



**SPI Podcast Session #148 -  
(By Popular Demand) The Story Behind The Success of Food  
Blog Pinch of Yum, with Lindsay and Bjork**

Show notes: [www.smartpassiveincome.com/session148](http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session148)

This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, Session #148.

**Intro:** Welcome to the Smart Passive Income podcast, where it's all about working hard now so you can sit back and reap the benefits later. And now your host, who's sad he gave away his Pogs in college, Pat Flynn!

**Pat:** Hey, what's up everybody? Thank you much for joining me today. This is Session #148 of the Smart Passive Income podcast. I'm super excited today. These types of episodes where I get success stories from people outside of the online business blogging entrepreneurship podcasting space – people love these success stories from people who are winning outside the sort of "how to make money online" spaces.

I can't wait to share today's success story because these are two people who are on by popular demand. These are the people behind [PinchOfYum.com](http://PinchOfYum.com), one of the most successful food blogs out there – a food blog with nearly 2 million views every single month, 1.5 million sessions, and they are making a lot of money too. How do I know that? Because they actually post their income report on their food blog.

We're going to get into why they do that and what has happened as a result of that. They're making upwards of anywhere between \$15,000 to \$30,000 a month from what they do, and they reveal exactly how they do that as well.

Let's not wait any longer. Let's welcome Lindsay and Bjork Ostrom from [PinchOfYum.com](http://PinchOfYum.com).

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**Pat:** What's up everybody? I'm so happy today to have the founders and the bloggers and the authors of [PinchOfYum.com](http://PinchOfYum.com) on the show with us. We have Lindsay and Bjork. It's such an incredible story, such an incredible and inspiring website. I'm so hungry as well after going on this site and looking at all their amazing pictures.

Before we get into the story, Lindsay and Bjork, welcome to the show!



**Lindsay:** Thank you Pat! Thanks so much for having us.

**Bjork:** Thanks Pat. We're excited to be here.

**Pat:** This is super cool. I've actually had a lot of people in the audience ask me to interview you guys because you guys are doing some amazing things. You have a food Blog at PinchOfYum, but you have income reports too. We're going to get into that, but before that let's just start at the beginning. Lindsay, why don't you start with how you got into what you guys are up to now.

**Lindsay:** Well, I've always been I don't know if I would say a foodie, but I've always been interested in food and cooking. Right after I graduated from college, so that was 6 years ago, I got a job as an elementary school teacher, which is what I went to school for.

Bjork and I were recently married so I was cooking more and kind of doing more meals for the two of us, and I was sharing a lot on Facebook or just with friends and stuff. I started to worry that maybe I was annoying all my friends because I'm blabbing about all my food all over the place, and Bjork suggested, kind of as a joke but kind of seriously, "You should start a blog."

I had no idea what I was doing. I was just completely clueless, but together we kind of got started. We got started actually with a Tumblr blog, so I started posting there. My posts were terrible. They were really just so silly. The recipes were so ridiculous and I had no idea what I was doing, but over time I continued to do it and I continued to get better.

It kind of became this thing that I didn't really know I had this passion for. I was super excited about it, and it grew in terms of traffic and readership and got to the point where we started to earn an income from it. Then eventually that income started to surpass what we were making with our day jobs, so within the last year we both officially have left our day jobs to do this full time.

**Pat:** That's so awesome. There's a lot in there, of course, and we'll get into that, but first of all just congratulations on all the success. This is just so incredible, to know that you started on Tumblr, it wasn't even on your own site, and you even said it yourself that your recipes were terrible. During that process were you ever like, "Why am I doing this?"



**Lindsay:** Yeah, early on, and also early on I never really had the idea that this could be a thing, so in a sense I had that but I also didn't have the self-pressure because I just felt like, "Oh, I'll just do it whenever I want. Whatever. No one's really reading it or anything like that."

But then as I started to realize things, my eyes were opened to the world of Google Analytics and I started to understand that game a little bit more. Then I started to really think, "Okay, I need to actually game up a little bit and do better with my content. I want to get more people into the site." I feel like that kind of put a fire under me to start improving the quality and posting more often and stuff like that.

**Pat:** Right, and when did the first thoughts come of "Maybe this is something I could do full-time"? I know when you're starting out it can be tough. I don't know how long it was until you started getting those thoughts. How long was it until you were like, "Wow, this is something I could actually keep going with"?

**Lindsay:** I think in terms of like thinking about leaving my teaching job – as a side note, that's what I've always wanted to do. It's just so bizarre to me that here I am a little more than five years after graduating with my "dream job" that I would willingly leave it for something else. It was just totally unexpected and something I never really thought of.

I think the idea first came into my mind when we started doing these income reports probably about two years after we started. Then it was maybe a year and a half after that that we made more in a month than I was making teaching. It was like, "Oh my gosh, this is legit. This is a real thing."

Just in terms of financially it would give me the freedom to leave, and then at that point it was just a question if I was willing to give up my teaching job because I loved my teaching job, regardless of the money.

