best-selling book called "*Today's Woman*" and congrats on the achievement by the way.

Miriam: Thank you very much I'm very proud of it.

Orren: Can you give me a bit of explanation of who you are and your background?

Miriam: Yep, sure I'll give you the very brief version of my life story. So I started out in life in a corporate career like many people. I actually completed an Engineering Degree, wound up working as a Petroleum Engineer and then from there I kind of transitioned into a more corporate development role which was all about growing the company and reporting directly to the board and looking at opportunities and I came at that from a technical perspective and eventually I realized that I really hated corporate life; took me a while to work it out and at that time my husband was building a small business. So I chose to leave my corporate world and help him and had my children and long story short I wound up divorced, broke, out of my career for 8 years with two young kids and from there really had to kind of start all over again, work out who I am, who I want to be and really dig deep for some self-esteem and self-belief and I tapped into a lot of personal development, started a business in a whole new industry which ticked the boxes with what I wanted and eventually once that was up and running I decided that I really wanted to go back to what helped me get there and kind of pay if forward and help other women. Writing the book was kind of the first and important step on that journey and transitioning what for me is now my new career.

Orren: Perfect that's very clear. Can you give me a bit of a timeline of when that transition point happened?

Miriam: It's interesting because when I started writing my book I actually looked back at some notes I made at a workshop I went to almost 10 prior and I wrote my little wish list of what I'd really love to be doing if money and everything else circumstances were no object and it was doing exactly what I'm now doing. So it's kind of a 10 year journey. But I only got brave enough to pass on and I think I'm the person for the job about probably 2 years prior to actually releasing the book. So it was a 2 year journey from say "okay I'm actually going to do this" to walking into a shop and seeing my book on the shelf.

Orren: Right, so over that two year journey what was that very first starting point? Was it approaching a publisher and getting a publishing contract first?

Miriam: Yes and no. So my first step was to get really clear on what I actually wanted to write about and then deciding whether I thought there was a market for it. So I interviewed a lot of women who I either admired or who I thought would be interested in what I have to say and I found that there was a lot of overlapping in our thinking and where we came from. So I found that there was actually a lot of head nodding as I was starting to speak to people and I knew I was on the right track and then I had to decide what angle I really wanted to take out of all the possible angles you can take and I put a book proposal together mainly for my own benefit initially just to get really clear on what do I actually want to write about and what's my angle and then I had to decide how I wanted to go about publishing it. So there are pros and cons to traditional publishing versus self-publishing and I did a lot of research into both and decided that it was really important to me to have a traditional publisher because there are so many self-published books out there and its becoming a crowded market and they don't really get the kudos that they maybe should.

Orren: Sure.

Miriam: Because there's so many and a lot of them are not very high quality. So I really did want a traditional published but I also wanted to retain the rights to my book so that I could do what I wanted with is and not be limited because a lot of people don't understand that when you sign up with a publisher most of the time you get handed a cheque and you're the person who wrote the book but then they do what

they like. From there on they can change your cover, your title, your colours and you kind of loose control and I really wanted to retain that control because it was part of a bigger picture for me. So in answer to your question once I decided that I wanted the best of both worlds so I had to find a publisher who could give me that and when I found them I started hounding them and harassing them until I basically got to sign up with them and that was probably 6 months process in starting to talk to them to finally signing a contract with them.

Orren: You mentioned that you interviewed so people that you admired. How else, was there anything that you did to help identify a target audience? Were there other people that you spoke to in a similar situation that you're in say 10 year prior to help shape what that book would be or make a compelling product for that audience?

Miriam: It's really important that you do have a target market when you produce any product but I also allow myself to be guided a lot by my gut and what I knew was really an important message to get out there so it was a bit of a blend of both and I spoke to a lot of women's networking groups and a group that I tend to talk to a lot is women who are sole traders, who are just starting their business or they're just wanting to start their business and they're really at that turning point in their life. So it was really just about having lots of conversations and finding that they were the common problems and the common obstacles that everybody's faced and then deciding that I wanted to address those and a lot of it also came from people looking at what I was doing in just the finance business I had built and having two kids and I started mentoring at *Venture Dorm* at *Flinders Uni* and I was writing a column for weekly online publication and I was doing lots and lots of different things and people would just go 'how the hell do you do it?' and I thought I don't know this is kind of how I operate. But I realized that overwhelmed was starting to become the really big problem that was starting to surface from all my conversations. So out of finding your way and figuring out how to do what you want to do and making it happen. The big continued word that kept cropping up was just oh overwhelmed and we don't even know where to begin so that's where I ended up choosing to focus on. But it was a whole conversation of a whole lot of things but a lot of conversation, a lot of one-on-one conversations rather than doing surveys and Facebook polls. I did a little bit of that but it was mainly just conversations with people.

Orren: Excellent, you started off with some of these conversations with people you admired and other people that were in your situation on the context that you were involved with to kind of develop that concept for the book then you mentioned that you wrote a proposal more so for yourself to get clarity on what you were writing on, then you moved on to approaching a publisher. How did that process with the publisher go? What was the conversation you were having particularly with them and what where the negotiation points that you had?

