

Interview with Nick Loper

Speaker 1: Hello, hello. I am really excited because today we have Nick Loper from Side Hustle Nation here and he's going to share some of his awesome wisdom to help you figure out how to find your perfect Side Hustle. Nick's blog is a wealth of information about Side Hustles and supplemental income streams, so be sure to check it out at SideHustleNation.com. Welcome, Nick.

Speaker 2: Thanks for having me.

Speaker 1: Awesome, so I want to go ahead and talk a little bit about your background and your personal experience and how you became the Side Hustle guru that you are today.

Speaker 2: How far back in time do you want to go?

Getting Started

Speaker 1: What got you started, kind of piqued your interest in Side Hustles and got you interested in pursuing those supplemental income streams?

Speaker 2: We'll start with the online stuff because that was kind of my first real... The first official Side Hustle was a footwear comparison shopping site. It was called ShoeSniper.com and in the early ShoesRUs.net. I was working corporate, did what you're supposed to do after college, got a real job and was trying to build this thing on the side because I had interned at a company while I was still in school that was one of the pioneering online footwear retailers. It was like my first exposure to online marketing, to pay per click advertising, to affiliate marketing, to SEO to eCommerce, to all this stuff.

Once I left that job, I joined their affiliate program and was like, "Well, I could figure out how to sell shoes on my own." I started out doing these little text link paid advertisements to these specific products at a one dollar a day budget on AdWords to not lose my shirt while I was still in college and then kind of scaled that up and eventually had the website built as a way to grow and scale the thing beyond.

Speaker 1: Fantastic. I know that you have your blog today too, which is also a source of Side Hustle income for you. I guess just maybe for people who are listening, how many Side Hustles do you have?

Speaker 2: At any given time, I guess there's probably eight or ten different projects going on at any one time. Not everything is a huge income stream. It's kind of fun to have, number one, that diversity of income. Number two, the diversity of projects. There's the one thing and there's the essentialism and there's all this drive to

focus, focus, focus and I think that's actually really good advice for people starting out, but once you're in motion, then you get the itch to see what else is out there.

For me, the call to diversify hit on my very first day of self-employment. Three years, nights and weekends, building the shoe business while working full time. I turned in the keys to my company car and I'm going to be a full time entrepreneur, it's going to be awesome.

On day one, Google completely strikes me down. They say, "You can't advertise with us anymore. Your account no longer meets our quality guidelines." You go through the full seven stages of anger and denial, all this stuff. What is going on? You never had a problem with this the past two years. We've got thousands of happy customers. You're making tons of money, Google. What's the problem?

Three months of making website tweaks and trying to figure out what could possibly have triggered this and they come back and they say, "It looks like we made an error. You're good to go again." Are you kidding me? That was kind of a [inaudible 00:03:36]. Even though I thought that the business was diversified. Hey, we've have 40 different retailers, advertisers on the site that would pay us commission for sales. You peel that back one layer and all of the traffic, 80% of the traffic was coming from Google from paid advertising.

That was a risky position to be in, so I'm trying to figure out. One of the things I will preach on Side Hustle nation, if you're relying on one source of income, for most people, that's their day job. That's a similarly risky position to be in, but even as an entrepreneur I found myself in the exact same boat, and so since then I've been on a mission to cultivate multiple income streams.

Speaker 1: It's kind of don't put all of your eggs in one basket and that's a recurring theme we see with personal finance and financial independence and all of those topics are the importance of diversifying your income streams. No one who achieves wealth just has one income stream. They're always doing tons of different stuff and I think that's what makes Side Hustles such a fascinating topic for people because they want to know, how can I diversify that income stream?

What Is A Side Hustle And Why You Should Have One

I know that we may have some newbies listening. For those who may be Side Hustle newbies, can you break down what exactly a Side Hustle is?

Speaker 2: I would call it, anything you're doing outside of a day job to make extra money. Previous generation probably called it moonlighting. It's just a new way to say it.

Speaker 1: Fantastic, so it's just that supplemental income stream or a way to achieve that.

Speaker 2: Right and for some people are like, "Hey, I need to make an extra hundred bucks a month," and other people are like, "I've got to find a way out of this cubicle," and it's a much more urgent kind of thing. That's the beauty of it. It can be a low risk gateway drug into entrepreneurship or it can be, "Hey look, I like to earn some extra cash so I can go out with my friends."

Speaker 1: Right, I think that's actually something we're going to touch on a little bit later, different categories of Side Hustles and different goals related to each one. First, I want to step back and do a basic overview of why would someone want that Side Hustle, kind of what you talked about, an extra hundred dollars a month. What are some of the benefits of having one or multiple Side Hustles. Is it just that extra income stream?

