SPI Podcast Session #114-
User Stories and BIG Project Production with My Team!

show notes at: http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session114

This is a Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, session number 114.

Announcer:

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 had a goatee in college and has sworn never to do it again, Pat Flynn.

Pat Flynn: Yeah it wasn't cool at all. But you know what is cool? You spending some of your time with me today. Thank you so much. I just want to tell you from the bottom of my heart, you rock. I do this for you. All the feedback and the ratings that I get, that just pushes me to do more of this. It's an amazing feedback loop.

Let's get to today's episode.

Today, I have the pleasure of introducing you to three amazing people. Three people who are actually helping me get some stuff done in my business to help you. These are the people who are behind the new Smart Passive Income iOS application. There's an Android version coming out soon. If you have an iPhone or an iPad you can download this app right now, if you go to smartpassiveincome.com/app you can download it right now, completely free. You can even stop this episode right now to download that and then re-listen to this and see how cool it is.

So much time and effort was put in to this to make it amazing and convenient for you to be able to consume the Smart Passive Income podcast, the Smart Passive Income blog and my Ask Pat podcast amongst some future things that are going to be put in there.

It's been an amazing experience working with this team and also to deliver this to you. So many amazing comments coming from those of you who have downloaded it.

Thousands of you have downloaded it, I can see and many of you have sent emails just wondering how this was built. That's why this episode exists. I wanted to bring three team members on who are working with me and have helped to put this together.

We are talking about all the things to put it together, from the development process to the design, why it looks the way it looks. Hopefully, my goal here is not just to share the app with you, yes I would love for you to download it, of course I'm not going to be dishonest with you, but I also want to show you what it was like to put this together and the systems we used to put a project like this, a big project, an iOS application from scratch together in 8 weeks.

I would love for you to do the same with your big major projects. You can see that this isn't just like "Oh I'm going to write a blog post" or "I'm going to compile an e-book", this is a big project.

If you're doing a membership site or any sort of applications or maybe a higher-end book of some sort, this is going to help you put those things together and see what it's like to:

A) Work with a team, if you're going to indeed work with the team and why that might be necessary or beneficial for you if you're going to make that decision, and

B) How these systems are in place to keep things moving forward. There's a startup feel to how this was all put together, from the sprints to the QA (quality assurance) and all that super important stuff, stuff I haven't really talked about on the show before because I have never really experienced it.

So to see all come together as the sort of leader of this team and then having Matt streamline everything, put the team together and get everybody on board and on the same track is just really cool.

I hope you enjoy this episode, I know you will. It's very interesting, it's sort of inside the life of the app and how it all started and how it all got put together. You can download the app now if you want to check it out, smartpassiveincome.com/app.

So without further delay, here is my team.

In the start of the interview you hear their names and exactly what they do, right now.

What's up Smart Passive Income listeners, I'm here with part of my team. We've got Matt Gartland, Dustin Tevis and also Ryan Nystrom.

There's more people involved in putting this together but we wanted to talk about the process of building the new iOS application for Smart Passive Income, something that we were able to do in about 6 to 7 weeks actually, with the project of the scope is actually pretty darn fast. We thought it would be cool to come together and talk about the process used to help you if you ever have any large projects you want to tackle, perhaps there are some tips and golden nuggets you can take away from how we work together to get your stuff done.

Let me introduce each of these people who are on here really quickly.

We have Matt Gartland, who I feel like is my other brain because he just helps keep everything organized and I'm just so appreciative of him and his organization skills, so Matt welcome back to the show, we've had you on before.

Matt Gartland: Yes, thanks Pat, it's great to be back.

Pat Flynn: We also have Dustin Tevis who is our Visual Expert I guess you could say. He's into user experience and designing and he is the reason why all the parts of the app look the way they do. He does an awesome job with the user experience, Dustin welcome to the show.

Dustin Tevis: Thanks for having me.

Pat Flynn: And of course somebody needs to code this thing and we have Ryan Nystrom for that, who is the expert that put all this together to make sure it works, is compatible and flows quite nicely.

One of the best comments that I keep hearing about the application is that it's super smooth in functionality and flow. There is always going to be an error or two based on people's iOS and versions and stuff. Honestly, I've done over 25 different apps and this is, especially to an app of this caliber, very very well coded.

So Ryan, thank you again for your work and thanks for coming on the show.

Ryan Nystrom: Absolutely, thanks so much. I'm glad people are enjoying it so much. I definitely put a lot of love into it.