Miriam: Well the publisher I ended up choosing to go with is a really non-traditional publisher and it took me a while to find them because I wanted somebody who could give me that best of both worlds that I was looking for where I could retain my rights but still be distributed so that my book could end up in bookstores. If you're self-published you actually cannot end up in a bookstore in Australia. In the US it's a bit different or you can end up in small independent stores but not in your big chains. So once I've found the publisher and I kind of stalked him, I really needed to just check out that his model was just right for me. So once I got sold on yes I do want to work this person I sent him a book proposal, I had a phone conversation with him and then he has a really particular process that he puts people through. So he actually starts with a 3 day workshop to kind of set the ground work of how he works because he take 20 authors and puts them through a 6 months program, sorry it's actually a 12 month program but really you get the work done in the first 6 months. So it was really a matter of going along to that first workshop, deciding that yes I understand and I'm happy work in how he works and it's a good fit then applying then being accepted as one of the 20 people to do the next intake and then it was quite a good rigid process that they put us through where we were on a timeline and you know there was accountability and we got lots of training and even lots of ideas on how to get your book written and how to gather your thoughts because that's definitely not something you tend to get with traditional publishers they're kind of here's a great book proposal and here's a contract and we need a manuscript from you in 6 months, thanks anyway and you don't have that relationship where you're constantly back and forth with them which I did. So it was a bit of a matter of checking each other out deciding that it was a good fit and then interviewing for this particular program that I wanted to be a part of and being accepted.

Orren: So how did you find this publisher? Was it recommendation, word of mouth, were you doing a search and you just discovered them?

Miriam: No I actually heard him speak at a seminar I went to and initially he was talking about marketing because he's very big on outside the square marketing ideas and he's worked in lots of different industries and done franchising and so on. So that's kind of something else he does in his business and then I thought oh okay that's really interesting. It's simple stuff but outside the box stuff and then I heard him speak again somewhere else and realize oh he actually has this publishing company and this is how he operates and it's all about knowing that your book is actually a positioning tool and how do you leverage that and how do you make the most of it and he talked about there are certain strategies you can follow to get best-seller status and really I just wanted to get as much I guess authority behind my book as possible. So I thought I don't want to be a self-published author and best-seller sounds pretty good so I think you would pay a little bit more attention if you've got that sticker on there. And so that's how I found him I just happen to stumble across him a couple of times and realized no I didn't just *Google* him.

Orren: Sure, so then next once you found that publisher what was the next step in the process? Were you then going and writing a first draft of the book?

Miriam: Well before I actually found the publisher when I decided I did want to write a book and I was trying to figure out exactly what my message was and what was the problem I was going to address and how was I going to go about solving it in my book because it is a 'How to book' and I applied it that I really needed to start writing and just finding my voice. So I started blogging and that was great because it also gave me that reinforcement that my message resonated with people and I was getting great feedback and it really let me know what women which is who I mainly talk to wanted to hear, wanted more help with, you know what were the main issues and it help me really find my very genuine voice because when you first start writing you're a bit worried about how you're gonna come across, you want to make sure you sound intelligent, you don't want to be too casual, is it okay to swear. All these kinds of things. So my blogging had really helped me find my voice and get really

comfortable with how I wanted to write and what actually happened out of that is by the time I had signed the publishing contract I had so many blogs which then fitted in really well into the chapters of my book. So for probably a third of my book it was really a case of just letting out blogs I had written and re-writing them a little bit and obviously expanding on them but I had a lot of content already and I had already found my voice.

Orren: Perfect, that's very smart.

Miriam: It worked out very well.

Orren: Of course and it sounds like a very good process to follow at least testing some of those ideas and also testing how your write and seeing what resonates and what doesn't and then majority of the ideas of the book have been created.

Miriam: And I was just going to say in an answer to your question from there in terms of writing a first draft, I hadn't actually written anything other than a proposal and blogs by the time I signed up with a publisher where as other people would write their book first and then go knocking on doors trying to find somebody who will publish it but I thought well that seems counter-productive to me because if you don't know you're going to publish it why bother writing it? So once I had found a publishing deal then I was already comfortable with my voice, I knew the publisher agreed that it was great idea and there was a market for it, I knew that my audience was already there and were resonating with my idea so then I sat down and wrote my first draft and that actually took me only 6 weeks but it was a real boot camp style. So I was up at 5 o clock every morning and I would just spend the first two hours of the day writing, using a few techniques that my publisher had taught us in workshop situations where we'll start with meditation, focus on what the chapter was about and then just do it like a subconscious, you know just a brain dump and letting things pour out and because they say the best first draft to write is a bad one - meaning you just need to get something down on paper and then you can massage and work it from there. So it actually took me 6 weeks to write my first draft which sounds like it was a really quick process but I think it was another 8 months before the book was actually published after that so there's still a lot to do.

Orren: Can you just clarify as well that blogging that you were doing, was that on your own platform or were you publishing on someone else's platform?

Miriam: No I decided that it was a great idea to start getting some SEO and some traction so I started a blog at Miriam Castilla dot com which I still write on today and started also looking for some opportunities to guest blog but it was really just my sandpit training ground where I just found my own voice.

