**SPI Podcast Session 198:
Building a Book Launch "Street Team" (Plus Pre-Order)
With Daniel Decker**

Show Notes: www.smartpassiveincome.com/session198

This is the Smart Passive Income Podcast with Pat Flynn Session #198. Alright team, here we go. 3, 2, 1 Podcast!

Welcome to the Smart Passive Income Podcast where it's all about working hard now so you can sit back and reap the benefits later. And now your host—he competes with himself to see just how much broccoli he can eat—Pat Flynn!

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Pat: Hey what's up everybody. Pat Flynn here. Thank you so much for joining me today. This is probably one of the most exciting weeks in a while because next week, if you're listening to this on the day it comes out, my new book "Will It Fly" will be available, and I am very excited and very nervous and there's just so many things going on. A lot has been leading up to this, and one of those things is a launch team that I've been able to build actually with the help of a man named Daniel Decker, who we have on the show today.

He's managed launch teams for people like Lewis Howes and Michael Hyatt and other people you've probably heard of before. And I wanted to bring him on the show today to talk about how we've been able to build this team, mobilize it, and some of the strategies and tools you can use within this team to help you launch not just a book, but anything that you come out with with a bang.

So I'm not even going to waste any time. We're just going to get right into it. Again this is Daniel Decker, who is managing my launch team which consists of over 500 people to help launch the book next week, and I hope you're gonna help out too. Look out for an invitation to a launch party and all this cool stuff. Again, everything is happening next week and if you're listening to this in the future, just go ahead and check out the book at WillItFlyBook.com. And you can get more information about that there. Now here we go. This is Daniel Decker, my launch team manager for "Will It Fly".

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Pat: Alright everybody. I'm so happy to welcome and introduce Daniel Decker to the show. Daniel, thanks for being here man.

Daniel: Pat, thanks for having me.

Pat: So your experience with launch teams, actually before we even get into how you got into this, can you define for everybody really what is this launch team that everybody keeps talking about?

Daniel: Yeah, absolutely. I've been in the book marketing and platform building industry for 14 years or so and started doing launch teams I guess maybe five or six years ago, so quite a while that I've been working with them. But to me what a launch team is, is really the opportunity just to mobilize your community. So for someone like you especially who has a little bit of a larger platform, the ability to take people who are already fans and just mobilize them to engage in the content, engage in the process and just to help you support the book and launch it in an amplified way, but it's not limited to just people with a platform. Anybody can utilize a launch team. It's really just leveraging that community.

Pat: Okay and can this philosophy of using a launch team be used for things other than books?

Daniel: Absolutely. It can be used basically for anything from products to books or anything. I kind of look at launch teams as, you know, we talk about leverage, leveraging the platform and what not and to have leverage you have to have a lever. And to me the launch team is, really, you know any time you're launching something, whether it's a product, a course, a book, whatever, you have to have levers to help you amplify your impact and a launch team is just one of many opportunities.

Pat: Okay, so the launch team, how do we even get started? And I want to make sure to try to address those who not only have a platform, but maybe we start with those who don't even have a platform. I think a lot of people hear this and they're like, "I don't even have any fans. This is impossible for me to do," but you kind of hinted that it's not.

Daniel: No, it's not and that's the beauty of it because it's a really low cost opportunity. I don't want to say low hanging fruit, because it's certainly better once someone has a platform that can, like for you with your launch team, when we send out a tweet or a post and people automatically respond. So for someone who doesn't, who is just starting out, they don't have to have 300, 500, 1,000 people on a launch team. They can equally be successful with 50, with 100, and most of us—if we're doing anything and we have friends out there and we're on Facebook—most of us have at least 50-100 people that we could invite to be a part of something with us, and it just really means doing that.

So the first step is when you're looking to create a launch team, you have to invite people to be a part of it. And for me what we do is we typically create a simple, very simple sign up form. I use WuFoo. There's many other solutions out there. SurveyMonkey, all kinds of things. You can use Google Forms, but I just create a very

simple form that's got a few fields in it, name, email, do you want to be a part of this launch team, that kind of thing. And you send that out to people or you can post it on social. You can do it on email, you can text a friend and just invite them to be a part of what you're creating, and you'll really be surprised because most people doubt how many people would be interested in helping them. What do they get out of it? They're just going to promote my stuff. And that's not necessarily true. They look at it as being endeared to you because they want to be a part of the process. They want to learn how it goes and many just will do it to support you because they like you.