Speaker 2: The income is probably what draws most people to it. The thing that I hear probably second most common is a chance to exercise my passion or exercise my creativity outside of work. If I'm not getting that fulfillment from my day job, here's something that I can do in my spare time that scratches that itch. The third thing is just to build more skills, to actually make myself not less employable but more employable by learning something outside of my day job that I'm interested in. There's people learning how to code apps in their spare time and turning that into a business. If that's something that you want to do, there's opportunity to that to have, we'll call it "for profit hobbies".

My wife, her Side Hustle is photography. Turn that from kind of a money sucking hobby with buying camera equipment into a for profit hobby. You compare that with going out and playing golf for \$80 a round. Very unlikely to turn a profit on that.

Speaker 1: Right. How profitable can Side Hustles potentially be?

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:07:06] You've got, there's a podcast called the Six Figure Side Gig. Really, the sky is the limit. You think of what goes into profitability. Revenue and expenses. For freelancers and consultants and stuff, you have very little on the expense side of the equation, basically just your time. We have trying to build a physical product business or even a digital product business, you have some upfront cost of building a website or investing in those products.

Once you get that spinning, the incremental sales can be very, very profitable.

Speaker 1: That's fantastic. I think that just attests to, there's a Side Hustle for every type of hustler out there, depending on your goals. Talking about that different diversity and the profitability potential, let's go back to those different categories of Side Hustles. For example are there some that are better suited just as smaller income

streams versus ones that have the potential to become full time gigs or really, really profitable. Are there certain types that lean more in one direction than the other or is it really what you make of it?

Speaker 2: It really is what you make of it. There are some you'll find on different finance sites, like, you could do something that's kind of really small scale, like I'm going to make pennies per task or per job but over the course... One guy who worked on, you ever heard of Mechanical Turk? It's owned by Amazon. It's like a micro task platform.

Speaker 1: Awesome, I have not.

Speaker 2: Mturk, it sounds horrible to me, but he's like, I do surveys on here. I can identify what animal is in this image. Just random stuff. I've actually used it as a client for data entry because it's like you can get cheap labor done. I was like, "What's the SKU of this shoe?" But it's like, "That doesn't tell me anything, so go search for this on the website and tell me what make and model the shoe actually is." That's data I can use. He legitimately stuck to this. He's like, "Hey I can do this from my couch, I can do this any time of day, it's the perfect Side Hustle. I'm home with my new baby and I'm just plugging away on this thing." Made twenty grand over the course of like a year and a half or two years doing this.

Speaker 1: Wow.

Speaker 2: The pennies definitely added up but I was like, "Man, that sounds like really tedious work." There's stuff like that and then there's stuff that really uses your own unique skills and experience. I think that's where you probably have more upside potential. We've met folks who are doing, who started out on selling a commodity service, like, "I'll build you a website or build you a WordPress website for \$300." Today, he only consults on like \$25,000 website projects. He's moved himself up that value chain and figured out how to sell really expensive consulting services rather than just being a commodity freelancer, something that the lowest common denominator can get done.

Speaker 1: Would you say that those are generally the most profitable Side Hustles or are there certain things that are definitely the most profitable ones?

Speaker 2: He didn't have any input other than this time, so that's very profitable. I'm trying to think of what other ones. Anything that can ultimately be time leveraged is what's kind of exciting. You have the Side Hustle show this week is with a blogger who, a year ago she was making five grand a month from her blog, which was outstanding. This year she's making like twenty grand a month from her blog, which just blows me away. It's an example of how this thing can scale as the traffic scales and as the system scales.

She's now created all of these e-mail, automated sales funnels. The site is about budgeting. How to save money on your groceries and stuff like that. Outside of the make money online realm, but she's like, "Hey, this product helped me cut my grocery budget by \$16,000. I think you should have it, and by the way I'm a poster child for why exactly you should have it." If you don't make your money back in the first month, you're not doing it right. Because she can really speak to that and because it's something that legitimately will help her audience, she sells the crap out of the stuff like that and is doing very well.

Finding The Right Side Hustle: The 3 Buckets

Speaker 1: Awesome. I want to talk a little bit about, for someone who's maybe new to the whole Side Hustle thing, who's kind of looking to try and identify what a Side Hustle could be that's ideal for them. Could you talk about what steps a newbie would need to take from concept to execution in order to find their ideal Side Hustle?

Speaker 2: The ideal Side Hustle is probably a myth. I think the ideal Side Hustle is one that you're excited to get up and work on and not get bored with. Let's talk about the three most common buckets or places I would recommend people to start. The renaissance of peer to peer commerce. Some people call it the sharing economy. This would be stuff like Uber, like AirBnB, like Task Rabbit. There's a tutoring platform called Wyzant. There's hundreds of these different things. For any niche imaginable, there's some startup that has built up a platform to connect you with somebody who want whatever it is you have to sell.