Orren: And at that time what were the numbers of readers on the blog when you were starting just out in this process a couple years back?

Miriam: I wasn't even tracking them. I'm really lazy with all that sort of stuff.

Orren: Of course I see it's an important point just to see where you're at and it was just more of a process for you rather than anything else.

Miriam: Yeah, look I was getting sign ups and after a while I said oh I should have a mailing list sign up and here that's what we meant to do isn't it? And I started getting sign ups and followers and so on but I tend to be a little bit lazy with watching numbers. I actually find that it's a personality thing I think that when I watch my numbers really closely I get too bogged down in the numbers and it stilts my creativity and my flow and I find that when I didn't worry about the numbers and I just pour out content and get really creative and just write whatever comes along the numbers just start climbing so I tend to do a stock take every few months and go oh look at that the subscribers have really increased and I know I'm on the right track but I'm not one who sits there with *Google Analytics* and I probably should, I know I probably should but I just don't like it so I don't do it.

Orren: Absolutely that makes sense. So you've written your draft and that took you about 6 weeks or so. What was the process from putting the last full stop on that manuscript what happened next?

Miriam: It's quite painful really from there. So what happens from there is you send that first draft to the editor and the editor's brief from my publisher was we don't change the author's voice and so really it's about making sure that the content flows in a logical manner, ironing out grammatical inconsistencies and errors and typos and all that kinds of thing but it wasn't a major re-write so I'm quite grateful for that because even so it was quite a painful process so things come back from the editor and apparently mine was the lightest edit they've done in several months but then I actually have to go through and actually approve each one because with my contract in a way its set up I did get the final say and that kinds of suits my personality as well. So then you actually have to go through and it's got track changes in a word document and you're just sitting there trying to follow each one and make a decision whether you keep and edit or you drop it and then it goes back for another final edit. You again have to go through all of their changes and decide whether you want to keep them. So that process was actually much more because it wasn't a creative process it was just a mechanical process I found it really annoyingly painful and it took me quite a long time to go through it all because track changes; I don't know if you use it much but some things they've made a change here but I cannot for the life of me find it so you actually spend a lot of time looking for something that changed. So once that was all finally done then the book actually have to get typed set. So then you have to set up instructions as to how I want my pages to lay, be laid out. You know this is where I want diagrams and pictures and things like that and then that gets done and comes back to you and then you have to make edits and approve that. So there's a lot of toing and froing and that's not even taken into account the audio book which was another whole project in itself.

Orren: Sounds like that process was quite frustrating for you as being a creative person.

Miriam: Yeah absolutely, you know those first 6 weeks I spent writing my book I was just loving it and even though it was early mornings and often all weekend long where I was just writing it was just a creative outpouring and just getting it all out of me and onto paper but the towing and froing and knit-picking over commas and apostrophes and semicolons did my head in.

Orren: What happened next after that process? Was it a matter of your publishers going to your distributors and the distributors going to book sellers? Where did the printing happen, where were you at that stage?

Miriam: So a lot of people think that your book is released into stores and then you start marketing, that's not quite how it works. In fact, the smart thing to do is to even start marketing your book before you even go to print because otherwise you become an author who has a garage full of books and I do have a lot of books in my garage because going to print is expensive and I speak around workshops and so the book is kind of part of that and I need enough to keep me going for the next few years but I did a lot of my sales before going to print. So I did set a goal that I wanted to reach best-seller and one of the things that *Global Publishing Group*, my publisher taught us was you need to get really creative with your marketing and your pre-sales. So once I had my first draft sent off and that job was done I got busy on marketing my book and finding partners to work with who had a similar audience or wanted to use the message of my book and then putting partnerships together so that's how I did a lot of my pre-sales quite a significant number of them were actually to corporates and that's great because if someone takes 350 copies or 500 copies of your book that's a nice hit towards your target and pre-selling to public in my readership and so on but obviously that's one book at a time. So having those corporate partnerships were really, really great and it also meant that we would put packages together where it would be okay I'd come and speak to your audience or your membership and they'll each get a copy of my book and then I'll run a free workshop for you and I sort of package the book in really creative ways with other offerings to add value to those partners. So those sorts of strategies are the reason I chose to work with a publisher I worked with because he gave me a lot of those ideas. So I spent quite a few months making a lot of phone calls and the key metrics were, it was a real basic selling 101 it was how many calls can I make today? I had a short list of people that I thought were appropriate partners but it's still all about making those phone calls.

Orren: Right, that sounds perfect and this whole process of preselling by the sounds if I'm following the timeline correctly was happening in parallel to the editing and type setting process.