Pat: Absolutely. And so kind of getting into the more specific, can you define what those fields are? I think a lot of people are gonna be interested, so it's name, email, and you also collected I think Twitter handles, and why do you want to be a part of this, and what you can do to help promote, I think, if I remember correctly.

Daniel: Yeah, and that can kind of vary based on the type of team that's being created, but for the most part you want to gather the necessities, the name, email address, you can ask for their social media handles, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram. And some of that is so that you can build a list that you can build with the team later on. I like to keep some open ended form fields in there such as why do you want to be a part of the team, what could you do to help promote the product or the book, or tell us something unique about yourself, something fun.

The biggest thing with these, Pat, is you have to approach a team not as if this is an army of people who are just gonna be promoting your wares. It is a community, so you want to make it fun. You want to make it something that people want to be a part of, something where you're gonna treat them like you'd want to be treated if you were a part of something with someone, so that you could get them feeling like it's fun to be a part of.

Pat: So speaking on that, like what else do people get by joining these groups? I think it's important to consider that, so that when people ask, "Well why should I join anyway? What's the point?," we can really define what that is. So not just being involved in the process, but kind of what other things do they get as a result?

Daniel: Sure. For the most, in a typical book launch team, the participants of the team will typically get a review copy of the book in advance. And that could be a physical copy that's mailed to them or a digital copy that's sent to them, and the digital copy can either be in PDF form or it can be a Kindle version or whatnot. There's many ways to deliver it to them. And then they typically get access to a Facebook group, and that's really just so that you can be able to communicate with them on a daily basis or how ever regular basis you choose to, and it's so that they can communicate together.

That's one of the big components in this, and Pat, you've experienced this too. The team, once they're together, they really feed off of the energy of each other, and it's really exciting just to watch them and see the things that they come up with and create

and are sharing, but those are the primary things. You can incentivize groups. You can give them access to, if you're gonna have any bonus material for your book or for your product, you can give them access to it first. You could do a special tele-seminar or webinar or something with the team as sort of a pep rally-type of opportunity. You really want to let them be a part of the process and give them opportunities to access content along the way, so that they're getting more and just really feeling so super engaged that they're gonna do everything they can to spread the word.

Pat: Yeah, I mean I want you all to think about this. You're given access to stuff that a lot of people, most people, aren't going to see until it's actually out. And as we all know, when you open up the factory doors, people get interested, people start to get hyped up about what it is that you're doing.

And I think this is a perfect way to kind of lead that charge on launch day, which is really cool, and Daniel's been doing a great job engaging the audience there. And it doesn't have to be someone that you hire for this. It could be yourself there engaging, and of course I'm in the community, in the launch team community, participating in there and answering questions and that sort of thing too, which has been really, really fun.

And we just recently shared a few things, so when people go into that group, I think the first thing that Daniel had me do actually a long time ago was create a welcome video. And this video Daniel then posted in the Facebook when everybody arrived after the application process, which we'll get back to in just a sec, everybody was commenting on that video. And everybody couldn't express how excited they were to be there. And then we've been sharing other things. We just shared the Intro. You can share different bits and pieces of the book, and I just shared the Intro and I have 91 comments of people totally in love with it, but also a lot of great comments and thoughts too.

Again, I'm still in the middle of finalizing this book, and so I'm getting a lot of great information on things that I can then incorporate into the book too, which is really cool. So I'm making it exactly the way it needs to be for those it is exactly for, which I'm really, really excited about.

Now going back to the application process. Should you have a goal in how many people you should have in there, and if you get more than that to apply, how do you kind of narrow down that group to that, or do you take all of them?

Daniel: Yeah, that's a good question, and I've done a variety of launch teams from people like you—Lewis Howes, Michael Hyatt, Jeff Goins—so the size of the team really just varies dependent on the person's platform and what they're able to do. So for someone who's new, don't look at the fact that we talk about a 500 or 1,000 person launch team and feel that that's overwhelming, because really you can have a very successful launch team with around 50-100 people. You really need at least 50 to get

some good engagement, but that's not very hard to get. I mean if you open up your forum and you push it for a week or two, it's usually typically pretty easy to get 50-100 people.

But say that you set your goal, and that's really just kind of an arbitrary goal of how many copies are you willing to give away if you're mailing copies, or how many course accesses are you willing to give if it's for a product or a course, those types of things. The biggest hiccup for most people is they say, "Well why would I want to give my book away because these are people who may buy it later," or a course, but you can't look at it like that. Because you're battling obscurity in most cases.