Pat Flynn: I'm just blown away by how amazing the response has been. To know that we put this together, we had nothing about seven weeks ago, to something like what we have now. It's just amazing. So Matt, would you mind taking over a little bit in terms of talking about the development process, what are the first steps for - I know we created an application here but a lot of people out there might have app ideas or ideas for membership sites, whatever the case may be, something large, how you tackle something large? You know you want to do something big, where do you even start?

Matt Gartland: We started with what's called User Stories. User stories are a helpful way of gaining definition to this nebulous very abstract idea. As you said Pat, that abstract idea can be a mobile app, it can be a web app, it can be a membership site. The common denominator a lot these days is software. What's exciting and challenging for a lot of online entrepreneurs is they are kind of graduating maybe from just content, blogs, even more than just podcasts. They're really getting excited about the opportunities that exist within software and software development.

There's a lot of complexity there, so you have to break it down into manageable chunks. Whether you come from an enterprise background or something, you can talk about these as business requirements or whatever else, but to contextualize the elements into again what are called user stories, it really keeps the team and keeps you as the product owner really focused on the end user. So you write these statements from the perspective of your fans. You say "As a fan, I want this app to do XYZ because of XYZ". This unifies both essentially a requirement, a feature set with the value statement, I want to do this thing because it delivers some result.

At the beginning of this project, after we spoke with you and we were really excited about re-imagining what the SPI app looked like, because I guess it's worth mentioning that you had an SPI app previously right?

Pat Flynn: Yeah.

Matt Gartland: But we wanted to create an amazing new experience that just kind of knocked the socks off of everyone and put the bar really high. The three of us sat down, Dustin, Ryan and I and we just started writing out all of these user stories statements and that started to kind of give boundaries to the puzzle. It started to give some definition to 'OK, this is what's possible' and from there other decisions started to get made.

Pat Flynn: Do you think it's important to have everybody involved, a Designer, a Coder and yourself as the big idea guy all together working at the same time to help figure out what these user stories might be or is it best to just sort of pass them along?

Matt Gartland: I certainly do and actually I'll nominate Ryan to speak to this because in most cases - and I can speak on this from a couple of very different experiences in my career leading software projects - typically developers do not get pulled all the way forward to the very beginning of the iteration process. I believe that is a horrible idea and that's why getting Ryan involved from the get-go is essential. So Ryan, do you maybe want to talk about that?

Ryan Nystrom: Yeah, I agree with Matt. It's incredibly important to have the developer in there early on, especially when you're working with a smaller team, because it gives the developer context on what they're actually building.

Frequently you'll see shops hand a developer almost like a line item sheet of "Here's the stuff you need to build", "Make this view go here", "Make a button here that goes to here" and "Make a pop up happen". It's all kind of boring and filling out little checklists. When you get the developer involved early and get them involved in writing these user stories, you get a sense of what you're actually trying to do and you also get a chance to find those things that are over complicated and not necessarily important to the main goal of the app.

We came up with a million ideas for this app, but we really needed to whittle it down and focus on the core pieces, the core functionality that were required and things that were feasible. There's a ton of amazing things that we wanted to do but to just get off the ground and running and make a working proof of concept, we really needed to hone in on what was available to us today.

Pat Flynn: Sure, now can you guys bring back some of what those user stories might be? Maybe some that they can see when they're in the app and also some that maybe got knocked out?

Matt Gartland: Yeah, absolutely. I'm going to see if I can pull this up in the background, I can even read some here. To share quickly as a high level categorization, there are user stories from the user perspective and user stories from the administration perspective. What's important to take into account, which a lot of

times gets undervalued or it's almost the black sheep of the family, which is the administration side.

Everyone wants to think about and conceptualize the front end user experience because it's maybe sexier, it's what gets most attention, it's what people see in the App Store, stuff like that, right. But this thing does need to function on the back end and there are a lot of critical requirements to making this thing operate.

There's admin requirements as well. In this case Pat, we wrote those from basically your perspective. So you know "As Pat, I want this thing to do this for this reason", so that's really important.

In terms of some of the user stories, I want an easy way to conceivably review all Pat's content whether it's blog content or podcasts. That essentially facilitated the main feed of content that basically a user experiences first after they've downloaded the app and get through the first welcoming experience.

Another important requirement was I wanted to access individual podcast episodes in their entirety. Not only do I want to see a feed but then I want to select an item from that feed and then be able to access the details of that particular content item.