The downside to something like Uber is, anybody can drive, for the most part. There's naturally a downward pressure on how much you can make there, what your hourly rate is going to be. The upside is, look, anybody can do it. Anybody can get started right away. These platforms take in, remove some of the barriers to entry typically found in entrepreneurship. Same thing with AirBnB, right? If fifteen years ago, you wanted to rent out your spare bedroom or have a vacation rental, what was your advertising? A sign in your front yard or something? It just didn't exist before and now they have built this huge marketplace where there is this big audience of buyers. That's really exciting.

For any skill imaginable. Even like DogVacay. A friend of mine sent me a note, he said, "I'm going to make probably fifteen grand on DogVacay this year." It's like AirBnB, but for dogs. If you have pet sitting in your blood, if you love animals. That's an option for you. That's kind of the first place that I would look. What are some of these platforms that might be available to you for very low barrier to entry, low cost to entry and quick to get started with.

I have a new book out called "Buy Buttons", you can find BuyButtonsBook.com, where it's basically, all these different platforms, where can you put your buy button? Where can you make it easy for people to do business with you?

The second area that is kind of like the age old business model of buy low, sell high. It's the same thing that Wal-Mart has done for years. Any store in the history of stores uses this buy low, sell high business model where I see actually a couple of different... One of the most popular episodes on the Side Hustle show is a guy called the Flea Market Flipper. He calls himself the Flea Market Flipper. He lives outside Orlando. Every weekend he says, "I'm at the Orlando Flea Market looking for," in his words, "The odd items." He gave me the example of finding a prosthetic leg that he bought for \$40 or something and sold it [inaudible 00:15:13] dollars.

He's just looking for these weird flips, right? [inaudible 00:15:18] Thing and then [inaudible 00:15:24] awkwardly walking around the market trying [inaudible 00:15:27] and then goes around and tries to flip it. He sells, he said sold some high exercise bike for like a couple grand. He said he sold some fancy cappuccino machine. It's like random stuff. That's something that's totally open to everyone and is just whatever you are comfortable investing in it. You know, don't make a bet you can't [inaudible 00:15:55] turn money over quickly.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: Mutual fund and waiting eight percent a year for 30 years. Where this one gets interesting is by tapping into the marketplace that Amazon has built. I was kind of surprised to learn that almost half the inventory is owned by Amazon. It's owned by sellers like you and me, small businesses and individuals who are using it as the world's biggest consignment store. They've basically opened up their fulfillment centers and their logistics network to everybody. We would like to crowd source our inventory. We're going to call this the FBA [inaudible 00:16:40]. You find stuff to send locally at Wal-Mart and Babies R Us, scanning items in the clearance section with the Amazon seller app. You can setup a free account at SellerCentral.Amazon.com. You scan the bar codes item, see what it's worth online. Most, not a good buy, but sometimes it is. Hey, this thing is selling for three times more on Amazon, I want to buy it and ship it in.

That's kind of a fun one. To scale that up what I've seen people doing is in a product. Finding items that are hot sellers and actually having them. Some friends of ours did some barbecue grates. We've got a couple episodes on the Amazon FBA business, the private labeling business as it's called. Those are the first two. Number three would be the freelancing. Go about selling your service. I think this is actually one of the fastest ways to get started with no overhead is taking inventory of your skills and saying, "What problem can I solve?" Like for

businesses or for other companies where, I'm trying to think of an example of this.

One place to start would be resumé. If you've ever had [inaudible 00:18:11] by definition, somebody thought that was a skill worth paying for. Where I would cross reference that with is your interests and what you like doing and connections or what your network is in.

An example I always thought would be really cool was, my brother is a Psychologist and has studied Psychology and sales and he's worked in restaurants. I always thought that he's got this service industry background. If he could figure out how to sell this as a training package to servers or restaurant owners. Like, "I can increase your average check by ten percent. What's that worth to you? What's that worth to you in terms of Yelp ratings?" People coming in, they're happy with their experience, they don't go grumbling out the door.

For me, I have a background in websites and online marketing and I love to ski. Could I go sell some marketing service to ski areas? Something like that or could I help them with their website or social media? That would be an interesting angle to pursue. Find those sweet spots that marry something you're interested in or have a connection in with a skill that you have.

Speaker 1: Fantastic. I know that you mention a lot about going where the cash is already flowing. Is that where newbies should start? Is that an example of the three buckets you just gave us? Just kind of start where the cash is already flowing?

Speaker 2: Sorry, say that again, you cut out for a second.

Speaker 1: Oh, sorry about that. I said, you mentioned a lot about going where the cash is already flowing. Is that where newbies should start?