The biggest thing is I equate it to a local burrito shop opening up. If a burrito shop opens and they give away a burrito today, and Pat Flynn goes and eats it and loves it and tells 50 friends, that restaurant, that burrito shop just made 50 more sales based off of giving away one burrito. So that's a big point, making sure just that quantity is based on what you can handle.

I don't really personally like teams much larger than 500 because it starts to become too hard to manage and keep it personal. I like to keep teams very personal so that we're really engaging with each other, we're really able to listen to ideas, follow the flow in the Facebook group and what not. Because like you mentioned, the 91 comments on the Intro chapter, a lot of those, that thing was just posted and those comments came in pretty much instantly. People stopped what they were doing to go and read that Intro and comment back. It's crazy.

Pat: Yeah, they feel special to be a part of this group and I thank each and every one of them for that, so each of you who are listening that are in that group, seriously thank you so much. You are making an impact on what this book becomes and how it affects other people's lives too. So this is not just a strategy for "let's get more reviews on launch day", which we ask people to do that of course, and it's not just "let me share it with everybody to get good vibes" and all that stuff. This is like you helping to make change and helping to make it the thing it needs to be before we put it out there. And I'm so thankful for everybody out there and especially you Daniel for helping manage this team.

Daniel: Thanks. That's a big benefit of the team too is that when you do them far enough out, and I suggest that a launch team be organized at least two months away from whatever your release date is or a month. You could go with a month, but two months is really more optimal because that gives people, you want to allow proper time for them to get the copy of the book, either physically or digitally and to read through it or get access to the course or product and give them honest time. Because this isn't the only thing they're doing in their lives, to be able to read it, consume it or go through it.

And you can use the launch team almost like a focus group or crowd sourcing to give feedback on what they liked, maybe what they didn't like. And a lot of times for books

especially, I'll post in the Facebook group, "Hey guys, whenever you're reading any quote that really stands out to you, comment on this post and share it," and then you can look at that and you can take a lot of the more popular, the repeat quotes that people are putting in there and turn them into social media memes, shareables, tweetables and all of that.

So you're basically identifying things that you may have already known. You may have thought, "This thing's really gonna be hot," or it may surprise you. You may look at some content and go, "Huh, I didn't think people would really resonate with that, but they really, really do so I need to seize that opportunity and really push it." So it's a great crowd sourcing opportunity too.

Pat: Yeah, I love that, and that always happens when I share my presentations with people. I might do it in front of a few people, friends, before I actually go up on stage in front of hundreds of people, and often times they tell me "that was really cool" and it's a part that I never really considered to be important. So when I go up on stage and do it, I actually emphasize that part. I might even create a slide for it because it had an impact on a smaller "focus group", sort of like a beta group for software. It's like just this same idea kind of pulled into the book specifically or course or whatever it is that you're doing and that's not to say that the people who are in here. You mentioned before that, yes you are giving away essentially your book, but I would care to say and I'm not just planting this seed because I want people to do this. I think this is what would happen. This is what I would do if I was that involved with the early processes of the book, I would want to support the author and buy it when it comes out even if I had a copy already.

Daniel: Yeah and that happens. That's surprising especially to publishers because when I first started doing these launch teams, the publishers were very weary of launch teams, and they were like, "Why would we give out or mail 3,500 books." And I can track it and show it over time that the net gain that a launch team has, especially for a newer author, is significant.

And it kind of goes back to that old adage where if a product is good, it will go. If it's not, it won't. That sort of thing. So people actually like the book and it's good and they will buy it and they'll get copies for friends, and the exponential purchase power of the group really is impactful. Now if they don't like the book and everybody starts getting quiet on you, then you know you might have an issue with content that maybe you weren't aware of.

Pat: Right, right and that again, going back to hopefully you've written good content. If it's just even a small group of 50 or even 30, it could still have a huge impact exponentially in the way that you're talking about it. What are some of the big mistakes that people have made when creating their launching? Obviously you're a pro at this, so you know what to do and when, but I can imagine a lot of people trying it out and not

being very successful because of a few things. What are some of those things people can look out for?

Daniel: There's definitely a few, and one of the big ones is not treating the community like a community and treating them more like a commodity, because you can't go in there. It's kind of like your Twitter feed or your Facebook. When it's time to launch your book, unfortunately many people wait until the last minute. And then all of a sudden— I'm gonna put this back to the analogy and to the launch team—but with social media, all of a sudden two weeks before their launch every post that they're posting is "buy my book, buy my book, buy my book," and people are just like so worn out and they hate it.