Pat Flynn: I know that there were a lot of user stories that I wanted as 'Pat'. One of them was I wanted to make sure I'm able to keep track of the events and the number of people who download the application. There's a ton of them, I know you have this huge list here and we could talk for hours about that.

Matt Gartland: I want to filter the feed of content, I want to search the feed of content, I want to read individual content posts in their entirety, I want to control a podcast episode from a player. That's one of the cooler things we did. With both the SPI podcast and the Ask Pat podcast, we enable users to consume that content in-app, so you don't have to go to a different podcast player, you can do it all from the SPI app.

The player once it starts playing an episode will continue to play in-app and you can jump to different parts of the app, you can go to other apps completely so long as that app is running in the background, your episode still plays.

Pat Flynn: We had some user stories that we wanted that didn't get put into the first version and that's always going to happen. The step-by-step here is create these user

stories, say "I want as a user to do XYZ because of XYZ", write as many of them as you can and then you have to figure out what's going to be in your MVP (Minimum Viable Product) and that can be a tough thing to do, to knock out some of the things.

I think it's also important to understand that you can't and shouldn't put everything and all the bells and whistles in the first iteration, you'd actually be kicking yourself in the foot because you wouldn't get whatever you're creating out sooner, to be able to do what it needs do by wasting your time doing these other things that you can always do later. Also, you're just wasting resources on stuff that may not be necessary upfront.

I know we went through a lot of things that may not be necessary for the MVP and you guys, especially you Matt, you kept me in check all the time because I said "I want this!", "I want this!", "I want people to be able to ask questions for Ask Pat directly from the app". As cool a user story as that is, it's not something that was absolutely necessary in the first iteration to do what we wanted the app to do.

Matt Gartland: Precisely. We have a backlog, that's another term, it's an important artifact, it's a part of the type of development process that I advocate that the guys have obviously embraced as well. So we still have these ideas and we are prioritizing them in the backlog for future versions. These great ideas don't just turn to vapor and disappear. They're still there, we're going to mature those ideas and as we get user feedback from even what's out there right now, we'll be able to better asses the viability and value of these future state ideas and prioritize them appropriately.

Too many people, in terms of making certain trade-offs, Dustin was involved in a lot of those from the user experience and there's probably some good stories Dustin that you can share from that perspective.

Dustin Tevis: Yeah. I think, when you go into an app there's endless possibilities. You have all these latest trends and design aspects. You want to fit everything into it but then you have to step back and think "Is this really best for the end user?"

That's when we come in and do a competitor analysis essentially, I look around, see what people are using, see what people are responding to. Part of that is searching blogs and searching the iOS App Store. Once we do Android, we would do the Android app store. Making sure that everything we're doing falls in line with what's out there and that people are familiar to it, picking those things out and making sure the user has the best product possible, that's where it gets kind of awesome.

Pat Flynn: I think one of the cool things that goes along line with that was when you first showed me the first test version of this app and I opened the application and there was sort of welcoming sequence in the beginning, where it shows you my image. "Hey I'm Pat Flynn" and you flip through the screen, "This is what this app's about" and you flip through the screen, "This is what the app can do for you". It was so cool because I've seen that in other applications that I do enjoy and you sort of just borrowed that opening sequence from other applications, you didn't steal anything but you used that initial feeling that people have when they open an app for the first time, that people resonate with and that there was a trend out there for it and you've adapted it to our own, I thought that was really smart.

Dustin Tevis: Yeah, there's so many trends. There's a lot of cool stuff, like those best practices really stand out and certain things like that. And show slide, definitely familiarizes the user with the app, makes them feel comfortable. As soon as they're done with it, it's quick and easy and they're all ready to go. It builds that confidence that we want in these projects.

Pat Flynn: Would you recommend for anybody listening out there who has a big project on their mind to look at their competitors to perhaps, maybe they're building a membership site, to look in membership sites that they are a part of, to start to make a list of what they like and what they don't like?

Dustin Tevis: Absolutely. Some of the sites that I use personally, this falls into more of the UI (User Interface) but it also falls into UX or sites like [inaudible]. You do have to be careful, there's a fine line with trends. Although things might look cool and seem cool, for the end user they're not cool at all. Take that with a grain of salt and using sites like that and also your competitors. You'll be surprised how much you can find with reviews, blog posts on what's working and what's not. Putting all those findings together can consolidate to this final user story, essentially, that you can build out.