Miriam: Yes and just as well I decided to do that early because in the end I had sort of a set deadline for myself of when I wanted to give the go ahead to go to print and I still missed that by two months because people were needing to get back to me and wait till the CEO was back from overseas to kind of fine tune stuff because it was more about selling some books, it was about building partnerships. There was a lot of detail behind some of it and it just dragged on and on. And I have had moments when I said is that best seller stamp really that important on there because its stopped the launch of my business and my business was launched when my book was launched but I'm still glad I did it because you know in the scheme of things what's an extra two three months. So yeah, it was quite a long process. I think it was probably realistically 4 moths that I spent marketing and doing my pre-sales before I gave the go ahead to go to print. So in terms of what happens with the distributor and getting into book stores which is then when your standard sales come in what actually happens is just because you have a publishing deal does not mean you get a distribution deal. So each publisher actually needs to sit with their distributor and they will go through the list of all the authors and all the upcoming books they have and the distributor will chose whether or not to take them on which is something I didn't know before I got into this. What do you mean? I have a publishing deal aren't I guaranteed a ticket to walk into *Dymocks* and see my book on the shelf? Well no, if the distributor thinks well no, it doesn't match with what we've got or we've got too many books in this area then they won't necessarily take it on. So you need to get the distributor to take your book on which is the publisher's job and then the distributor's job is to get the book stores to take it on and actually stock it on their shelves and to order the copies in so yeah there's quite a lot of hoops to jump through and a lot of people who need to agree it's a good idea.

Orren: So did the bookstores add any significant version to your pre-sales?

Miriam: Not a single one because the bookstores don't get my book until after it's printed.

Orren: And you didn't print until you got your pre-sale threshold.

Miriam: Correct, I wanted to know that I had met my target which is 5,000 pre-sales which in Australia, I think even globally best seller is a little bit, it's up to your publisher and they're sort of accepted numbers of what it should be. For example *New York's Times Best Seller* list I think is the strictest, you know it has to be through certain outlets and so son but in Australia some people will slap a best-seller label on a book that has just had a really good day on Amazon in the kindle version and the publisher will still slap a best seller sticker on it. So it's not very strictly guided but the most common one is 5,000 hard copies is the Australian is the most commonly accepted standard. So that's the one I guided myself by and that's the one my publisher said at that point I'm happy to put a best-selling sticker on your book because obviously that gets printed like that.

Orren: 5, 000 is decent number as well.

Miriam: It's quite a lot of books as I found out it takes a lot of phone calls to sell 5, 000 books. So then the bookstores only gets the books after its gone to print and then really it's up to no publisher anywhere in the world really market books per say I mean they have PR Departments and so on but they have a whole lot of books and authors that they need to move so it's really still up to the author to market themselves. So I actually know a lot of the local bookstores in Adelaide, you know I know the owners quite well and I'd go in and out of there and what I actually do which is a good little trick I learnt is I just go in and autograph whichever books they have because then they actually put a sign by the author sticker on it and place it near the counter or face up on the shelf rather than just side on. So it's all these little extra tricks.

Orren: Interesting. You mentioned quite a few things I just want to go back and get some clarity on. One of them was around the pre-sales. How did you track those was it through purchase orders and what evidence did you want to show your publisher that you'd hit that mark?

Miriam: Yes so I did have to have purchase orders and invoice, tax invoices for those and I had to cc them into a lot of emails so that it wasn't just me stock piling books in my garage which I heard some amazing stories of authors doing that and

bind their own books to make them go best-seller and the selling them afterwards and actually going best seller. There's all sorts of stories out there but yeah I did I had to have the purchase orders, the tax invoices and confirmation emails and all the rest of it.

Orren: Right. How did the conversation go of pre-selling when you didn't have a physical product - it was just an idea?

Miriam: That was something I had to get my head around or I' trying to sell something that I don't actually have yet. So I have in hind sight thought you know what it wouldn't be a bad strategy to do a small local print run of just 100 or so books and actually post them out to these people with your proposal and then follow up with the phone calls and so on actually if I did it again and should I decide after all to write another book I think I'd actually go that way because it gets their attention. So I had to do an email and phone call and I had a very slick looking PDF, you know that put the proposal for them but what really helped is obviously I had my cover design already so they got to see a 3-D mock-up of what the book would look like. I had the contents, I had a sample chapter, the fact that I had a publishing deal and that my publisher has a 100% strike rate with distribution pick up and we make it quite clear that our target is not to go to print unless we have the best-seller target met and that the opportunity is that by pre-purchasing we can obviously with a bigger print run the cost goes down and presales or obviously wholesale as well so that made the cost of it cheaper so that allowed us to then package it up with other value ads for them so they; the book was basically a marketing tool for them who are reaching the same audiences as my book reaches. So it was just about putting a really clear proposal together that showed the value in it and why free ordering is the only way you could achieve that but yes in hind sight you can small print runs done locally they're very expensive obviously but it would have probably shortened my time frame and meant that I talked to a few more people who maybe didn't want to respond or be interested in an email and a phone call.

Orren: Sure. In contacting these corporates who are you initially targeting within those partners and how did the initial contact go: Was it a phone call? Was it an email? How did you navigate that?