And the same thing with the launch team. You can't look at them and treat them like mercenaries and just continually say, "Hey guys, go do this, go do that". You've got to also engage with them and talk to them and share with them. And just like you, Pat, you've gone in there and posted some authentic posts thanking them, engaging them, appreciating them for the process and the feedback that they're giving. So it's not always just giving them marching orders of, "Hey guys, go do this." It is, you're part of a community, you're networking with them. You're shepherding them. You're asking "what are you guys up to" or "what ideas do y'all have", but you're listening too. That's the big thing. If someone comes up with an idea, you have to acknowledge it and share it with the group and say, "Man I never thought about that. That's a crazy good idea. Hey team let's do that." Those sort of things.

So that's one, and then the other is starting too late. That's definitely a big one. With any sort of promotion, most people, especially if they're newer, tend to wait too long or start too late thinking they don't need as far out to plan and engage and things like that. So it's improper planning on that side.

And then three is that fear of sharing the content is really just a big one that holds a lot of people back, of not wanting to share or give access to things that they should give access to. Because your team here is going to be supportive of you. And sure there's a chance, a remote chance, that someone could take your PDF and put it out there on some black market site or whatever, but in 14 years of me doing book marketing and working with authors, I've only seen that have a negative impact like one time. It's so minute that you're dealing with something that doesn't really affect the big outcome.

Pat: Right. So leading up to the launch, let's say the book is coming out in two weeks, and of course we're recording this quite early in the process so we're not at this point yet, but I'm pretty curious. What happens, let's say, two weeks out to start to mobilize this group and to get them to really take action on launch day and what action would that be actually?

Daniel: Yeah. One of the things that I do is we try to equip the launch team with tools. So it's not just asking them to do things—"Hey guys come read this content"—but we're

also equipping them. We're listening, like I said, and taking whatever quotes and memes, and then typically we'll build a share page, and that could even be on your book site. It could be a back end page on your blog or whatever. It could be PatFlynn/share. Go on that page, we would take some of those top quotes and turn them into tweetables and share images, and we basically embed those things on that page so that they're all there, easy, click of a button.

A tool that I use for the Twitter things is ClicktoTweet.com. So when you go and you post your Twitter message on that page, you can just put a little button next to it, Click Now To Tweet. So you basically make it very easy for them to go and share and promote things that you've created that will be consistent. They're gonna include the hashtag. They're gonna include the URL to the book.

So leading up to launch, it's really a significant push for them to be sharing, to be talking about the book with their friends, to get the word out there, to leave reviews for a book launch, to leave reviews on GoodReads.com, to be preparing to leave a review on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. You can't leave a review in most cases, you can't leave a review until the book is actually on sale on Amazon, but you're getting them in that mode that they're ready and they're prepared and they're promoting.

And then typically at some point, we'll do some sort of rally with the team, and usually within that two week window of the launch we'll do a webinar or tele-seminar or something real simple. It's very casual. It's just an opportunity to thank the team again, to do a little pep rally with them, to say, "Hey guys, anybody else got any creative ideas you've seen? What's going on with this? Speak up now." And a lot of times they'll share ideas because they're smart people in your community that are looking at things, not just digitally, but you might have someone who did a launch team with Mark Sambourne, a leadership author a couple of years ago and we had no idea, but there was a VP of a very big company that was a part of the launch team and he got on a tele-seminar one night and said, "Hey, I want to create these cards and get them out to 30,000 employees of our company and invite them to go and be part of the book launch and get books," and he ended up buying some copies. It's crazy. You just never know.

Pat: Yeah. Awesome. I love that, and I'm so looking forward to seeing what happens with this group. And you know, I'm just very excited for everybody out there who is listening to this and who is thinking, "This actually isn't all this difficult."

And actually the first time we've heard of this is when Jeff Goins was on the show a long time ago, and this was something that I thought I had done, but I didn't do correctly. That episode for that, if you don't remember, we'll link to it in the Show Notes and stuff, was Jeff and I talking before the launch of my book, and then in the middle we time traveled to after I launched the book. And then one of the mistakes I made was not mobilizing this group that I had created in the best way possible. That group has kept growing and it's about 17,000 people now because it's just a public Facebook

group, and it's a great resource for all authors, not only to that in the show too. But this however seems a lot more personal and I think that's definitely the way to do it. So do you have any final tips for people, how can they really just be more personable and really make a deep connection? Because I think that that's really what this is very much driven for, that one to few connection to make a lot of action happen on launch day.