Pat Flynn: Obviously, there's a lot of things moving, a lot of parts going on, we talked about user stories, we talked about the lean launch with the MVP, we talked a little bit about user interface, although we could get more into what makes a good user interface for anything. There's a lot of moving parts, there's a lot of people talking.

Matt, can you describe how you all communicated with each other and what was that like? How often did you talk? Was there an agenda in each of those meetings? What tools were you using?

Matt Gartland: Yeah, it's a big topic, I love talking about this stuff. I think of this, the communication aspect, the organization aspect is sort of the invisible magic to not only software or app projects but to any great creative idea. It's really easy to have an idea, but how do you take an idea and operationalize it? If you were from world history, "I want you to expand my empire", that's great, how do you actually move an army across territory and take land and all that sort of stuff? You need a plan.

And kudos, big kudos to Dustin and Ryan for just being awesome. We communicate on the same wavelength. We did use tools to help facilitate that.

The biggest one to probably mention is [Trello](#). Trello is a free web and mobile app collaboration platform that helps you organize information first by boards, so you can create a board for a given project. We have a board for the SPI iOS app.

Then inside the board you can organize further into lists. So we have a list for the backlog of ideas, so the stuff that we haven't tackled yet but is really interesting. That's getting evaluated for the future.

Then we have other lists for the various phases of the development effort. Essentially that's for Ryan, for Development. We have a list for UI and UX for Dustin. We have a list for content and QA, which I was basically shepherding.

Then a third dimension, hopefully this isn't getting confusing. You have cards. So you can put cards into lists. It's very fluid, you can easily drag and drop cards from one list to another to another. We organized each card to represent and user story. So we had all these cards, it's easy to then drag these cards to various phases of the project. You can comment on cards, you can add detailed requirements to cards, you can add checklists.

For example, as we go through this, we can identify through our QA process, this stuff is working, these aren't. We were able to add very detailed line items for then Ryan to be able to go back and address, he can click that check box, he knows that's done, that gives me a signal to re-test it and make sure that it's valid.

Pat Flynn: Trello is great. It's kind of hard to visualize based off of explanation, you kind of have to go in there and see and play around with it. I know a lot of people who swear by it.

Matt Gartland: It's hard to articulate in words, the user experience is really simple and amazing. Trello is big. We did speak frequently so the three of us were talking multiple times during the week, we were meeting frequently on weekends. It's nice that even though a lot of our collaboration is virtual, that the three of us are together in Columbus, Ohio so we were able to meet in person on the weekends a lot of times to continue our iteration.

Pat, I know you've advertised this in a recent blog post, we've adopted [Slack](#), which is another communication tool, there's a great mobile app for that as well, all free. We've been using that to really enhance our communication and iteration. It's made the entire process really smooth.

Pat Flynn: Slack is amazing, I just talked about it in a recent blog posts as one of the top apps that I use in my phone. I can feel from a leader perspective of this team, the responsiveness and people knowing what's going on is much better now that we've adopted Slack for primary communication.

Matt Gartland: Communication, I genuinely don't feel gets enough attention when we talk about these really awesome software projects or web projects in general. The attention maybe rightly so goes to the user experience, things that you can see and feel and touch. I would love to pull Ryan back into this as the Developer, just how critical really good communication is to a project like this.

Pat Flynn: Sure, I was actually going to ask you Ryan, from a Developer's perspective, it doesn't matter what type of person you're trying to hire to do something, whether it's an app developer or a coder for your website, what makes your life easier if you could have the perfect client, what would they do and how would they help you do what you need to do?

Ryan Nystrom: I think one of the most essential things for me to effectively work is just to have documentation, to have a paper trail about what's going on, about what we're working on, what changes were made, why they were made.

Early on when we started this project I think we really established that email is a black hole for communication. Although it's great for sending text instantly over the wire, you can't keep track of a project's communication through it. One of the great things about Trello was that we really started using that as our email communication. We would start talking about something, we would have a question, a comment, maybe a concern about a certain feature or element and we would just go to the comment

thread on a particular card. We might go to one of the user stories that says "I want to filter the feed of Pat Flynn content", I would go in there and tag Dustin and say "Hey, this check mark here, do you think we should change the color, do you think it should animate?" and Dustin would have the opportunity to respond.

Then whenever I'm going into X code to start writing some code and building something, I can also pull up that card, look at the communication chain, understand what's going on, what decisions were made and then jump back into X code and start building something. To me I think it helped me, there was no fog, I was never unsure of what I was building, I knew exactly what to do. If I didn't have an answer instantly it was really easy to find it out.