Miriam: So I spent a bit of time just researching who has the same target market which is busy women experiencing overwhelm who might be just starting a business. So there was a bit of research into who's actually advertising to this demographic and then the obvious ones like women's networking groups that kind of thing and also home-based business groups you know with the network marketing industry they're always huge on personal development and they tend to have a lot of women within their ranks. I think it's a really heavily female dominated area. So I identified all those groups and obviously put my proposal together and had a few different options on how we could work together and then I called them all, found out who is the right person to speak to was said I'd be sending an email, this is who I am, this is what this is about, I am sending you an email and I'll follow up in a couple of days. So I really had to come out of my comfort zone and go into kind of direct selling mode. So it was a phone call to find out who was the right person to speak to was, send them an email with the proposal, follow up with a phone call and follow up often enough without making a nuisance of myself to be sure that they had gotten the message and knew what it was all about and I believe they were 'Yeah that's great' and a lot of people were really enthusiastic and the wheels fell off a couple unfortunately because there were really big businesses with so much bureaucracy to jump through and it just doesn't work out I had a few disappointments and then others would say "Yeah great, let's do it " and a few were like " Go away who are you". It's sales but it's how I decided to do it and meanwhile I had the blog readership who knew the book was on its way and they were really encouraging and supportive and they were grabbing some pre-sale orders as well so that was really nice positive re-enforcement that I was on the right track.

Orren: How much cold-selling have you done previous to this exercise?

Miriam: Pretty much none to be honest. I'm just trying to think no , cold calling is something I hate, I'm really uncomfortable with it and even when I built the business in the finance area , you know there's opportunities where you can make cold calls or luke warm calls I guess to people and for example people will approach business owners in the area and say let me do a review of you or your business lending but I still never did it I always relied on the people I knew who trusted me and knew how I

operated to give me a go and then recommend me and that's how I built my business in the past. It was always very much on trust and recommendation and excellent service. So with this I had to really go out of my comfort zone but what I actually found is when I look back on the pre-sales I did do most of them were somehow by I spoke to every man and his dog about it and let them know what I was doing. It was often by referral, recommendation; hey Miriam's writing this book and so you can kind of follow that train and that's how a lot of the sales actually ended up coming about but I still made lots and lots of cold calls and I think what got me over the fear of it is that I really believed in my product and I really believed that kind of offerings we put together to work with all these corporates were just a no brainer for them. They were already spending money advertising and trying to get this demographic on board and I actually had a really great product that added great value where I could help with workshops as part of it and so on. So there was just so much value in it that it was just a no-brainer and what helped me get over it straight away was the belief in what I had to sell.

Orren: Yeah great. And do you think you can break down the percentage between individual consumers who bought pre-sale or partners that bought pre-sale?

Miriam: I would say that about 20% were individuals. So people who knew of me had been reading my blogs, followed me on Facebook that kind of thing and then larger corporate was actually probably only about another 20% then a lot of women's networking groups, women's business groups, you know that kind of area where they're all about supporting and encouraging women, that was a really huge part of it - that was probably 40 -50% and the rest was just smaller businesses, various different ways.

Orren: Great you mentioned previously that one of the stats that you're monitoring during this presale period were the amount of phone calls that you're making. I imagine that the amount of pre-sale that you also make was another stat that you were monitoring. Was there anything else that was a big thing that you just said If I put my finger on this pulse this is gonna give me an indication of where I'm going?

Miriam: In terms of my pre-sales no, I really I made a list which was a really exhaustive list also I'm not going to sell to people that have nothing to benefit from here and who aren't a good fit and who don't fit with my demographic so I made a really exhaustive list and it was really just about working through it and doing the best I could with it and because I didn't have to go best-seller we've gotten to the end of the list and I hadn't made my target well I would have just gotten to print without it so there wasn't really another step it was really just a factor of okay we've got whatever 200 names on the list and I really want to get this job in 2 months and it end up being 4 months and it was just this is the list and a few sort persons let to that person but I did my research first and then made my list and then just work through it.

Orren: One of the other things that I've noticed is that you spend a lot of personal time pre-selling the book and getting through the process. Were there any financial resources that you also invested in it or was that something that you said no I'm not gonna invest any capital in this process?

Miriam: The only capital I invested was that I chose to buy the rights to my book which you still have to because normally with a traditional publishing contract like I said they pay you as the author but they own the rights and you are quite limited in what you can and can't do with your book. So I chose to invest in that and by that my rights out front because I didn't want any nasty surprises but other than that no I kept it very much on a shoe string you know I built a word press blog myself, I didn't spend money on advertising or marketing it was really, really organic and just making sure my message resonated and the people would pass it on because I think at the end of the day I'm wanting to build a business on the back of it which will be largely based online it's the nature of our world and so if people don't resonate with your message and do the marketing for you it's not going to work so I purposely chose not to.

Orren: That's a great segue. How did you or how will you in the future capitalize on the book's success of the 5,000 pre-sales? Are you gonna build on tour existing fan base? Are you gonna launch new products or are you just gonna stick to your events, speaking, consulting?