**Pat:** So about 3-1/2 years actually till that point, which is quite a long time. I think a lot of people need to hear that, so thank you for being honest and sharing that.

Bjork, when you pitched this idea to Lindsay about, "Maybe you should do these recipes online," where did you get the inspiration? Where did that idea come from?



**Bjork:** At the time Lindsay and I had been married and it was within the first year or two years. We'd head over to the gym together every day, and on the way over she'd plug in headphones and I'd plug in headphones and we'd do our workout.

One of the books I stumbled upon was [Crush It](#) by Gary Vaynerchuk, which I know that you've referred to before, too. As I was listening to that there's an example, for those that haven't read that book or listened to it, where he talks about this idea of somebody who's really passionate about worms.

He says, "If you are super passionate about worms, you can take that and you can start a blog, and eventually you're going to grow that to the point where you're going to be like the worm authority. There's going to be people that manufacture fake worms and they're going to want to advertise on your site."

To me that was this idea of like, "You know what, that makes a ton of sense." I had never thought about it in that context before or that way. Then I also had read a few of these posts before where some people had said, "If you're going to do anything around food online you can basically assume that it's going to be a hobby because it's impossible to create income from that." So I had these two kind of conflicting ideas when we were getting into it.

I said, "Lindsay, I think you can take this blog thing and I think you can really make something of it." For Lindsay, I think for her starting out it was like, "Hey, I'm passionate about this. I want to do this. I have this genuine need and want to share this."

I was always kind of interested in the business aspect of it, and not even just the business aspect but also like, "Hey, if you're going to set it up on Tumblr I would love to jump on there and see what that's like to get that set up." Right from the start it was a really good tag team and it was a really good way for us to work together.

It was kind of from those early influencers that that idea came about, this idea of a blog. At the time it was like, "What is a blog?" I always understood it as sharing updates and stuff with your family, never really in the context of something that could be really specific and eventually potentially be a business.

**Pat:** That's really cool. Now, food blogs are competitive. You guys weren't the first food blog to come out there. How did you know that this was going to work, or did you?



**Lindsay:** I don't think I had any idea really. I don't even think I had an idea of how competitive it was. I feel like it's gotten more competitive even within the last maybe two years. When I started – and we were just talking about this the other day – I feel like it was a little bit different. I feel like the things that you needed to get some attention amongst food blog people was different. It just seems like it's changed quite a bit.

I think in terms of Pinch of Yum and how that's continued to kind of grow over the long term, I feel like it's not necessarily something specific other than I just share sometimes stuff about our life and I've become more comfortable with that. I think the people who want to be there for that are then inclined to come back for more of that because that's unique to Pinch of Yum.

But I think the unique thing is actually not that unique, which is just long-term hard work, just continuing to show up day after day and continuing to get a little bit better with my posts. I don't know if that answers your question. It's not really super clear.

**Pat:** Yeah, it does. And now I'm curious because this blog has grown so much over the last number of years, I'm curious when it first started where was this traffic coming from? Actually, even before we get to that can we maybe specify each of your roles in Pinch of Yum? Lindsay, what it is that you do specifically for Pinch of Yum, then Bjork, what is it that you do?

**Lindsay:** At this point where we're at, my role is primarily content creation. That includes the recipe posts that come out – we do three a week – and then occasionally a lifestyle type post. I'll do all of that, so I do all the content and obviously community management for Pinch of Yum. Content creation also crosses over a little bit into products, so basically new content is kind of my role.

**Pat:** Okay. How about you, Bjork?

**Bjork:** My role has kind of switched over the years. When we first got started I was kind of the behind-the-scenes guy, so I would do all things tech just because that's what I was really interested in, then some of the ad management and things like that.

My role has really shifted quite a bit really over the last two years. I would say realistically in terms of time I spend about 10% of my time on Pinch of Yum helping out



with stuff like maybe server maintenance or ad networks or things like that, but I've really shifted pretty heavily into kind of a sister site we have called [Food Blogger Pro](#).

FoodBloggerPro is actually a membership site for food bloggers. We started that almost exactly two years ago, so 90% of my time is spent with that community, with those people, creating content for that and then also we have a forum, so it's engaging on the forum and just kind of keeping an eye on that. So that's kind of what our roles look like today.

**Pat:** We'll get into FoodBloggerPro in a second. Going back to the traffic, how long till you started seeing some significant traffic coming in, and then where was that traffic coming from? Was it just coming naturally from Google or were you doing anything to market and promote the site?

**Lindsay:** This is at least what I remember, is that within I'd say the first two years food sharing websites were a really big deal. That would be a site like [Food Gawker](#), or [Taste Spotting](#) would be another example. These sites would curate all different recipes, so you would submit your photo to them along with a link back to your post, then they would kind of curate pages of these recipes. Foodies would go to the sites and it's like all the curated best stuff of the food blogs kind of a thing.

For me that was a really big deal in the beginning when I found those sites and started submitting, then little old nobody me started getting my photos and my recipes featured on those sites, and lots of people would favorite them. I feel like that kind of started a snowball of building traffic.