Speaker 2: I think it's a great place to start. It's some of the marketing burden, right? I spoke with a woman for the Buy Button book who is a graphic designer in New York. Actually, that was her Side Hustle. Her day job was working for some big IT company. What she said was, "I started doing wedding shower invitations, baby shower invitations and putting them up on a site called Zazzle.com," which is like a print on demand service. They sell t-shirts, they sell those invitations. Basically, anything imaginable that you want custom printed on something, they will do it for you. The artist makes a cut on that sale.

What she said is like, "Zazzle, if you Google 'baby shower invitations', Zazzle is on the first page. If I was to setup my own website, my own shop and try to stick my flag in the sand and say 'I'm your baby shower invitation person,' that's a huge battle for discoverability, for visibility." These platform have kind of solved,

they've made it like a smaller pool to swim in instead of competing with the entirety of Google for attention. Same thing with Podcasting or even with Amazon for books. Although that's a big market to play in too. Trying to find these different ways to shrink your visible Universe.

15 Most Popular Side Hustles

Speaker 1: Fantastic. I think a lot of people get stuck, and I know we just talked about a few different Side Hustle buckets. I think a lot of people get stuck because they don't realize how many different ways there are to create additional income. What are twenty or so, maybe even less, popular different Side Hustle ideas that you see people frequently using. Is it just, is it like Uber, AirBnB, that Amazon thing? What are some of those popular ones you see frequently?

Speaker 2: I've got a survey. Let me see if I can pull this up. We can even do screen share. Show my screen, let's see. When people join the site, I also mention in e-mail that's like, I ask them, "What's your hustle?" Through thousands of responses, these are the fifteen most popular answers that I've got to that, so I put this together as a slideshow deck. Can you see my screen now?

Speaker 1: Yes, I can.

Speaker 2: Okay, so number fifteen was network marketing. Multi-level marketing, network marketing. The hot ones right now would be essential oils, even coming up on [inaudible 00:22:37] like all of the fitness and health ones. A friend of mine is doing really, really well as a beach body coach. That's an exciting one.

The ones I would stay away from are the ones that if you think it's a scam, it probably is. If you have to buy inventory up front, that's probably a red flag. If you have to pay some membership fee, that's probably a red flag. People have strong opinions about network marketing. If that's something that appeals to you, I would say, take a look, go down that path but I guess tread with caution because some of them I think you can kind of spin your wheels and not make any money with.

The next one that I hear quite often is real estate. Whether that's residential real estate investing or even becoming like a micro-landlord of renting out your spare bedroom. Some of the interesting ones on the real estate front were, I met a gentleman who called this, "the best passive income business." What did he call it? The best passive income business, something like that. What it was was like raw land flipping. He had this whole process spelled out where he was targeting parcels of land in the Southwest where the owner lived out of state and owed back taxes. Apparently, you can get these databases online or this is sometimes public information because it's tax records. He's sending them an offer letter, "I

would like to buy your parcel of land in the middle of nowhere, Arizona," and turning around.

It's kind of a numbers game. You could send out a hundred letters and get a two or five percent response rate would be excellent. Occasionally, somebody says yes and you turn around and try to find a buyer for that. I thought that was fascinating because he was like, "Look, there's no toilets to repair, there's no tenants." You know, none of these headaches that come with traditional real estate land ownership. I thought that was an interesting one.

Photography, obviously one that's near and dear to my heart because that's my wife's Side Hustle. Her and her partner actually started with an ad on Craigslist, which at the time, I thought that was the dumbest thing ever. I said, "Who's looking for wedding photographers on Craigslist?" Within hours, within the first couple days, they had booked half a dozen different jobs. I was like, "I was wrong, apparently this is a thing." So they can use that.

Speaker 1: [inaudible 00:25:22]

Speaker 2: Totally, they're like, "What do you know about marketing, Mr. Marketing guy?" I said, "Fine."

It illustrates again, the power of that marketplace. Craigslist, at least in the US, probably a top ten website in terms of popularity. There's a lot of eyeballs on there, so you can put your service up for sale or even sell products on there as well if you're... I met another guy, that was his whole business. He make a full-time living just buying and selling stuff on Craigslist. Supports a family of a seven doing this. He was specializing in appliances.

Could you imagine something that's bulkier or harder to move? That was his thing. Photography, okay, so we have example. Health, fitness services. I don't have an example other than the beach body coach that really comes to mind. I actually listened to a podcast the other day, I'm going to try to get her on the Side Hustle show. She was doing real high end weight loss coaching for female executives. She had this really cool, dialed in sales funnel where she was doing guest blogging which lead to her e-mail list, which lead to setup a free initial consultation call, actually it was apply for a free initial consultation call with me. She had some screening process to see, is this person going to be a good fit? Can they afford me? I thought that was a really cool process to nail people down for some high-end health coaching.