Miriam: Okay so one of the main reasons I wanted to okay write the book was as a positioning tool but also as a lovely summary where you could just give somebody that and go here read that and you'll know what I'm all about and now it's really a matter of building on that so I'm still in the process of developing workshops and programs around it and its quite funny I'm entrepreneurial so I come up with lots of great ideas and go off on tangents and I've spent a lot of this year just working out exactly what does my business look like, what will I do, what won't I do because I started doing lots of different things and got a little diluted for a while and I've come back full circle and gone okay so I'm going to have this program, that program, that program, it will be offered in different formats; online, in person that kind of thing but it all comes back to the message of my book. The book's a great positioning tool; it's great to say you're an author. It's actually even better to say hey my book's not a PDF it's actually a hardcopy and by the way you can walk into any major chain and buy it. So it's a great authority tool for that it gives you that credibility which is really important if you want to get a bit of cut through and it's a lovely little upsell or lovely little cheap intro to what I do and when I am running a workshop. So the book is kind of the central piece of my business I guess.

Orren: Great, one thing you mentioned was doing a small run for some of those partners when you're pre-selling. What other takeaways or lessons learned would you do differently next time besides that?

Miriam: Okay so yeah that's a really big one of you're doing the pre-sales I think doing a small print run that is a small investment that I should have made absolutely. It would have made life so much easier. I think the other thing I thought I was clear on the business I wanted to build on the back of the book but in hindsight I wasn't as clear as I needed to be because I got really side tracked on writing the book, getting it to print, marketing the book, getting it out in the stores, making sure people knew it was there and really its very rare as an author to be able to make a living just out of selling books you know you have to kind of be a J.K Rowling to get to that level so most authors earn their income on the back of the book, on the things they do on the back of the books. So I have literally spent the best part of this year just working out exactly what that will look like. So I wish I had designed that a little bit better up

front; that's a really big takeaway. I'm not sure if this is a takeaway as much but I think we all have the voice in our head that says "are you sure you can do this and does anybody care and are you good enough?" You really need to get over that very, very quickly and just talk about what you're doing everywhere you go especially with a book and make sure you always have it with you because people are so busy and they have their own stuff going on and really none is gonna care about your book that much so you better care about your book and about the message that it offers and what it is you have to offer on the back of it and really, really clear about it, you really can't be shy about it and writing a book and publishing it is the biggest personal development journey I have ever been on because you're really putting yourself out there publicly for everyone to read, criticize, comment on so as much personal development that I've done in the past this eclipse everything.

Orren: And was it a positive experience?

Miriam: Oh huge yeah, it's the best thing I've ever done and just looking back when I started the journey 2 or more years ago to where I am now as a person and as the belief I have in myself and what I'm capable of and what I stand for it's just huge you know everybody should write a book and get it out there just for that even if they don't want to do anything else with it, it's just been incredible.

Orren: Just talk a little bit more about some of those lessons learned around the backend business model and the things that you thought were gonna work that didn't necessarily pan out.

Miriam: I think that the way I approached writing my book where I started really gently finding my voice, finding who it resonated with and then it has to be a fit too when you're writing between what's genuine and authentic about you and how you feel to have people tap into it and relate to it. So you really do have to find your audience and your little tribe so that it's a two-way street and so that's how I went about writing my book and I have never had a negative comment about my book. I've had nothing but glowing remarks and saying you know it's changing my life and its changing how I think about things and thank you so much which is incredible. It just blows me away anytime someone says that and I think it's due to the fact that I really

made sure that my message was resonating and hitting the right spots. So going back to your question about the business, what I initially did with my business is I thought great I know what people need, which was a mistake you should never assume; I know what people need and so what I'm going to offer them is addressing all these things that I'm touching on in my book in 12 month mentoring program. It turns out not a lot of people want to commit to a 12 month mentoring program. So I went way too big way too quickly because I assumed that people were where I am. Looking back I wish I'd just worked with someone for 12 months and covered all these different areas of my life that would have, that year spent focusing on all of that would have just made such a difference. Hindsight is not a way to plan a business and it's not a way to approach your customer. Your customer needs to grow, you need to allow them to grow with you so yeah that's a big learning that I did so now I've gone back to actually doing the opposite taking the pressure right off my customer and letting them pick and choose how they want to work with me and then to progressively grow as they wish and I'm really big on transparency you know like this is everything you can do with me but you can pick and choose. So I have a bit of bug bear about how a lot of the personal development industry in particular operates and I talk about people being shoved down a sales funnel and being made to feel bad if they don't go to the next step then the next step, "oh you'll miss out and you'll never achieve your goals". Do you want to back yourself and I hate those sorts of messages, it's the opposite to what I say. So I'm the opposite I can give people all the information and say this is my top selling most expensive thing you can possibly do with me but you don't have to do that if you're not ready. If one day you chose great, but meanwhile would you like a $10 little effectiveness tool that I built? So I give people all the information up front and allow them to pick and choose their own ways through it.

Orren: So what's the most popular product that you're offering that customers are utilizing?