Pat Flynn: I've worked with developers in the past, this is especially when I was first starting with app development back in 2008/2009. I had these ideas in my head that I wanted, I would email the developers and say "I want this to happen" and that's it. I'd get it back and it wouldn't be anything like I had imagined. That's where I learned the importance of wireframing and doing all that stuff. That wasn't even working with a Designer. When you get a designer involved, like Dustin, to have the designer and developer talk to each other I think is incredibly invaluable. The question is, is this always possible?

Ryan Nystrom: I personally think it is, as long as you're keeping the team small enough and you've really got everybody understanding all the different moving parts. That was something that Dustin and I did really early on. We sat down and we both wanted to get started. I wanted to start writing code, Dustin wanted to open up Photoshop and start laying down some pixels. We both knew that if we just jumped into it without really collaborating on anything that we might step on each other's toes. I might build something that he doesn't want and we might kind of criss-cross. So that's one of the first things we did, we sat down together, we started wireframing. We started drawing boxes with arrows pointing to other boxes with labels and saying "From the List view, you need to tap an item and it needs to show you the content and then there needs to be a play button". We just went through and kept drilling down.

I don't know Dustin if you want to add anything about our wire frame process, I think - not to boast - I think we really knocked it out of the park really early on.

Dustin Tevis: We did have a clear idea of the goals that we wanted to accomplish. A lot of that was when we all three met and talked about the user stories. We had the foundation of those user stories started, Ryan and I just went at it and we crushed it.

We basically laid out the first draft of the whole app. What happened then is Ryan then started developing as soon I started designing. We were working in tandem. We were on the same page. I knew what I was designing for, he knew what he was developing for. We came together in the end, which I think saved us a ton of time and a ton of headache, which was awesome.

Ryan Nystrom: With those user stories established early on, I was able to build essentially the entire app satisfying all the stories. It looked like absolute garbage, but it worked. You could play podcasts, you could browse things. While I was building all those, Dustin was building the designs. Then when I was done with this prototype that satisfies the stories and Dustin's done with the designs, we both stopped, we converged and then we applied the designs to the actual app and it was seamless.

Pat Flynn: That's awesome. Dustin, can you talk a little bit about UI and user experience in general. That's what you're an expert in, I know a lot of people out there who are listening might not be able to hire somebody like yourself but are there any basic rules when it comes to how to make an experience great for somebody who's going through one of your products or a website or something that you've built?

Dustin Tevis: Absolutely. The first thing I would say is when it comes to user experience, there's kind of a misconception on what a UX designer is. Usually it's not just one person. Usually the user experience is drawn out between everybody. For us it was Matt, Ryan and I. I don't think I could complete the whole user experience on my own. It's a lot of work and there's so many touch points that you don't really want to leave it to one person. Whenever you're in a project, if you can get everybody involved, I think that right there helps immensely.

When it comes to the actual UI, for us it was a little easier because we knew we were working on iOS. The awesome thing about iOS and platforms alike is that they have certain guidelines. So we know buttons should be this pixel size, we know what corner radiuses should be, we know what text size should be about because Apple spends the time and creates this human interface guideline which kind of lays all this stuff out and says "This will give you the best experience. If you follow these rules, everybody will be happy". So building on top of that, we kind of have to inject one's brand or image. When you can do that together, it comes together pretty cohesively like this app did.

Pat Flynn: Matt can you talk a little bit about some of the - was it all perfect the whole way through? Was there any snafus or anything that didn't go the way they were supposed to? How did we get out of that?

Matt Gartland: There's always bumps in the road. This was a pretty smooth project but it's never perfectly smooth. We were able to mitigate a lot of that through the close communication we had, the use of Trello, stuff like that. A great example is the featured images in your blog posts. We originally wanted to pull through those images and style them and position them inside the app in a particular way.

Dustin had worked out an amazing UI that in fact illustrated that. This was a technical challenge in terms of pulling that through from WordPress and being able to parse out that particular image and plop it into the app in a particular way. We were sort of frustrated by that point and we spent a little bit of time trying to adapt it and try different technical angles to sulphur that. Ryan would take a swing at it and throw it back into revision and we'd look at it and say "Yeah, that's not really the user experience we want" so we'd try a different angle and "That's not quite there yet either".