On the teaching side, so this is number eleven. Teaching online or offline. Lots of examples on this front. My favorite platform for this is probably Udemy.com. It's a platform with probably ten million students at this point, maybe twelve million

students at this point of people proven to spend money on online education. Continuing education is a hundred billion dollar online market. It's like putting a [inaudible 00:27:22] launch your Kindle book, or how to launch a book on Amazon. It's made pretty consistent passive income for almost two years now. I really like that platform.

Similar with Amazon, I think it's kind of on you. Probably a lot of these platforms, kind of on you to provide an initial push to get noticed on the platform with the algorithm. Start to take note, start to work in your favor. I definitely like Udemy for that and there's skill share and even if you can build up your own audience, teaching on your own platform has much higher profit potential. You talked about profitability [inaudible 00:28:05] a thousand bucks, your incremental delivery cost is very, very low, so that's a kind of exciting proposition too.

Marketing agency was number ten. I'm kind of surprised to see that one ranked this highly, but a handful of people, a handful of guests running SEO services or running social media services or running content marketing. A couple that come to mind, one is Dane. He's in Wisconsin or someplace in the West. He started out just doing blog writing as a freelancer, kind of one on one. Then you had enough margin underneath him to do the work. Eventually he's got like a team of twenty different writers under him now. He built out this agency and now [inaudible 00:29:02].

The other guy that comes to mind is my friend Shawn Marshall, who runs [inaudible 00:29:11]. He runs this local marketing agency. He's got this team in the Philippines that helps with all the work. It targets people in the home services businesses. Painters and plumbers and real estate agents and stuff like that. There's a niche for everything.

Speaker 1: There is.

Speaker 2: Coaching, we talked a little bit about coaching for that health coach. I'm always hesitant when I talk to the 25-year-old life coach and be like, "How does this work again? How do you get clients? What can you really add to the world?"

Speaker 1: [inaudible 00:29:47] have you really lived?

Speaker 2: I know. It's kind of funny when that's the business and obviously there's more to it than having the life experience. Knowing what levers to pull, what questions to ask. It's a skill, definitely a skill in itself. Coaching was number nine. Corina had another interesting sales file similar to the health coaching one.

Software and app development, another one that I was kind of surprised to see this high because it's a lot of technical skill required in some cases, or

development cost to do. If you're not going to do it yourself. I've seen some interesting examples.

Probably my favorite comes from a guy who didn't code anything himself but was probably one of the best sales people that I've ever talked to. His name is John Logar. He told me this story of looking at the Inc. 500, or the Inc. 5000. Say these are fast growing companies and looking at specific industries and just calling up the boss. He would send an e-mail to the CEO or whoever it is and then immediately follow up with a phone call and say, "Hey, I just want to make sure you got my e-mail." They'd be like, "Wait what? You sent that two seconds ago. What is this?"

"Hey, while I've got you on the phone, would you mind answering this one question?" He's like, "Since you're a leader in such and such industry, I just want to ask you, what's the biggest challenge facing your industry for the next five years?" He's just trying to get people talking. Then he would uncover these different painful, expensive problems in their businesses. Fascinating conversation. He'll get people to tell them exactly how much this problem is costing and he can base his solution on what it's worth to them, not on how much it's going to cost him to deliver it. I thought he was a really smart guy.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Software, again, of course is like the holy grail of Side Hustles, right? It's that same thing. You can deal with something once and sell it over and over again. No incremental costs.

Amazon and eBay, we talked a little bit about that before with the Amazon FBA business and eBay flipping business. Flipping prosthetic legs and stuff from flea markets. We don't probably need to spend too much time on that.

Speaker 1: [inaudible 00:32:03] for some people.

Speaker 2: Yes. Surprisingly eBay, you know, when I ask people in the Side Hustle Nation Facebook community, eBay was a really popular place for people to get started just because even if you're just de-cluttering your house, that kind of kills two birds with one stone. Like, I'm going to clear out my garage, get rid of this crap that I haven't used in two years and hopefully turn that into some extra cash. I think tapping into those marketplaces can be pretty powerful too. If for no other reason, like I'm lightening my load, kind of reducing my inventory.

Number six was eCommerce and drop shipping. An interesting episode recently on drop shipping was with Anton Kraly, who runs DropShiplifestyle.com. He came on and kind of schooled me on his process for setting up a drop shipping store. He

maintains a portfolio of dozens and dozens of different sites. We were walking through the example of like, I want to setup this storefront to sell treadmill desks. I love treadmill desks, I have one upstairs and I walk on it every morning. Maybe I could start the treadmill desk shipping emporium. He talked about what kind of price point you want to look for. He was like, "I wouldn't go anything less than \$200, because it takes the same amount of effort to sell a \$500 thing as it does a \$20 thing and you're going to make way more from the \$500 thing." I thought that was really interesting.