Miriam: Its really interesting because when people feel overwhelmed they usually just want to make that go away and they want to work out how to get more done in less time and so I've developed a tool called *The Effectiveness Quotient* and it just allow you to assess everything you have to do and then the value of each item in the

scheme of your work or your life, depending which area you using it on and how much time you're actually spending on it. So it's a bit of a blend of *Pareto*'s analysis and *Parkinson's Law* and a few other things and I kind of just put it together and I started using for myself and I thought okay if I made this a little more slick people can use it themselves. So most people gravitate towards that because they want to know how to get more done in less time and they think that that will be the salvation but I allow them to go there except that it comes with a little guide lets them know that I really you know yes this will take the pressure off you but you will end up in a vicious cycle if this is all you ever do. if you never get clear on why you're actually bothering to do any of this stuff in the first place you will just keep filling up the time you freed up with more stuff to do to keep busy because that's your habit and that's the patent you're on. So that's the one that sells the most. It's not actually the one I want to sell the most so it comes back to not making the choice for your customer but just allowing them to be where they're at, at a particular point in time and not judging it or trying to force it to be what it's not.

Orren: Then where do they move to from there, what style of product?

Miriam: From there they'll do a workshop and I haven't launched it yet but I'm developing an online course but with a big difference being that they will still get the personal contact. So what I've actually been doing is just coaching one on one just to referring my process and all the different tools that I offer people and take them through but I'm a really big believer in one size never fits all so I'm now wanting to launch that as an online program but still with that personalization so everybody still will get one time and then feedback and then a guide as to okay we're going to go through this program and you know you'll be bombarded with 25 different tools and techniques but really these 5 are the ones for where you're at right now and what you need these are the 5 I really want you to focus on and this is how I want you to use them and the rest you just park them for future reference or do the program again when you're ready and you you'll get that personalized instruction again on how to make them work so I sort of spent a lot of time where I'm working out a model where people can get that personal contact which I think we're so lacking in thins online world and still complete the program and be able to access it at their own when

convenience so we have this world of convenience where everything is delivered online but the truth of it is a lot of people pay for stuff that they never even do.

Orren: Sure.

Miriam: And that's a waste. So I've been mainly coaching one on one and I have just started some group coaching in person so I have brought a program back from the US which is Mike Dooley's *Infinite Possibilities* Program and so I've just been over in the US studying with him and becoming a certified trainer and it just plugs in really perfectly with my book and the messages within it so teaching that as a group program and there'll be some one day intensives and so on but it will also become an online version. So people can pick and choose how they want to take the content.

Orren: I want to change tangent just slightly. You mentioned in the conversation about the audio book version. Where did that come into play?

Miriam: Okay so I had always intended to do an audio book because particularly with personal development, it's really great to be able to play stuff in the car but also interestingly I've had a lot of people say " look I'm dyslexic and I really need the audio book which I actually hadn't considered so a lot of people will gravitate towards that and for the kind of learning, the material that I'm covering it's great to have it in the car and be able to play it over and over again because each time you listen to it you're in a different place and you will hear something you didn't hear the previous time. So I had always intended to do it and basically I waited until the final draft of the book was all signed off and I had to lock myself away for hours and hours and painstaking hours at a time.

Orren: And you did the recording. Did you also do the editing of that recording?

Miriam: God no. The recording itself is really challenging I thought it was really important that it was me reading the book rather than having a narrator and I thought how hard can it be? Well you don't until you actually have to read a whole chapter a book and try not to hear yourself swallowing in the middle of it or have a car drive pass. So I recorded it all in my home. I found the quietest room in the house

I could and got a really high quality microphone that they use on radio stations and so on but it picks up everything. So I remember one time I had read a whole chapter and I learned after a while to only do it in small chunks so that you could read a few paragraphs, stop then read the next few paragraphs and stop so that if you made a mistake you dint have to do the whole thing again. So it was a huge learning curve and I think that took twice as long as writing the actual book. But I do remember one time where this was before I learned to break it down into smaller chunks and I'd gotten towards the end of a longish chapter and my husband flushed the toilet and I never realized how loud our plumbing was until that moment. So yes, the audio book was a long and challenging process but a really good way to get familiar with my material because I had to read it over and over and over again and then I had somebody edit it all together and put a outro and intro to each chapter and make it all lovely and sexy for me the sent it off somewhere else to have it burnt to CD and have the cover made which had to obviously match the book cover and so on. So it's another whole product and another whole process.

Orren: And that's a physical product that you now distribute as well?

Miriam: Yes, it is actually we don't even have it available as the download maybe I should do that in my spare time.
Orren: There you go but it is in physical product right now.

Miriam: Yes it is. It's a 6 CD set.

Orren: And how long is that CD set?

Miriam: I think each CD is about 30 minutes or so.

Orren: So that's just over 3 hours' worth?

Miriam: Yeah. My book is not particularly long. In fact there is an optimal size for a book which is about 40, 000 words and that's about 200 pages and if you look at studies done people don't tend to recommend a book they don't finish because they feel a sense of failure and 200 pages, 40, 000 words is about what most people can

get through without losing interest or being life dragging them off the track so I was really mindful to keep my book to that length and I think mine ended up being 46, 000 words or something like that. But it just means that really the book is very succinct and it's laid out for easy reading with lots of spacing and so on. So that was a really big part of the whole project making sure that the type setting made it really digestible because what actually happens when somebody walks into a bookstore is you have 7 seconds for them to look at your front cover and decide that they want to pick it up off the shelf. Then you have 14 seconds while they read the back cover where you have to have some bullet points on the key messages from the book and they may or may not open it and actually flick through it before they take it to the counter and buy it. And if they do flick through it to open it it's actually not necessarily about reading it but does this look like something I can get through.