Ultimately what we did was we took them out, at least in the feed. So you don't see them in the feed. There are some images that pull through into the blog content. If a user weren't listening to this podcast, they wouldn't think anything of it. It looks great. We ended up dis-positioning that detailed requirement, a detailed requirement inside one of those user stories to say "Hey, this isn't done, we want to take a swing at this again" but it wasn't worth the headache and the technical risk and the delay to the timeline to continue to basically burn cycles.

That is a testament to the communication we had, our alignment around the development process, I think maybe it's mentioned too much, but it is agility. We were agile and that allowed us to make some of those relatively quick decisions and pivot quickly and still accomplish the main objective.

Pat Flynn: What is Agile? Can you explain? I know there's a lot of people who have heard that and not know quite what that means.

Matt Gartland: Sure. If anyone's listening as a seasoned software developer, there's really strong opinions on this and I'm not trying to probably get into the weeds on either side. Agile as an almost philosophy, if you go to agilemanifesto.org or if you Google Agile Manifesto, it did set out as a philosophy, a set of tenets or value statements essentially for how software development professionals, whether they're designers or developers or product owners and those sorts of folks, kind of like myself, how we conceive and approach these sorts of opportunities to build products.

It's not necessarily meant, or wasn't at that time to be a tactile methodology. Subsequently, others have contributed to that, sort of extrapolated and tried to put methodology behind it. So you have methodologies like Kanban or Skrum XP, different sorts of implementations to try to basically make real in a pragmatic way the ideals of Agile.

A couple of simple things, Agile promotes working software, so as Ryan was articulating just a bit ago, we had something functional very quickly. It looked horrible but it worked. We were able to use that as our key stone to guide for the decision making. Another one is cycles. We were talking not only once a week, we were talking multiple times during the week but essentially we were on a weekly sprint cycle.

Obviously for some of the larger initiatives and for the team at large we were on a bi-weekly sprint cycle. That allows us to hold each other accountable, to keep the communication going and make sure that we were delivering value on a regular frequency.

Pat Flynn: I love the sprints, that's something that's new to me since working with you guys. It's great because what happens is we meet every week and we talk about the exact things we want to have done by the next week's cycle and then we check in mid week and we talk about how we're doing and what we have accomplished and what we have left to do so we're all in check and we're all holding each other accountable. I love it also because it forces us to not only get things done but to keep moving forward and keep adding new things and add new features and think about what else we could do to help promote the brand and ultimately generate more income down the road.

Matt Gartland: Precisely. Maybe to pitch it back to the guys because they also have experience with non Agile or nimble project development cycles. So how do you guys conceptualize these or contrast the methodology that we employed for this versus some of the other stuff that you have done?

Ryan Nystrom: Traditional places will use this methodology called Waterfall, where you basically do things in a sequence. No work is really parallelized, you have to do design first, or even before that you're doing planning and checking for scope and all that. You move on to design and when design is finished and signed off, you start development and so on until you launch your project.

One of the biggest issues that I've run into with that is that in the planning phase you'll establish a timeline, you know "We want to launch this product in six months", but things happen. There is never ever a project that starts and ends the way it was supposed to. You're always going to run into stuff, you're always going to make turns, you hit speed bumps. When those things happen in the waterfall approach you extend one of those sequences if something takes longer. Now what happens down the road is you lose time in some of those other phases. For instance, you might spend too much time doing designs because somebody doesn't like the way something looks or somebody wants to change the direction in the middle of the project. Because of that, you lose a couple of weeks from your development cycle. That can rush things, introduce bugs, problems. Sometimes it can just be really frustrating.

Dustin Tevis: Time itself also creates this inconsistency and disconnects from the whole experience in the beginning, and when you're more agile, you together create this user experience but when you take that Waterfall approach that experience gets cut up into tiny little pieces and as you move through this process you lose little by little and then towards the end you see the end product and you're like "It's not necessarily what we were going for" and then everybody's on edge.

For me personally, working on the Agile methodology has been amazing, it's made my life a lot easier, I know it's made Ryan's life a lot easier. So much so, Ryan and I work at an agency here in Columbus, we're actually starting to adopt that methodology, which is kind of cool.

Pat Flynn: That's pretty awesome.

Now the app is out there and we get a few comments here and there from people who - we've discovered that there's a couple of bugs for people who have the iPhone 5C for whatever reason. There's a couple of people who have noticed - and it doesn't happen for most people but when their app shuts down or goes into sleep mode, the podcast that was playing stops. The reason I wanted to bring this up is there is always going to be bugs, it's never going to be perfect. I think that's something that a lot of people have to live with.