He talked about when you reach out to the manufacturers or the distributors, not to use the word "drop shipping" but to say instead, "Hey, I have an eCommerce store." He gave a way to setup with Shopify, kind of a dummy looking site with some placeholder products. Stuff to try and convince people like, "Hey, this is a storefront. We'd like to help you sell some more products." It was just interesting to not use the word "drop shipping" and then eCommerce, you can setup your storefront to sell whatever product it is. I've had people tapping into the marijuana legalization trend and selling marijuana related products online. Had people selling dance clothing related products online. People selling linens and wedding napkins and all sorts of random stuff.

There's a market for everything and that's kind of the beauty of it. Versus [inaudible 00:34:41] setup shop online, start to advertise [inaudible 00:34:47] buys. Worst case, you're not out anything, especially with drop shipping because you don't even have to buy the inventory until you sell it.

Number five was the jewelry crafts and art. I'm trying to think of a good art example from the archives. I think the Zazzle artist, the wedding or baby shower invitation designer person was a good example for art. On the craft side, an example that comes to mind is my friend Kara who runs an Etsy shop selling wine themed wedding décor. Which again, sounds kind of intimidating to me because it still has to be physically you making it. She's like, "You know the kids come home. My husband comes home from his job and that's when I bust out [inaudible 00:35:44] wine corks." She was like, "I love it, it never gets old."

I think it's a great creative outlet for her, but it's like, man, that's a lot, it's very labor intensive. If that's something that you love, her advice for people getting started for people on Etsy was to really focus on the product photography. The keywords in your listing. You can even probably go out of your way, similar to all these other platforms, to seed your account with some initial sales to friends and family or seed some reviews. She really liked the wedding market because it was like, "Hey, this thing might only cost five dollars but if people buy it for the entire wedding guest list that's a hundred people, all of a sudden that's a \$500 order and I'm more than happy to glue some wine corks together for the 500 bucks."

Speaker 1: It's amazing the stuff that you can sell on Etsy. People have some really creative stuff and people love it. All of this unique stuff that you wouldn't expect there'd be a market for and then you find out there is. People are buying tons of Etsy crafts all the time.

Speaker 2: It's really tapping into that. Go where the cash is already flowing, right? Here's a marketplace of buyers where you can put your buy button. One thing I didn't realize about it too was like, okay, it's the handmade, handcrafted marketplace, but you can sell digital products too. How about somebody who was selling digital financial planners. Now somebody's selling business card templates on there, which is awesome, because it's kind of like, now, once you have it dialed in, there's no glue gun involved. You just go and send somebody this PDF file or make a couple of tweaks to the template and you're off to the races.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: Number four was consulting. Lots of examples on this, I think. Probably the best examples are the ones that are going really up market trying to find an expensive problem they can find for some business to business sales, business to business company like the guy doing the \$25,000 websites versus the the commoditization of all of these skills, trying to find somebody who has a really specific need and you can solve some.

I don't know. I haven't done much on the consulting side. Maybe a little bit on... It's like, I'm targeting, Side Hustlers, people who are trying to make more money versus trying to target companies. Probably the best consulting gig I had was with with a home builder. Trying to figure out, what's your lead generation process? It was kind of silly and then I was like, "I don't really know what I'm talking about," so I quit.

Oh, here's one. Kai. Kai has a really good episode on how to start your consulting business in twenty hours. He lays out step by step what he'd do. He talked about the concept of software with a service. The common thing, especially in Silicon Valley is like, SaaS, you're going to have a software as a service business. He was like, "Hey, you know, a lot of these software companies. It's kind of complicated to use. It's like QuickBooks, as an example, we use QuickBooks for our accounting, finances. You probably still hire a CPA to help you out, right?" That's software with a service.

He gave the example of some different SEO software like SEMrush or some other software that's like, "Hey we bought this, we're already proven that we're going to invest in the software, but are we getting the most out of it?" As an SEO consultant, you'd be software with a service to help people out with their different things. The way he found clients was going on their support forums and

genuinely being helpful, but like, "Hey, if you want to take this offline, if you want to talk more, happy to do it." Then, "Hey, can I just hire you to do this for me?" Perfect way to get business.

Number three, blogging, of course everybody wants to be a professional blog. Everybody wants to have a moneymaking blog. The BusyBudgeter.com is a great example of somebody who's doing that well outside of the traditional blogging space although now the blog is making so much money she's developed an audience of like, "I want to learn how to blog," too.

This is a fun one for me even though my hourly rate from blogging is pretty low. For me, it started as a creative outlet. Here's a place to practice my writing and where it got serious or when it kind of started to take off is when I nailed that focus. Initially, I started with a personal blog, no real reason for anybody to stick around unless you knew me personally, but then when I started talking specifically side businesses and my experience with the shoe site and all these other random Side Hustles, that's kind of when people started to stick around and the following started to grow.