Orren: Right, that's where the type setting comes in.

Miriam: And that's where the type setting comes in. So that's a really big part of the process and so what it means is that my book is quite succinct, it has a lot of takeaway bullet points at the end of each chapter so I have action cheats at the end of each chapter because I want people to be able to just flick back through it and just go straight to the cracks of what was that chapter about and go away and action it and going deeper into it they get to do in my workshop some programs.

Orren: I understand. So to wrap this up under what circumstances should someone try to write and sell a book and under what circumstances do you think they just publish or even attempt?

Miriam: Well I'm in the how to space so I'll only take to that I will leave fiction out of it but I think really anyone who has any kind of business should consider writing a book. It makes you get really clear on your message, on your point of difference and it's a really great positioning tool for your clients. So for example I've seen people do really well who have a therapy practice and decided to put a book out on their particular approach to physiotherapy. It can be almost any industry and a book can be a really great way to condense your message for you to get really clear on it because if you're not clear on it you'll never be able to translate it across to anyone

else and as a lovely introduction and positioning tool with your customers. So I think anyone in business should definitely consider writing it. If you're somebody who doesn't commit to completing a project, don't do it. But I think anyone in business whose managing to stay in business knows that they have to make a commitment if they start any major project and they have to finish it. But it's not as quick and simple a process as people might think it is but I think it's still very much a process worth going through and in terms of self-publishing versus traditional publishing looking back I think maybe I was a little bit too ego driven in that like no I want the bookstore, because most people don't actually care and most people don't even notice the best-seller sticker on my book. So it was really important to me and then after a while they might notice it and I have to mention it to kind of give it that little bit of extra credibility but a lot of people don't care all that much. I think there's nothing wrong in actually writing a book, producing it really well and doing a small print run so that you can give it as a giveaway to your customers or as a marketing tool to your business partners. There's nothing wrong with that but you want to make sure if you do that you get professionals from the industry to help you with your type setting and your layout because if it's badly done it just looks wrong. If you've ever picked up a published book where it just looks so cheap and nasty and something it doesn't sit right, it's because the layout is completely wrong and there are really standard ways that books should be laid out and certain ways the pages should be numbered and placed and what should appear on this page and on the left side versus the right side and it's just one of these subliminal things that we don't realize we know it but we've seen so many books so we know what a book should look like and so when it doesn't look right it just look off. So there's nothing worse than putting a, I'm really big on quality so that was really important to me. Sorry that was a very long answer to your question Orren but in answer to the second part of your question "Who shouldn't write a book" somebody who can't commit to completing something.

Orren: And someone that falls in the former category what are the 1-3 potential next action steps that they should take if they want to start this journey regardless if they succeed or not?

Miriam: I think the answer is a little bit what my book teaches people which is number 1 start with 'why'. Why I'm a huge fan of Simon Sinek so you're probably

familiar with his *TED* talk on *Start With Why* but I've sort of used to hybrid version of the in what I teach though. If you don't know why you're doing it in the first place don't even bother. SO you need to get really clear on why do you want to write a book what's it going to do for you? Is it going to help your business? Is it going to allow you to grow your existing business, tap into new markets, get really, really clear on why you want to write that book. Number 2 - Get your head space right because it does take you by surprise as to how many self- limiting beliefs you're going to bump into on the journey so make sure you really believe in what you do and you're passionate about it and you know your stuff and you've got that complete and utter self-belief and then really decide at what level you want to do it. So do you want to do just a small cheap print run and just use it as a bit of a value add you know maybe as a free giveaway to your customers or something like that? Do you want to go larger scale? Do you want to go global with it? And I think the bigger scale you want to go to the more important it's gonna be to go down a more traditional, having a publishing control it making sure it is s top quality product. So the level that you want to get to will determine the route of the book publishing that you'll chose.

Orren: That's great advice.

Miriam: Thank you I'm glad you think so.

Orren: Awesome, thank you very much for making time and congratulations on your success.

Miriam: Thank you so much Orren it's been absolute pleasure talking with you.

Orren Prunckun graduated from Flinders University with a bachelor's degree in Law and Arts and is admitted as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of South Australia.

He won the *Australia Day Citizen of the Year Award* for Unley in 2015, was recognized as one of the "Top 50 Australian Startup Influencers" and "Mentors you should know in the startup space" by *Startup Daily*. Prunckun also received an Honourable Mention in *Australian Anthill's* "30 Under 30" award. Orren is also a member of the Unley Business and Economic Development Committee.

He has been featured in *The Advertiser, The Messenger, Radio Adelaide, Fresh FM, Startup Smart, e27 Web Innovation in Asia, IT Wire, The New Daily, Unley Life* and is a regular contributor to *In-Business Magazine*.

Orren has spoken at *Microsoft, BDO, Piper Alderman Lawyers, Flinders University, University of Adelaide, University of South Australia, The Inventors Association of Australia, Social Media Adelaide, Pecha Kucha* and *South Start Conference*.

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