But there are certain ways to handle these things. Matt, how are we addressing the issues that people are coming up with? How are we going to fix them, if we're going to fix them? I think the big point here is after you come out with something, your membership site, your product, your app, that doesn't mean it's the end. There's

always stuff that's going to happen after, how do you organize that stuff and deal with it?

Matt Gartland: There's a lot there. The first thing is that we will be addressing these things. We love and welcome and encourage feedback so everyone that has contributed to that in terms of sharing, "Hey, we love this feature here, this one over here doesn't seem to work the way I'm expecting it to", all of that is so valuable so thank you.

We catalogue that stuff, it goes back into the back log in Trello, so we have then that consistency of record keeping that Ryan was mentioning earlier. It's really easy just to keep funneling the stuff back into our user stories and then prioritize those appropriately for our corrective actions cycles and our future release cycles. A broader point, Pat you lead the charts in this dimension and you excel at it, which is establishing expectations with the user base, so you're always communicating with the users, if someone gives this feedback you're quick to acknowledge it and embrace that and continue to encourage them to give more feedback and whatever else. I think that end user communication consistently setting their expectations is really invaluable.

What's tricky sometimes, even with iOS as Dustin was saying, which is a pretty locked down environment. Apple has really clear guidelines. There's really only a couple of permutations of the software at any given time, depending on when people update.

There are still edge cases. The term 'edge cases' is an industry term. It's a weird extrapolation upon extrapolation of series of events that could get a user into a situation where something breaks. It's not something that all users are experiencing or that a primary user experience would facilitate, it's on the edge of some reality, a combination of things, whether it's a software setting at the operating system level or at the device level, you mentioned the iPhone 5C. A combination of things could lead to something. That's challenging and fun and sometimes frustrating. Trying to figure out the edge cases because they're sometimes hard to predict and you don't always have the answer to addresses those at least immediately, so you have to triage them.

Pat Flynn: Right. Absolutely. I want to end on talking about something that's really cool. The fact that all the work we put in and the number of hours we put in to create this thing, it's actually so amazing to see the feedback from everybody. It's a testament to all the great work that you are doing and the entire process of putting this together. We could have taken the Waterfall approach, we could have done it in so

many other ways. To see the end product and to see it actually filling in those user experiences and making those user experiences happen, it's so fulfilling.

I encourage everybody out there who is creating to after you create pay attention to what you just did and how it's affecting people. Also at the same time be open to that feedback and make sure to not only address those things and reply to people who are having potential issues and problems but really listen and keep moving forward.

I think if you think about applications specifically, a lot of the best applications out there are coming up with iteration after iteration to address issues and make things better and add more features, as opposed to something like my old application, which was put out once. I think version 1.1 came six months later and then three years later I didn't do anything else. It ended up breaking, I have a tool called Flurry connected with that application, that allows me to see how many times people have checked in and used it and how long they're using it for. I have over 35,000 people who downloaded it and about 100 people are actively using it. I completely failed on that part because I just wasn't listening or paying attention or make it a priority.

I think that's going to be different this time around for sure.

Matt Gartland: It is. We can tease that we're working to a quarterly cycle. As it stands now, we're listening, we're categorizing all this great feedback, we're having our internal conversations around priorities. The intent now is to have that quarterly cycle so there'll be revisions and new enhancements coming out on a 3-month basis.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, absolutely. You also have to think about the purpose of what it is you're creating too. The purpose of this, again it's completely free to download, you can get it at smartpassiveincome.com/app. If you're listening to this in the future, when there is an Android version available, it will be available at the same location.

This is free, this is a way to help the SPI audience more easily consume and make their lives easier, which will hopefully help with the trust that we have and show that we're always trying to provide, which can then lead to potential customers and other iterations and transactions down the road, just because of trying to give away.

Obviously, you don't have to give away what you're creating for free. You could sell these things and you should if you know that you're providing value and people are going to earn what they paid for it back over. Just wanted to point that out.

I'm just going to go down the line with each of you really quick to first of all say thank you and also have you give anybody out there who's listening who is ramping up toward a big project, one or two tips that's going to help them move forward.

Dustin, can we start with you from a Designer perspective? First of all thank you for all the work that you're doing, it's amazing. What would you recommend to somebody who's just getting involved with a really big project that might involve a lot of moving parts and pieces and things that should work?