Daniel: Absolutely. I mean it definitely is that scenario because it's amazing what 10 or 100 or 300 people who are really engaged can do versus having 1,000 people who aren't. But to a point you just made, it made me think of something, Pat, because you do have your other Facebook groups and other things like that, and a lot of people do try to create like a Facebook group. And where launch teams, not all launch teams are created equal. One key component in this is that you need to have people's email address. Like anything else on Facebook, not all the posts end up showing to your group members, or it might get lost in the feed, or whatever. We make a priority that any important posts or any action step or anything that's significant, we post it in the Facebook group, but we also follow up with the team with an email as well, and I try to keep emails short. It's real, like we want to respect people's time. We don't want to ask them to do things that don't really matter, and just make sure that we're using email to communicate things that are significant because that will be a big point.

The biggest thing for anyone to get started is really just to think about who you can invite to be a part of your team, create a simple WuFoo form. And what I could do, Pat, if you want, I am building something out on this. It's not ready yet, but I could do kind of a quick start guide on BestSellerLaunchTeam.com that people could get that would list out the form and the tools that we use, and I could put a few resources on there too that might help them to get a quick start of how they can do it themselves. I'm happy to do that.

Pat: Yeah, that'll be great. Do you have a specific URL in mind for them?

Daniel: Yeah, BestSellerLaunchTeam.com.

Pat: Okay. Perfect. Man I think this is all the information we need to move forward, you know. I wasn't exactly sure how long this episode would go, but sometimes the best episodes are the ones that are concise, to the point, very actionable, which I think this is. So I'm very excited for everybody out there who is going to be doing this, and again that URL one more time, Daniel.

Daniel: BestSellerLaunchTeam.com.

Pat: Okay, and is there anywhere else people can find you and learn more about you?

Daniel: Yeah. Twitter is good @DanielDecker is really where I'm most active. I'm horrible on everything else because I'm knee deep in the work.

Pat: Alright man. We appreciate you. Thank you so much and let's keep mobilizing this team that we've built together.

Daniel: Awesome. Thanks Pat.

Pat: Bye bye.

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Pat: I hope you enjoyed that episode. Quick, but very actionable episode that you can use to help build and mobilize your own launch team so you can launch your next book, your next course, your next product, whatever it is that you're coming out with. Or maybe you just want to share a message and go big with it. This is how you can make it happen.

So again, Daniel thank you so much for doing what you do and for coming on and sharing this information, and I'm really excited to see it all happen next week. If you want to get the notes and the links for this episode, just head on over to SmartPassiveIncome.com/Session198, and you can get all of that information there.

I also want to give a shout out to 99Designs, the sponsor for this particular episode who has helped me a lot along the way. In the beginning I used them a lot, quite a bit for creating graphics, and it does it in a very interesting way where you can put on the website whatever you want and designers from around the world will come and design that thing for you, and you can choose your favorite one, and a lot of people like Tim Ferris and many others have used this too from book covers to website designs, landing pages, t-shirt designs, and even people in the food truck industry use it for car wraps. So it's a cool, fun way to do it in a very economical and quick turnaround kind of way. This is of course what you should do if you don't have that one designer that you can work with in your brand like I do, and I'm very fortunate to have Dustin on my team, but if you don't have a Dustin like myself to help you create awesome graphics, check out 99Designs. Head on over to 99Designs.com/spi and you'll get $99 free that you can put towards your next design project. Again that's 99Designs.com/spi.

Guys, we are coming up to the final countdown here for the launch of my book "Will It Fly". I just want to thank you again so much for your support, and head on over to WillItFlyBook.com right now. You can pre-order it, or again if you're listening to this in the future, you can go ahead and check it out and purchase it. Again, thank you so much. I think you'll enjoy it quite a bit, and I love you guys. I appreciate you.

I'll see you in the next episode of "Will It Fly" where we're actually going to be talking with my own team members. Not just people like Daniel who I've hired to help out, but also Matt and Mindy and Janna and my content manager who is gonna help us discover what it all took to put this together and hopefully it goes well next week. So we'll have

some good things to say. Alright, cheers. Thanks guys. I appreciate you and here we go.

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