I think it also started a personal motivation, kind of what I was talking about before. Then I would go into Google Analytics and see, "Wow, from FoodGawker we got like 100 visitors today, just from FoodGawker!" and it was like, "Whoa, that's a big deal!" or was a big deal to us at the time. Then that would kind of motivate me to keep on going.

Pinterest has always been a big traffic source for us, but I've not been super active on Pinterest personally or with the Pinch of Yum account. A lot of that just comes from creating content that resonates with people that they're excited to share. Just within the last year we've been on Pinterest, but up until that time it was always the leading traffic source, even without Pinch of Yum necessarily having a presence there with our own account.



**Pat:** That's really cool. What are the numbers looking like now in terms of traffic? Where are they coming from and how many people are coming each month?

**Bjork:** Actually last month was the first month where Google surpassed Pinterest in terms of traffic to Pinch of Yum, which is exciting for us because Pinterest can be kind of up and down. There's a little bit more of the virality that goes into Pinterest. One month you could have something that's really popular and you have a bunch of traffic, then the next month maybe that dies off a little bit.

With Google, unless you're hit with some kind of weird algorithm change, it's generally an upward trend, so for the first time last month the majority of traffic to Pinch of Yum came from Google.

In terms of traffic numbers, over the past few months roughly speaking – I don't know the exact numbers – it would be like I'd say 2 million page views per month, then probably 1 to 1.5 million in terms of visits.

**Pat:** That's crazy.

**Bjork:** Yeah, it's crazy, and a lot of it has to do with so many people are searching out food. Some people might hear that that are listening to this and they're like, "Oh my gosh, I'm never going to get to that number," because it's just such a big number, but so much of it is niche-specific.

There's so many searches for recipes every single day. Food blogs have a little bit of an advantage in that they're going to have really high traffic. You might lose a little bit on that because engagement might not be as high, because once people get there they get the recipe and that might be all that they're looking for. They come, they leave, so traditionally a food blog will also have a really high bounce rate, but the advantage is you can really drive a lot of traffic. The hard part is getting those people to engage and to stick around.

**Pat:** Right. And I'm really curious now because people search for these recipes, and you've got a lot of people coming to the site searching for recipes. They get that recipe, it looks awesome, and you've got these amazing pictures.

I will say you've got to visit Pinch of Yum. There was one for [Drunken Chicken Marsala](#) I just saw, and my mouth was starting to water. I think I might try and cook that tonight, actually, so we'll see what happens.





Anyway, people are coming to these recipes and it's like they come and they get it and I would imagine that they leave. How are you staying connected with them, and also how are you monetizing this kind of site? That's what I think would be the biggest challenge.

**Bjork:** I think the connecting piece – and I think Lindsay does a really good job of this – I think it's being a little bit vulnerable, and I think you're great at doing that, Pat. It's opening yourself up a little bit and letting people know that you're human.

Lindsay is pretty intentional about sharing stories, and maybe she can talk about that a little bit later, but just doing her best to be authentic and genuine. We talk about food but also if people are going to stay it's because of you, because we all know that there are sites out there where you can really easily get good recipes. You can search through it and find what you want really quickly, so if people are going to stay it's because of who you are and your connection with them, and because of how you communicate on the blog.

Maybe you share a story about something you struggled with or something you're excited about or a personal story. People connect with that, so I think that's a really important piece. Pat, I think you're great at that, and I think that other people that really strive to be as human as possible, as scary as that is, they'll really win long-term because it helps people stick around.

In terms of the monetization, it's really an interesting scenario with food blogs, kind of going back to what we were talking about earlier. Because you can have such a huge amount of traffic, ad networks are something that traditionally work pretty well with a food blog.

I know with a lot of other blogs, because they would maybe be lower traffic and higher niche, an ad network might not be the best way to go, but with a food blog, a lot of food blogs will monetize strictly through ad networks. But as ad networks continue to be kind of a pain in the neck for us, we're continuing to think about what are ways we can move away from just using ad networks.

For us right now that looks like affiliate marketing, we have our own products that we sell, and then Lindsay also does sponsored content where maybe a brand comes and they say, "Hey, we would love for you to write a recipe and to do a post and then to talk about our food product and how you used that."





Those are really the main ways that we're monetizing right now. Ad networks is probably #1, but I think especially in 2015 we're going to start moving away from those, which is a little bit scary because we'll kind of be giving ourselves a pay decrease, but I think long-run it will be more beneficial for us.

**Pat:** Right, and what kinds of products are you selling on the site? Are these recipe books or other kinds of things?

**Lindsay:** Right now I have three ebooks on the site that are products for sale. The first one that I wrote, it was probably 2012 that I wrote that, was a book about [food photography](#). It was really kind of random at the time, but it's been really amazing in how much it's sold, totally unexpected to me. I wrote it thinking, "Maybe a few people will buy this."

**Pat:** That's interesting, that that's the first product that you created because your audience on the site are people looking for recipes to cook with. What made you decide to do a food photography product?

