show notes at: http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session68

Hey what's up everyone, this is Pat Flynn and welcome to session #68 of the Smart Passive Income Podcast!

I'm going to just jump right into today's content, and I'm going to do so by giving you a little scenario.

I want you to imagine that you're about to get married. Whether you're married already or you never plan on getting married, that's not the point here - the point here is this - it's about 10 weeks before the wedding, and you have to send 200 wedding invitations out within the next few weeks. It's a large wedding.

At this point, you have no invitations, and you and your partner decide to construct them yourself. DIY wedding invitations. Actually, this is what my wife and I did for ours, and it was actually a lot of fun. Sure you could pay someone to just do them for you, but you want to enjoy the fact that it's something you worked on together.

At the same time, with the wedding coming up, taste testing for your cake and food for the reception, making sure the seat arrangements are good, the vendors are all in line, the slideshow that you're going to show, so on and so forth, you want to do these invitations by hand, but you also want to do them efficiently, since there are so many other things on your plate.

You go online, do the research, find designs that you like. Maybe you go on Pinterest and create a little inspirational board of your own with ideas that you like. You buy the paper, the envelopes, the ink and everything you need, and print everything out and you're left with the following:

220 each of the main invitation (a few extra, just in case - printed already, but not yet folded or hole punched for the ribbon that you wanted to adorn it with), then you have the RSVP inserts with checkboxes to select the dishes for the guest that they'll send back to you, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

The envelopes are already addressed to you since you batch printed them out, but you still have to add the stamps, then you have the other inserts: like that card with the directions on it and a card that shares registry information - and then you have a roll of ribbon matching the color of your wedding to put into the holes that you'll punch into your invitation, then 220 unaddressed envelops that you want to address by hand, more stamps for those and then two hole punchers and two sets of scissors and a couple of pens.

At this point, you and your partner both look at this huge pile of stuff that has to be put together, and it starts to overwhelm you both a little. There's 8 weeks left until the wedding, 220 addressed invitations have to go out now - so you and your partner discuss, civilly (hehe), how to best tackle this dilemma.

You both just decide to jump right into it and start putting these things together, and that's when you notice your partner grabbing the hole puncher and punching 2 holes into the main invitation. Then, your partner takes the scissors and cuts a ribbon about a foot in length, runs it through the holes in the invitation and ties it into a bow.

Then, your partner grabs all of the inserts, the RSVP card, the directions and the registry info, neatly places them into the main invitation and folds it shut. The invitation goes into an empty envelope which is then addressed and stamped. One down, 219 more to go.

That's when you chime in because you're the entrepreneurial type, you're efficient, you're into systems and getting things done the right way. You say, "whoa whoa whoa, what are you doing? this is going to take forever if we do it like this, why don't we do everything by steps - let's first hole punch all of the invitations, then we'll cut all the pieces of ribbon that we need and then tie them into the invitations.

Then we can put the inserts in them, and then fold them all. Then we can stuff them all into envelops. Then address all of them, and finally put stamps on each and then we're done. Easy peasy, no wasting time since we can probably do each of these segments of the process much faster if we do them all at once.

Your partner hears your suggestion and just looks at you, "Really? They say? I'm pretty sure my way is faster."

You reply, "No, my dear, I believe my way is faster."

Then, you both go back and forth for a bit and finally decide you want to compete against each other, like all good couples do right before their wedding. You decide to split the inventory in half (which yes, takes up more time, but this is just part of the hypothetical situation so don't take that time into account), and your partner is going to do it their way, one completed invitation in it's addressed and stamped envelope at a time, vs. you who will put your efforts into one segment of the entire invitation-creation process at a time.

The question is who is going to win? Your partner, or you?

Well, I hope you're good at admitting you're wrong, because as counterintuitive as it seems, your partner will complete their half of the job faster.

This isn't what my wife and I did and to be honest I don't remember how we put our DIY invitations together, but I'm smart enough to know not to get into any sort of debate or competition with her weeks before our wedding.