I definitely like blogging and I really like podcasting as well because, similar to Zazzle, similar to Etsy, it's like a smaller pool to swim in, iTunes is rather than Google. Even though there's hundreds of thousands of podcasts, it's an order of magnitude less competitive than the world of just straight blogging for content and Google. I'm a fan of podcasting as well.

Speaker 1: You have your own podcast show too.

Speaker 2: Yes, of course. The reason I say that is the podcast has grown probably three, four, five times faster than the blog. It's gotten to the point where I can write this article or I can just put it out on the podcast. It's going to reach more people on the podcast. It gets to be these trad offs. You don't have to fight for discoverability. People who are already subscribed to your show, it's going to get pushed to their phone automatically. There's a lot of benefits doing that, plus I think, somebody spends a half hour, forty-five minutes with you in their ear buds every week, that's a powerful relationship. More so than if they spend three, four minutes skimming a blog post.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: I don't know, that's my obviously biased self-experience.

Number two is self-publishing, one of my favorite Side Hustles. I remember getting my first royalty for Amazon. It was like \$47.42 and it was like, "Somebody bought my book!" It was just crazy. What I like about this is, very low overhead,

very quick to get started and immediately you can get your work out on Amazon, which is essentially the world's largest store. Definitely the world's largest store for books. It's one of those things where, again, if you can provide that initial marketing push, sometimes the algorithm will start to take over and help other people discover you. It's a search engine all its own. If you have a topic that can link well inside Amazon's search engine, all of a sudden, that's quite a bit of free traffic, free exposure and potentially free author royalties for your book.

Where I see people having the most success is them using the book, not, the royalties it makes are nice, right? But to build a full-time business just on the back of publishing probably is a portfolio business. It's something like, oh yeah, it's a passive income, but I've got to keep writing the next book to keep that passive income spinning. What I see people doing well with it is, using the book as a business card. Using the book as lead generation for a larger product or a consulting service.

The classic example would be like Jeff Walker's book called "Launch" which is like, it tells you a lot in the book, but it's like a thinly-veiled sales pitch for his \$2000 product launch formula course. Another avenue of discoverability, for one. You know, there's probably a lot more people searching on Amazon that have never heard of me that may have a chance to discover me through there than if they just happen to happen upon me through the podcast or through Google. I like that angle as well. It's fun. It's fun to write your book and put it out there and see what happens.

I'm just a month removed from a book launch and going through the whole recap post. Actually, that's over... You can see, I'm drafting up, "Here's everything I did to launch my bestselling book." That's what I've been working on this morning, the blog post recap of that one.

Speaker 1: Congratulations on that, by the way.

Speaker 2: Well, thank you. It's been, so far, knock on wood, the feedback has been good on it. Hopefully it continues to be an asset for Side Hustle Nation.

Number one is just straight up freelancing. This is probably the simplest thing to get started. There's a mindset shift that says probably half of the workforce is going to be freelancers or contractors by 2020. If you're not already, so you might as well get that in your head that your employer today is probably just your largest client, maybe that's the way to look at it. Freelancing is number one. Lots of different platforms to get this done or using the pull marketing approach of establishing your authority in a given space and getting clients to come to you, rather than you bidding for work on platforms like Upwork.

An example of somebody setting themselves up for clients to come to them, I thought this was really genius, we're going to be recording an episode on this shortly, too. He went to, I think a local accounting office or local attorney's office and said, "Hey, you guys have a lot of small business clients. I would like to give a presentation, free of charge to your customers, on the seven deadly sins of copy writing," or websites, or graphic design. Whatever it is that is his area of expertise. He put on this presentation, and no sales pitch, right?

At the end, people are coming up to him, "Can you take a look at my website? What should I do?" You just collect business cards, do these follow up calls, and ended up booking thousands of dollars worth of work from that free engagement. It set himself up as the authority and had gone not to buy buttons platform marketplace, but like, use that same strategy to get in front of his target customers in their native habitat. I thought that was pretty smart.

Speaker 1: That is. That's fantastic. That was such a great list. Full of a lot of different types of things that people can do. So kind of talking about all of those different options and the different buckets that you mentioned earlier, if someone is trying to start out and they're trying to figure out, okay, here are the ideas that blend my skills with my interests. How do they brainstorm those, take those different ideas and kind of vet them to figure out which one's going to be the right one for me to start with? Is there a particular process? Is it just making a list? Do you have any process or strategies for nailing down all of those different ideas and picking the one that you want to pursue?

Brainstorm Ideas & Narrow It Down

Speaker 2: I do start with the list. I start with, you know, resumé. What kind of skills do I have or do I think I have? Give yourself some credit. You have, probably more skills than I think you give yourself credit for because once you know a thing, it's hard to imagine not knowing it, but to somebody who doesn't have it, that could still be a valuable skill. I wouldn't put breathing and walking and stuff, but short of that, make a big list. Then you can think, the way I would narrow it down is like, what are people asking you for help with most often? What kind of questions do you get either from your co-workers, your peers? What do people already see you as an expert in?