**Lindsay:** Well, it's funny because now sometimes we'll go to conferences and we'll talk about ebooks and I always advise people, "Always do something that you can teach or solve a problem for your readers, and be really intentional about choosing that." I feel like I did that, but it was kind of just by chance that I did that. I was not being intentional about that at all.

What happened was I went to a food photography class and I came home from the class and I was like, "Gosh, I knew all that already and I didn't know that that was the stuff that people needed to know." With my teaching background I felt excited to try to kind of take this creative process and break it down into step-by-step easy-to-understand skill-based kind of stuff, so that was kind of what spurred that on. I also just personally like photography and like learning about it, so it makes it an easy thing to write about, and it just ended up being a great match I think for our audience.

Also I think the reason that that far outsells the [ecookbooks](#) that I've published on the site and that I have [for sale](#) – which is so interesting because most of the audience is not food bloggers, they're not looking for help with their food photography – but with that food photography ebook we have a really strong affiliate program, so when people finish reading the book it says, "Hey, if you're interested in sharing this with someone if



you found it helpful, share about it on your blog and you'll get a portion of the sale." That's just been huge for us.

Those are the three main products that we have on Pinch of Yum would be the food photography book and then the two ecookbooks, but it's important to note that the food photography book I feel like pretty much singlehandedly takes the income in that department.

**Pat:** That's so crazy. Can you give us some insight on potentially how much you've made on that book?

**Bjork:** For sure. The ebook makes consistently probably \$3,000 to \$4,000 a month. It hasn't always been that much, but the growth has been up generally with it, and I think it's because awareness of it grows through the affiliate program as well. That's pretty consistent, probably in the \$3,000 to \$4,000 range a month.

**Pat:** And I see that it's on sale for \$19.

**Bjork:** Yup, it's \$19. We've thought about different steps that we're going to take in this next year to kind of build that out and make it more of a resource, so that might change in the future, but at the time of this recording it's \$19.

**Pat:** So you guys are selling a good number of these every single month.

**Bjork:** Yup, it's a good handful. I think overall we've sold 5,500 or somewhere around there, between 5,000 and 6,000.

**Pat:** That's so cool, and is this on Amazon or is this sold strictly through your site?

**Bjork:** It's just strictly through Pinch of Yum. One of the things that was a hard decision to make was where we're going to distribute it. The hardest thing with the ebook is there's so many photos with it, so to think about somebody reading that on a Kindle was a little bit sad because so much of the emphasis is on small changes you can make.

Lindsay will show, "If you do an aperture at this versus an aperture at this" – that's a photography term, aperture – "if you change your aperture this is what it will look like." If it was on just a traditional Kindle reader you might not even be able to tell, so we're just doing it strictly PDF and we're doing that through the site.



**Pat:** That's true, when you think about it Kindle is good for reading words and not so much for looking at stuff. You can publish images on Kindle, and there are those Kindle readers that do show photos in color, but you do have to pay depending on the size of those as well, I believe.

**Bjork:** Right, so if you have a bunch of photos, which we do in this book, I'm sure your profit margin would shrink pretty quickly because you're paying for the bandwidth of the download. Is that what you're referring to?

**Pat:** Yeah, exactly. Now, you also mentioned sponsored posts. I know that this is a good opportunity for a lot of the readers out there who don't necessarily have products or affiliate products to sell. Sponsored posts, if you have a good amount of traffic, can be a great monetization source. Can you talk more about the sort of process for that and how that works?

**Lindsay:** At this point we're represented by an agency that kind of acts as the 3<sup>rd</sup>-party negotiators between us as Pinch of Yum and a brand, but I know that a lot of food bloggers are working directly with brand representatives. For us we just felt like the intake of the leads and processing through all that stuff just got to be too much, so we now have that managed. I basically send all my leads to them and they'll work out contracts. If it's something that I like then I'll say yes.

I think we're lucky with food because there are just a lot of brands that want to get in front of people who love food, and if it's a good match it's the same kind of content that I would otherwise be creating. It's a new recipe usually, but it just features a new ingredient.

I feel like with the future of Pinch of Yum the next few years with moving away from banner ads I'm open and excited about doing that more. I feel like it's a great opportunity for bloggers because it is valuable to your readers when you say, "This is a good product and I like it, and here's why I like it and here's what you can do with it."

It's equally promotion for the brand and income for you as the blogger and also value for your readers, so to me it's a win-win and I'm totally fine doing them and I really like featuring brands that we like.

**Pat:** That's cool, but you have to be honest with your audience about the fact that you are getting compensation for that, is that right?



**Lindsay:** Yeah, absolutely. All my posts that are sponsored have to have multiple disclaimers in multiple places. There are rules about that for sure.

**Pat:** Got it. Then in terms of the deals that you make with these companies, or the 3<sup>rd</sup> party company that you have, are you paid per post, are you paid per number of views on those posts within a certain period of time, or how does the monetization work in terms of sponsored posts?