I recently finished reading The Lean Startup by Eric Reis, and in it he talks about the power of small batches. He gives a similar, real life example of a man who was stuffing newsletters and his 2 daughters thought the way he was doing it, folding one sheet of paper, stuffing it into an envelope and then sealing and addressing it was completely inefficient, so the daughters took half of the pile, and decided to fold all the letters first, then stuff them all into envelops, and then seal them all, and yep - the father finished before they did, even though it would seem more efficient to do one task at a time.

This sort of one at a time approach is faster and it has been confirmed in many studies, and I'll put a link to a [YouTube video](#) where you can actually see this in action - one piece flow vs. mass production, where it becomes obvious that the one-piece flow is better and faster.

So why does this work, why is it faster even though it feels like it should be slower?

There are a number of reasons actually.

For one, our intuition doesn't think about the extra time that would be required to sort, stack and move around large piles of stuff that's not completely finished all the way through yet.

Secondly, when things are done in smaller batches, it's typically a more calming experience, and you have more control over what's going on.

Thirdly, at least for me, I enjoy seeing things getting done, chipping away if you will and it keeps me going and keeps me motivated. The chipping away is more obvious when I have completed products sooner. After 30 seconds, for example, your partner may already have 1 done. After 10 minutes, several are already complete. YOU don't have ANY done until potentially hours later, so it can be a DRAG.

Speaking of waiting until the end - another reason why your partners method works well is because what if you found out that the invitations, along with the ribbon and all the inserts in it did not fit in the envelops you bought. If you complete one invitation at a time, you'd learn this almost right away. If you want until the end you'd have to switch gears, or worse off you already spent time addressing and stamping the envelopes, only to find out the invitations don't fit. Now that would be bad and definitely waste a lot of time.

What if you and your partner decided to get your friends to help - you know, bring the bridal party in to help out a little bit. If you all did it your partner's way, each completing one full invitation at a time, instead of working on one part of the process, like just putting the ribbons in, or just stamping everything - everyone would feel better and have a lot more fun because they'd be seeing the final products sooner and each one would be one that they created on their own, from start to finish. There's a tiny bit of ownership there.

This reminds me of one of my first jobs I had when I was growing up - this was in high school, I was hired by a temp agency to get whatever jobs were open during the summer just to make some extra cash. One year I did some phone center stuff which was alright and it paid pretty good, like $8.00 an hour, which was above minimum wage.

The next year rolled around and I asked to see if that same job was available again, but it wasn't, and there wasn't much else to choose from really. I had to ask several times before I was finally given the opportunity to work in a factory here in San Diego for a Halloween Costume company, minimum wage, and I have to tell you. Actually, let me share what it was like going to work each day - I did this for about 2 months, 5 days a week until school started again in the fall.

I'd go into work, put my brown bag lunch in the fridge, take my little punch card and check in and then report to the floor where I was told the job I was going to do for the day. The job would be something like, fold the left arm of the costume to the right over the body of the costume, and pass to the right. Or, it would be put the mask on the hanger and pass to the next person. Or, snap the button on the packaging and place into a box.

My work couldn't have been more boring, and less fulfilling - I was doing one little job, seeing nothing tangible from it except a small paycheck for a few hundred dollars every 2 weeks. If instead I was taught how to take a particular costume from a box, hang it, folder it, do whatever I needed to do from it myself, package it, put the insert in with the image of some random kid wearing the costume and then put that into a box, sure it still would have been a drag, but it would have been less of a drag.

It would have been more interesting and fulfilling. I could actually count to see how many completed ones I've gotten done. But of course, that's not how the factory was structured so I just had one little task - we all did - hundreds of us every single day. Good times.

Now, you might be wondering, okay - stuffing envelopes, wedding invitations, what does this have to do with me, what does this have to do with online business or blogging or building passive income streams?

Well, the big lesson here is this:

As much as possible, you want to work on one-thing-at-a-time, until completion, or a point at which something else can take over.

One thing at a time, and this is coming from a person who has multiple projects - yes, I have multiple things going on at the same time, but in whole with all of my projects, and even within each specific project which may have a way to batch process stuff, small batches are better and in my experience, it's true.

When I succeeded with GreenExamAcademy.com, that was my focus and that's it, and I took one thing at a time, writing the content, creating the eBook, then figuring out how to sell it, then growing my business by introducing an audio guide, and I did and focused on one thing at a time.