Dustin Tevis: From a UI perspective, for me, especially in this project is focusing on the details. Anything from those little tiny animations that are inseparable from the data and how that's represented in the app, make sure that the user enjoys the experience. Every single detail counts. I can't stress it enough. Those little pleasures will make that user come back and keep them engaged, that's all worth it in the end.

Pat Flynn: That's so true. If you go to this app right now and you open up the feed and you click on the bar on the upper right hand side where it drops down the menu of all the different content that I have that you can sort through, you can see how it animates and it comes through and the three dots come in at different times. It's so small and miniscule, but it's so cool. It just makes it pop.

Dustin Tevis: Absolutely.

Pat Flynn: Ryan, how about you?

Ryan Nystrom: I think especially for anybody that's in the development world that's looking to start a new project or is getting ready to start a new project, get in there and start writing stuff early – start playing with APIs, start looking at data, start building specs. Make something that meets all those functional requirements, it looks horrible, but get it out there. You're going to run into stuff, you're going to find bugs and quirks and limitations that you wouldn't have seen elsewhere. Just get in there, roll your sleeves up and start building something sweet.

Pat Flynn: Awesome. And Matt, we'll end up with you.

Matt Gartland: Probably to compliment Ryan's point and I'll borrow this from Neil Gaiman, one of my favorite writers. This was said in context of writing a book or something in that domain. You have to finish things, whether it's a book or a website or a blog, in this case a mobile app, you have to finish things. We could have iterated

on this thing to death, we could still be doing it. But we chose, this is good enough, we're going to finish here, we're going to get this thing out here, we're going to listen to the users, the fans. That's what we did and that's what we'll continue to do. Work hard, finish things, work hard, finish things, rinse and repeat.

Pat Flynn: Absolutely.

Guys thank you again for coming on the show and sharing a bit about the development process of this application, I know it's going to be helpful for others, whether they're doing iOS, Android stuff or other big projects on their own. Ryan, Matt, Dustin thank you all so much.

All: Always a pleasure. Thank you.

Pat Flynn: Alright I hope you enjoyed that interview with Matt, Dustin and Ryan, the three guys behind just the production of the iOS application, which you can get right now for Smart Passive Income over at smartpassiveincome.com/app.

You can check out all the little details that we were talking about and see how it works. It's also going to be upgraded over time of course and an Android version will come out as well.

All the show notes for this episode can be found at smartpassiveincome.com/session114. I hope you enjoyed that episode with some of my team members. A few of my other team members will be coming on fairly soon. I have Jessica who is helping me transform how I manage my emails, Jessica my Executive Assistant. Some of you have emailed me recently and probably heard from her. She's kind of, I'm not even going to get into it. The episode we recorded already is just, it's going to blow your mind. I can't wait for you to check it out.

Now lastly, before I finish up here, I do have something special to share with you actually. Glen Allsopp contacted me the other day and he was actually wondering about the sponsorships here for the Smart Passive Income podcast, he knew I was doing sponsorships, I worked with other companies like 99designs.com and also audiobooks.com, both of which had very successful campaigns promoting at the end of the show here. I only promote companies that are awesome. Glen isn't really a company but he always has such great stuff, amazing things going on and he's so forward thinking with marketing. He is obviously the owner of viperchill.com, was the

creator of the WordPress plug-in Optinskin, which has been majorly successful, I use it on my site as well.

In the last year, he's managed to build a $60,000 a month marketing company. He's actually taught a number of other people how to do the same thing. Based on the success of his teachings, he's launched a free 2-hour video course, completely free, showing step-by-step how you can build a highly profitable client based business.

This is different than selling information. This is a client based business that Glen has built for $60,000 a month, he's taught other people how to do the same thing. You don't have to be a marketing expert. There's no opt-in, nothing. You can watch the videos, they're each about 15/20 minutes each. If it's not your cup of tea you can leave of course, but like I said Glen always has great stuff, easy to digest.

If you're interested check out marketinginc.com. After you've watched the videos you'll be able to speak to Glen directly through the comments on his site and with other people who have gone through the course. Check it out, again marketinginc.com.

Thank you Glen for sponsoring the end of the show here, I've watched a couple of the videos myself, you're always doing great stuff.

Thank you everybody for listening to this episode of the Smart Passive Income podcast. You rock. Have a great day and make stuff happen. Make. Stuff. Happen. Don't wait to create. You've got this. Take care. Peace out.

Announcer:

Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast at www.smartpassiveincome.com