**Lindsay:** It's just usually a flat fee. It's like, "Hey, we know you have this kind of reach and we know you have built this kind of trust with your audience, so we will pay you X amount of dollars." Usually it's in the \$2,000 to \$3,000 range per post, so it's like, "We'll pay you this amount of money to go in front of your readers and have you kind of be affiliated with us and promote us." Maybe it's a thing, but I don't know of any sponsored post that I've done where they're paid based on clicks or anything like that.

**Pat:** Yeah, that's kind of how podcast sponsorships work. It sort of sounds similar, but I think a flat fee totally makes sense. It's probably just easier across the board. Have you ever been approached by a company that wanted to sponsor one of your posts and it didn't really align with what you were doing and you said no?

**Lindsay:** Yeah, and in the particular instance I'm thinking of it was both the product and frankly the budget. I think to me if there's any question, regardless if it's within budget or not of what I feel like is fair, we're fortunate that I feel like at this point we have the ability to say no to things, which is a really good place to be in.

It's really cool to see within the blogging community, because I think people do hold pretty tightly to what they feel and won't just let any old brand or any old product sponsor a recipe, but it's hard because sometimes they're paid well and it would be easy to say yes, but you really have to think about, "What is my blog? What is my brand? What's valuable to my readers?" and keep that at the forefront.

**Pat:** Amen, for sure. There's a lot of things that you guys have done over the years, a lot of things I'm sure that maybe didn't go quite as well. Are there some things that you wish you could sort of do over, and maybe you could give some lessons to everybody out there who's listening who could learn from those experiences? Maybe something you wish you had done sooner or better or maybe not at all?



**Bjork:** Absolutely. The one thing that you've talked about before, Pat, that I think is really true is just figuring out email, and we're still trying to do that. We're trying to figure out the best way to approach the audience on Pinch of Yum at least, in terms of email.

Right now we do an RSS to email, so when a new post goes out those people will automatically be notified. We're trying to figure out what does that look like to really do email well with Pinch of Yum. I'd be speaking to myself presently and saying it would be good to figure that out.

I think another thing that would be important, and I've talked about this before, is to not get too deep into it. This is a little bit more abstract. It's not super concrete or actionable, but I think it might be important for some people to hear. I think it would be to not be too hard on yourself, and to allow yourself to enjoy the process.

I think what can happen sometimes is we can get so deep into this. You can listen to Smart Passive Income and you can listen to business podcasts and you have all these actionable things, and pretty soon you can get so far deep in that you can start to get hard on yourself and it doesn't become enjoyable anymore.

I think if I were to do it again and I were to go back let's say three or four years when we were first getting started with this I would say, "Bjork, figure out ways to enjoy the process, to allow the process to make you a better person, as opposed to getting so far into it that you kind of put up those blinders like horses wear."

I think that can be good sometimes, but I think for the most part it's good to be aware of all the other things happening in life and not to get too focused into stuff. I think I would just have a little bit more grace with myself as we were getting started, and to not be too concerned with the small details along the way.

**Pat:** It sounds like when you were getting started you were concerned about a lot of those things that maybe looking back were a little bit trivial.

**Bjork:** Yeah, and the example that I'm thinking of specifically is Lindsay and I spent a year abroad and we were working at an orphanage in Cebu City, Philippines. That was actually the same time we were working on the side project I mentioned earlier called FoodBlogger Pro, and we were really committed to it. I had some time during the day because Lindsay was teaching at the school and I was helping the orphanage with some multimedia stuff so my schedule was pretty flexible.



But as I look back on it, that experience was a really rich and valuable life experience, and I think that if I were to do it again I would have built more margins into my life and into my time in order to enjoy that experience a little bit more, as opposed to being so focused on getting this business launched.

It's hard because the business stuff is super tangible, like it's numbers and it's Analytics and we can see it grow, and the life stuff is a little bit more abstract and it's harder to see the value in that, but there's definitely value in that. I think that I've tried to teach myself to be aware of that and to not get too focused on the business stuff.

**Pat:** That's cool. Thank you for sharing that. Now, you're a food blog but you have income reports. Where did this idea come from, why are they there, and how has it been working out for you guys?

**Bjork:** I was trying to think back to when we first started those. That was kind of around the time of the story that I referenced earlier where we kind of had these two people sitting on our shoulders, one saying "Hey, you can't create an income from a food blog" and then this other shoulder where it's like, "Hey, yeah you can."

I think that it might have been around the time that you were doing the niche site duel. Do you remember when you first started doing that, Pat?

**Pat:** August of 2010.

**Bjork:** Okay, so that was after that.

**Pat:** Well, that's when it started but it really started to get into motion maybe 3-4 months after that.

**Bjork:** Sure, so I was aware of that and I was aware of those. I don't remember if it was those specifically, and it wasn't really like a niche site that we had started, but I was reading through some of those reports and some of those other people that were doing income reports and I thought, "Hey, this makes sense. We're kind of starting at Ground Zero here." The first one we did was like \$28 or something like that.