As a result, the site got to a point where I didn't have to spend as much time on it anymore, and I could move onto the next and also take what I learned from the experience and use it on my next as well.

With Niche Site Duel 2.0 coming up, which you can check out by going to nichesiteduel.com, and it's crazy I have to tell you, I published sort of the first, non-interview post for the duel just the other day, and within 24 hours, 1,200 comments. 1,200 comments!

Unbelievable; this is going to be exciting I hope you care to join me, whether you are going to build a new site of your own along with me, or watch from the sidelines, it's going to be fun, we'll see what happens, but the point is, I'm going to take things one at a time, and you should too.

Some people, for example, may think it's smart to create 3 niche sites at the same time. More niche sites, more opportunity, more traffic, more possibility of monetization, but as you can probably guess, doing 3 at the same time is inefficient.

Let's say a niche site takes 6 weeks to build - just hypothetically speaking, again I'll walk through the entire process in Niche Site Duel 2.0, but let's just say it takes 6 weeks to do. Week 1 is keyword research and niche selection, Week 2 is building the website and getting it online, Week 3 is writing content, Week 4 is Marketing and Reaching out to others, Week 5 is building the social media campaign around your site and Week 6 is Monetization - again, just using this as an example.

If you want to do 3 niche sites right, sites A, B and C, all at the same time, you'd spend Week 1 doing keyword research and niche selection for site A. Week 2 for site B and week 3 for site C. Then in week 4, you're in the second phase which is building the website, so week 4 is building site A, week 5 is building site B and week 6 is building site C.

By the end of 6 weeks, you have 1/3rd of 3 different niche sites. That's a lot of work you've done already, but you have yet to write any content, you have yet to have anything online for people and search engines to find.

Take things one niche site at a time, however, and by the end of 6 weeks you have what - a completed niche site that's already gone through all of the phases, and it's there with the possibility to earn you an income.

By the end of week 12, you'd have 2 completed sites, while in the other scenario you still would have ZERO - just 66% of each of the three sites A, B and C. and to the end user, at this point that's nothing. It might as well be 0%.

So you see, it's clear that it's best to work on one thing at a time - so if you're like any entrepreneur and you have all of these crazy ideas in your head that you'd like to implement - implement them, but do so one at time.

In fact taking the site ABC example, by switching from one site to another, you're losing precious time and energy by having to refocus from one topic to the other. You might even get a site done faster by putting all of your energy into it at first. Maybe you get it done in 5 weeks or 4, instead of 6 or 7 or 8.

Also, let's say you finish site A in 6 weeks. Awesome, it's up and running, and when you build site B you can take what you've learned from your experience with site A - maybe something that went wrong that first time that you can now correct or be ready for. Maybe as site A is up and certain parts of it start to work really well, you can focus more on those things in site B.

This is what [Eric Reis](#) calls validated learning. It's doing things in smaller batches - one at a time so you can learn and then re-adjust along the way if you need to. It's so powerful, it's used in Lean Startup Methods, it's the foundation for Toyota's success, and it can help you get the results that you're looking for faster.

And I'll be honest with you, I still need work on this too. I have trouble sometimes doing one-thing-at-a time because I get so excited and so many new opportunities come my way, so let's do this together; let's try to be good about smaller batches - taking one thing at a time. We will save a lot more time and money, we'll be less stressed - calmer, more in control of our situation.

And yes there are certain things we can't control, and yes there are strategies for getting multiple things done at the same time, like when it comes to hiring Virtual Assistants or having a team work with you, delegating certain parts of the process to others so you can do Niche site A, B and C all at the same time but that can be a challenge in itself, but still I'd strongly consider completing one project at a time for the reason of validating learning.

And if you haven't read the book already, I highly recommend you pick up The Lean Startup by Eric Reis, I didn't think it would apply much to what I do because it's about Startups, but I was completely wrong.

You can head on over to smartpassiveincome.com/session68 for the link to that book and the show notes.

No voicemail in this episode, I'll continue those in the next - I just want you to end this show today by thinking about the examples used in this episode about taking things one at a time, and see where you can apply it in your life and business.

Let me know what you think at smartpassiveincome.com/session68, and again, thank you for listening. I appreciate you. Cheers!

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