For my wife, that was the photography, will you come take pictures of us? That's how the idea for the business got started. Hey, would you help me proofread this? I had done some proofreading as a freelance Side Hustle. The other thing to consider is, what are you excited about or interested in or could see yourself pursuing? It doesn't have to be your end all, be all passion, but it does have to be something that you don't dread. The last thing you need is a second job that you hate.

Speaker 1: Very true. Awesome. Now that you kind of have that list, I know you talked a little bit, kind of during that little slideshow, about publishing can have that recurring income but you still have to be writing that next book. Are there other certain Side Hustles that can create passive recurring income?

Speaker 2: The myth of the elusive passive income usually takes either time or money to create. You can invest in dividend stocks and make passive income. You can invest in peer to peer loans like on Prosper.com and make passive income, or you can build an asset, a piece of software, a book, course, that you can sell over and over again and make passive income. Probably the most successful passive income assets for me have been the books and courses and then, that's the tough part. The blog and the podcast, I wouldn't really consider it passive. It's like time leveraged. If you can get a thousand people to a blog post and there's an affiliate product in there, then that... It wasn't a direct trade of time for money, but... So that's kind of the trade off.

Speaker 1: That's actually a perfect segue into my next question about, do Side Hustles have to involve huge investments of time or capital? Should people be prepared to do that or is it that time leveraging that you keep discussing?

Speaker 2: The advantage that Side Hustlers have is, they have some flexibility and they have some cash flow already coming in, hopefully from their day job. You can afford to take a longer term view. You can afford to write that book. You can afford to work on that blog for twelve months or eighteen months or however long it's going to take to get it off the ground versus the person who needs to make rent next month. You're in much better entrepreneurship position than a lot of the world. That's a good place to start out with.

As far as the time or capital, all of these businesses we talked have very low overhead, very low startup costs. I started the podcast for less than a hundred dollars. I bought the SideHustle.com domain for a hundred dollars. All of these businesses started, at least were validated, for less than five hundred in my case. It's kind of like, that's my seed money, that's what I was comfortable putting on the line and placing my bet and if I lost it, like, okay, that's not going to be a lifestyle changer, but hopefully it gives it the opportunity to multiply. Same thing with product flipping. I'm going to put a hundred dollars into a washer and dryer on Craigslist, hopefully turn it around and sell it for two hundred the next day.

The time investment is the bigger challenge. We're all obviously dealt the same twenty four hours in a day. For figuring out where to find the time, one trick that's worked for me is simply tracking it. This goes back to Peter Drucker's what gets measured gets managed. You can use a tool like Toggles, it's Toggl.com or

you could just use Excel like I do. It kind of gamifies it. I'll put time and all of a sudden it's like, "I'm on the clock. I've got to go, I've got to hustle on this."

You'd be surprised probably how much time you have in a day once you start itemizing minute by minute where it goes. It's depressing in a way but I think eyeopening in another way. You say, "Okay, I actually do have the time, it's just a matter of how am I going to use it?" The other benefit of having that list, because at the end of the week, the end of the month, you've got this itemized list of everything you spent time on.

You're going to be able to uncover opportunities for elimination, you know, what tasks do I really not need to be doing? Opportunities for automation, what am I doing over and over again that maybe there's a smarter way to do that? And opportunities for delegation. With a little bit of training, could a virtual assistant do this for me or could I get somebody else to help out with these different tasks? That's kind of where I like to start on the time.

Speaker 1: Fantastic. I think that brings me to my last question in terms of Side Hustles. How do you use your Side Hustle income?

Speaker 2: Irene, you cut out again, go ahead.

Speaker 1: Sorry about that. That brings me to the last question, which is, how do you use your Side Hustle income?

Speaker 2: It's my full-time gig now, so I use it to pay rent and buy groceries. Yeah, and it's another advantage too. If you don't need the income, you can do some really fun things with deferring that and open up the tax advantages to you as a business owner. That's kind of exciting as well for if you don't need it. A friend of mine has that dividend growth investing strategy here he's like, "For every dollar I make, I'm going to put it into these stocks that pay dividends and not only those, I pick the stocks that pay increasing dividends or have for the last thirty years and that's one way to get paid over and over again from this work that I did once."
[inaudible 00:54:31] work that I did one time.

Speaker 1: Fantastic. Well, thank you so much for all of those tips and strategies that you shared with everyone and we appreciate you taking the time to interview with us.

Speaker 2: You bet, thanks for having me.

Speaker 1: Thanks Nick. Be sure to check out his blog Side Hustle Nation.