I asked Lindsay – I think I asked permission – if I could jump on and start to do these monthly reports just to kind of keep track of "Is this something that's possible?" but



also it was really good accountability for us in order to continually figure out ways to improve and to do things differently and to implement new things.

For us, we really started it out as like accountability, but then also this experiment. We called it the food blog money-making experiment, which is one of the least creative names of all time, but that's what it was. It was a food blog money-making experiment.

**Pat:** If you're talking about keeping track and holding yourself accountable and goal setting and that sort of stuff, that's stuff you can do in private. It's funny that I'm asking you these questions and I'm the one who's doing these income reports myself, but I'm curious. Why publish that on a site where those readers aren't maybe going to be necessarily looking for an income report?

Like I imagine I go to find a recipe and I see income reports, and part of me is like, "Whoa, this is super cool" because this is who I am and I like business and I like to see those things, but I could see another part of me being like, "Okay, this person's just trying to make money off of me."

**Bjork:** For sure, and that's a tension that I think we felt and we continue to feel. With Smart Passive Income you publish an income report and it's like, "Well, it's Smart Passive Income. That's totally aligned with what you're doing," and for us it's like, "Pinch of Yum and income reports," which isn't aligned at all with what the other content is.

To be honest I don't know, when we think back on it. Do you have something that you want to share?

**Lindsay:** Yeah – and this is maybe a little vague because we're both kind of like, "Hmm, why was it?" – but I think we both had the idea that the value wasn't going to be right then and there, but that we were just starting something and the value would be one year in or two years in when we would really start using that information to then kind of create the teaching side of Pinch of Yum. Do you think that's true?

**Bjork:** Yeah, and I think the other piece too is it was a way for us to sync up two very different things in one place for us as a couple. It was Lindsay, Pinch of Yum, food – and I'm a terrible, terrible chef. I can't cook.

I tried to make an omelet for lunch today and, this is no overstatement, I think I ruined the pan. Lindsay's like, "I think we're going to have to throw this away." So I'm a





terrible chef but I'm really interested in this world of online business and technology surrounding websites and all that stuff.

So part of it, too, was a way for us to co-exist in one place, even though we have these vastly different interests. They're starting to come together a little bit, like I think Lindsay's maybe starting to get a little bit more interested in this stuff, and I'm attempting food stuff. I'm still not there yet. But part of it too was I think for us to be able to work on one project together despite our varied interests.

**Pat:** Yeah, I see that. I'm on the site now and I can see both of your personalities here. It's all in one spot, like you said. You've made it your own. It's a reflection of who you guys are.

**Bjork:** Yeah, for sure. It's definitely, like you said, something that you wouldn't necessarily expect when you come to a site, but I think that's maybe why it's a little bit intriguing too is because it's this site that's not around online business, and yet we're talking around online business.

It's kind of like if that worm farmer that Gary Vaynerchuk talked about eventually started doing little business reports. Suddenly for other worm farmers it would be really intriguing because they're like, "Oh, this is how this worm farmer is creating an income." I think that's what those have done for Pinch of Yum.

**Pat:** Right. For me personally I know that now that I've shared my income for over six years now, people look at that every month and they want me to get to that next level. They're supporting me whenever they purchase something either through an affiliate link or something that I'm offering. It's like they know that they're a part of that and kind of we're all in it together.

I feel like it's the same thing with you because when people were like, "You've got to interview the guys from Pinch of Yum. They do an income report and it's awesome!" it's obvious that they notice it and they think it's cool and it helps you stand out from everybody else – not just for that reason and that's not the only reason to do it, but that's sort of a byproduct of doing that.

**Bjork:** Yeah, for sure. It's fascinating and it's intriguing and I think it's really helpful too. I would say for us looking back, obviously Gary Vaynerchuk and that book had a really big impact, but then to see when you'd publish these reports, for us we look at it and we're like, "Hey, this is something that's possible."



We've also had stories where people have come to us and said, "We looked at one of those and we're like 'Hey, it's possible.'" It's kind of the 4-minute mile. Once somebody broke that record then people are like, "Oh, I guess you can run a 4-minute mile." Then a lot of people started running 4-minute miles, whereas before people never did it.

It's almost like just for people to know that it's possible allows them then to be able to jump in and do it on their own.

**Pat:** That's really cool. It even reminds me of Dan Norris who was on the show recently from [WordPress Curve](#). He has a service helping people with WordPress customer service type stuff and he publishes an income report as well. That's not necessarily related but people love him for that. They love his company and back it totally and are completely in line with what he has to share and his values, and that helps spread word of the company.

**Bjork:** Yeah, for sure. I think in the back of your mind people are always wondering, "Hey, how does this site make money?" I think people are at ease a little bit when they know or can clearly see how it is because they know they're not being tricked along the way, or somebody's not trying to pull something over on them.

I think the transparency really helps people to feel at ease. It's like somebody's coming to me and they're saying, "This is how we create income from the site. If you're looking at a chicken marsala recipe, here's how we're creating an income from it." I think that helps people relax a little bit maybe when dealing with anything business-related online.

**Pat:** That's true. Now, I know there's some people out there listening right now that are shaking their heads and they're like, "No, I would never do that," and I don't think it's for everybody. You kind of have to see what it might be like. This isn't an answer for everybody, and some people don't even share their income but they share something that they are continually reaching toward.

I remember [Chris Ducker](#) when he had his Virtual Business Lifestyle website and he was talking about how he was going to convert from this sort of full-time CEO in his business to a virtual CEO and spend less hours with the office every week and more time with his family. He was documenting that over time, how many hours he was in the office and how many hours he was at home, and people were loving that process.



I think just the idea of being able to come back and see something and see progression and see that there's care there, it's almost like opening up those factory doors. This is sort of your way of doing it, which is similar to the way I do it, but there's all different kinds of ways to sort of open the kimono a little bit and show people how things work, to get people more in tune with what you have to offer, and show how the insides of the factory work to get people to understand that you actually care about what you do.

**Bjork:** Right. And another huge piece of it too is just like it's insanely helpful, and I think there are other ways that you can show how the factory works with maybe not letting people all the way in but you can reveal things that will be helpful for people.

I think at the core really what it is is it's helpful if people can see really concretely like you're not just kind of saying "I'm creating an income from this," you're saying "Here's how much I am creating from my site." Then you're also saying "Here's how I do it," which is even above and beyond helpful, so I think at its core it's figuring out what are the things that we can share that are even more helpful than the traditional recipe or things like that. I think that translates into other niches as well.

**Pat:** Yeah, totally. Let's finish up by talking about [FoodBloggerPro](#). Where did the idea for this come from?

**Bjork:** FoodBloggerPro is really kind of an 'ear to the ground' business. We've always tried to keep our ear to the ground and say, "What is it that people are talking about and what are the needs that people have?"

One that we just consistently heard people ask for and request is everything around the technical side of blogging and photography. That would be like SEO, that would be like monetization, that would be like how do you take a food photo or edit in Photoshop? We'd really consistently get questions like that.

There's a lot of different ways that you can go in and create information products around those, and we decided to try a membership site. We launched FoodBloggerPro two years ago and there's really three components to it. There's the videos. We have 300 videos all around those things I mentioned before, kind of 3- to 5-minute videos or 3- to 10-minute videos.

**Pat:** 300 videos?

**Bjork:** Yeah, it's like Screencast, live photography shoots, things like that.



**Pat:** Did it start with 300 or have you kind of added more over time?

**Bjork:** It was maybe like 200-250 that we started with, so it was like super hustle and we did that in three months. It was kind of a crazy three months. So there's videos. Then there's a community forum so people can go and post questions and interact on the community forum.

That's one thing that we've found has been really beneficial just because, as you know, the idea of starting a blog or starting a website can be a really lonely thing, especially if you have people in your life that are supportive but maybe don't necessarily get it. There's really detail things that some people will get and other people won't.

To have that community element has been a really beneficial thing, and to meet those people in person has just been a really cool thing. So there's a community forum, and then lastly we're very slowly starting to add in actual software tools.

The example of the one that we have right now is a nutrition label generator. If you paste in ingredients and then press Analyze, it will spit out a nutrition label that you can then download and upload to your blog to go along with a recipe. That's a really simple way for people to get a nutrition label onto their site.

**Pat:** How did you guys start that process? You guys aren't developers yourself, right?

**Bjork:** No. That was one of those things where if you would have said three years ago that I would have had any involvement with developing some type of software solution I would have been like, "What?" But I think that really what it comes down to is finding capable people and then communicating your vision.

I'm not a developer by any means, but the process for that was reaching out to a couple friends who recommended a developer. Then I mocked up a couple things in Photoshop. The hardest part was figuring out – so this is getting into a little bit of the detail stuff – but an API, essentially a database that we could partner with that would pull that information.

Once we found that, essentially I found a developer and said, "Photoshop files, here they are. This is kind of what we're looking for," and then they mocked it up and we did a couple revisions and then we pushed it live.



**Pat:** That's awesome. That's super cool. So Lindsay, what's kind of on the docket next? What's up next for Pinch of Yum?

**Lindsay:** We're really excited about reducing ads in 2015. I don't even know if reducing ads is the right word but maybe replacing banner ads with advertisements directing people to our own products, so kind of building out that library of products.

I think a lot of that will be a teaching focus, as we've realized from the case study of the photography book versus the two cookbooks. Something that teaches or solves a problem for people is really compelling and really helpful, and that's going to be the ticket for us.

I'm super excited just to change a little bit of the feel of the site and hopefully make it feel – you know how it is having a blog. You try to get it to look a certain way and then you have to plunk ads on there and you don't know what's going to show necessarily. So being able to make the whole experience more cohesive by building out that product library and then replacing banner ads eventually with ads for our own products, I guess in-house ads.

**Pat:** I love that. I look forward to that. Bjork, to finish off with you, what are some things that right now in your business are truly working? What's working really well for you right now?

**Bjork:** I think one thing that we've really found that has been effective is intentionally treating people like people. We do a lot of email and interaction individually with people and also in the forums, responding to comments and things like that. It's a lot of work to do that and it's not very scalable, but we've found that it's been one thing that's been really, really beneficial to us because we're able to establish those connections with people, which goes a really, really long way.

The other thing that I would say would be important is to get people in your life that get it. For both Lindsay and I, we have mastermind groups that we meet with on a weekly or almost weekly basis. I think those people being able to speak into your life and say, "Hey, you should do this a little bit differently" or "This might be a way that you guys could improve" is really, really beneficial.

I don't think that necessarily has to be people that are doing online business. I think it's great if it can be, but just to have people that kind of understand a little bit what you're doing has been really beneficial for us.



**Pat:** That's super cool. Correct me if I'm wrong, but to get more information from you guys, head on over to [Pinch of Yum](#), right?

**Bjork:** That would be it, yup.

**Pat:** All right, so everybody out there, go ahead and visit Pinch of Yum. They also have the nice navigation area at the top where you can see how everything is going over there. The income reports are super incredibly helpful. Last month, November of 2014, I see \$20,751.47. Congratulations guys! That's amazing.

**Bjork:** Thanks Pat. I really appreciate it. One thing before we wrap up, I just really wanted to say thank you for what you've done. You've had a huge impact on us. It's like life stuff, like we're doing different stuff today than we would be if we hadn't figured this Smart Passive Income stuff, so we really appreciate you and what you've done for people. It's life changing stuff and it means a lot, so thanks.

**Pat:** Thank you for that, guys. You can thank my employer for letting me go back in 2008.

**Bjork:** Yeah, I'll put a call in.

**Pat:** Love you guys. Thank you so much. Best of luck to you, and we'll have to catch up again soon.

**Lindsay:** Sounds good. Thanks Pat.

**Bjork:** Thanks Pat.

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**Pat:** I hope you enjoyed that interview with Lindsay and Bjork from PinchOfYum.com. If you'd like to get the show notes for this episode you can go to [SmartPassiveIncome.com/session148](http://SmartPassiveIncome.com/session148) and you can get all that information right there, all the links that were mentioned on the show.

I highly recommend you check out Pinch Of Yum, not just because of their Drunken Chicken Marsala and other recipes of course, but because of their income reports which



are super inspiring. There's also traffic reports on those sites as well with a lot of insights, actually.

I was just looking at the recent one and I think they had like 65% of their viewers actually coming from mobile. I didn't check yet but I hope their site's mobile-responsive, and I hope yours is too. Sort of a side note there.

Secondly, also check out [FoodBloggerPro](#). The home page to that which promotes their sort of course for how to create a food blog specifically is super cool. They have a really cool optin area or promotional area with video behind it as well, so you can see Bjork and Lindsay there. She's standing on a chair taking pictures of food on the table, which is super cool, so check that out.

Again, show notes are available at <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session148>.

I'd also love for you to check out the sponsor for today's episode which is [99Designs.com](#). That's a super cool site that I've used many times in the past, and I know a lot of you have used it as well to great success.

If you're looking to design anything in your business, or even outside of your business, from a logo to letterhead for your stationery or a mug or a tshirt or a food truck wrap, whatever the case may be, whatever you're designing, a website, a landing page or whatever, you can go to [99Designs.com](#), enter your description for what you want, and then all the sudden designers from around the world are going to design something based on your description, and you get to pick the one that you like best.

It's really cool because it's pretty affordable and it's very, very fast turnaround within 7 days. If you don't like the final choices that you have, you can do another contest where you get your money back. They're so good about that.

You can go to [www.99Designs.com/spi](http://www.99Designs.com/spi), which gets you a \$99 power pack of services for free which you can apply to your next design contest. Again that's [99Designs.com/spi](http://www.99Designs.com/spi). Go ahead and check it out.

Again, thank you to Lindsay and Bjork for coming on the show today and sharing everything with us. They're super cool and you are super cool for staying on and listening to the episode. I appreciate you so much. This is why I do what I do, to have you listen and get value and hopefully take action from what you hear on the show.





Until next week, keep crushing it. Love you guys. If you have a sec, go ahead to iTunes and leave a review for the show if you haven't already. I appreciate it so much. I'll see you next week. Thanks guys.

**Outro:** Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast at [www.SmartPassiveIncome.com](http://www.SmartPassiveIncome.com).

## **Links and Resources Mentioned in This Episode:**

### **Today's guests:**

[Pinch of Yum](#)

[Food Blogger Pro](#)

Ebooks:

[Tasty Food Photography](#)

[The Creamy Cauliflower Sauce ebook](#)

[Everyday Healthy ebook](#)

### **Other Resources:**

[Food Gawker](#)

[Taste Spotting](#)

[Crush It](#) by Gary Vaynerchuk

[Dan Norris WP Curve](#)

[Chris Ducker](#)

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