

THE FOUNDATION

Starting from Nothing – The Foundation Podcast

Guest Name Interview – Mike Pisciotta

Introduction: Welcome to Starting from Nothing – The Foundation Podcast, the place where incredible entrepreneurs show you how they built their business entirely from scratch, before they knew what the heck they were doing.

Frank: Welcome to another edition of the Starting from Nothing podcast. I'm your host today, Frank Mocerino. Today we're bringing on a really special guest, his name is Mike Pisciotta.

Mike is an online marketing strategist, funnel fanatic, and business coach whose [unclear 00:00:34] results driven approach has helped thousands of entrepreneurs grow their businesses.

Mike's got a really cool story. He is no stranger to failure and adversity. He spent 10 years in a Florida prison and used the time there to transform his mind and ultimately emerge a new man after that with a mission and purpose to empower others.

So Mike's journey from inmate to entrepreneur began when he was 18 with a 10-year prison sentence and a huge choice to make in the midst of an environment that was designed to make him fail. Mike's motto that he developed during this time is let the time make him not break him.

Mike, welcome to the show.

Mike: Hey, what's up, Frank? Thanks for having me, man.

Frank: No, it's really exciting to be able to share your story with our audience. I think that they're going to get a tremendous amount of value from that. Because we're not just going to tell your story of transformation, we're also going to dive into tactics that have let you build big businesses, right? So this is part transformation, part actual tactics that Mike's used to crush it.

Mike: Definitely. We'll touch on this story because I think it's really cool to show that like, hey, if I could come from massive failure to massive success then even folks

in the middle or with way less types of failures can really be encourage to go, "You know what, I can do this, I can make it happen, and I could crush it too."

Frank: Awesome. Well, why don't we just begin with the story, Mike. Tell us what happened when you were 18 years old.

Mike: So at 18 I grew up in a truly dysfunctional home, drugs were prevalent, and the drugs led me to a 10-year prison sentence. I wake up in a cell really still high from the night before, no idea what had happened, what the crime was, where I was. I was completely blacked out. I go to the process and they wind up mercifully -- at least that's what the court called it -- given me a 10-year sentence.

I was 18, man, and up until that time the only world that I knew was a world of just drugs and crime and just the street light, that's all that I'd ever been exposed to. The system worked to pull me out of an environment and it allowed me to kind of open my mind and see a different world because I could be sober, I could look at things differently.

So, throughout the prison sentence, there was a time, and you shared it in my bio. I just remember this one day that I would really say probably, like, the turning point, the day that really marks the entire trajectory of what I had used my time for.

I'm in my cell and I'm exercising and I'm having an internal conversation with God. I just began to kind of process what was ahead of me. I was only 19 at that time, realize that I got about nine years in change ahead of me which seem like forever, you know? It seemed like an insurmountable hill.

Internally, and between just me and God, I had just realized that where I was in life was a product of the choices that I had made. No one else had put me there and I made a choice that I was going to change that and I was going to use the time, every moment of it, to just completely transform who I was.

I realize that I'd allowed them to take 10 years of my freedom. [unclear 00:03:53] my choices did that but the choice that I did have was I wasn't going to let them take 10 years of my life and I was going to use that time, man, to live and come out the other side a completely different person.

Frank: Man, that is incredible.

When you decided to make this transformation, what did that actually looks like for you? What kind of things did you do, write, read? How did you actually start ingraining that mindset in, I imagine, one of the most challenging environments to ingrain that type of mindset.

Mike: Yeah. Well, for sure, man. Definitely.

I kind of liken the environment two crabs in a bucket and people have heard this kind of analogy before. I was that one crab frantically tried to get out of the bucket and all the other crabs, they don't want me to get out. They're trying to pull me in.

One of the main things that I really did is I knew that my character was going to be of utmost importance and I just immerse myself in the bible and in things spiritual to really shape my character and change the criminal that I had been. And along with that, I also immerse myself in all things business. Every business book, every Tony Robbins book, Robert Kiyosaki book, every book on marketing, any book that I could get my hands on that would instill both personal development, strategic direction for business, I would just soak them up and take note and read them.

And I also, at that time, I really got interested in languages and I met a guy who had taught himself Spanish and I stalked this dude, literally stalked him, begging him to teach me Spanish, teach me, and he did. He finally caved, he taught me Spanish, and I took what he taught me and how he taught me to learn a language and I applied it and I ultimately learned Spanish, Italian, French, and Greek. Read, write, speak all of them by the time I had come out of prison.

Kind of one of the things that I knew during my time was I really didn't know what life was going to have for me on the other side of the gates. I didn't really know what I was going to do for work, I didn't really know what opportunities would present them self and so I made it my goal to prepare myself for as many opportunities as I could.

Learn languages, learn business, learn the stock market, I learned about foreclosures, and I learned about how people start restaurants. I just wanted to be very, very well-rounded so that when I got out of the prison system, I could see opportunities and be prepared instead of having to get prepared.

Frank: Man, alright. Let's go down that path. So you get out, it's about seven years ago now, right?

Mike: Yup, right about seven years.

Frank: So you've prepared yourself with pretty much everything business, everything language. How did you actually begin? Let's say you walk out the gates, what was your first step or what happened?

Mike: I did -- I'll just kind of chime this. I did have the extreme blessing. I actually met my wife while I was in prison. She was a radio DJ and we met when I still had

about almost eight years to go. We began writing. Things went in that direction. That is a completely separate story that we can talk about but I did -- When I came home, she was there, and we wound up getting married about five weeks later.

But when I did come home, I came home to -- she had a place, she had a job and stuff, and, unfortunately, her boss just didn't like the idea that she was going to be marrying an ex-con. She wound up losing her job. So here, both her and I are with a stack of bills. I couldn't get a job. Nobody would hire me, right? People would get really excited when I talk to them. They realize, "Wow! This guy speaks all these languages. He's pretty well-spoken. He's intelligent." And as soon as they would look at my record, they would not call me back.

At that time I was, again, faced with a choice, man. I was faced with the choice to get frustrated and let that continue those doors shut break me, you know? I could let them be like get mad and turn the other way but I chose to just continue to press forward and draw from some of that strength.

My wife and I, at the same time, were starting to get pretty active in our local business community. There was these couple of buzz words that were really, really popular then that we all know now. Facebook and Twitter and WordPress and all of these things were really kind of just starting to get really popular and introduced into the business community. My wife and I realized, if we were going to be successful and if we were going to get where we wanted to go, that we were going to have to utilize all of these tools and business.

We started out literally dead broke, selling trash on Craigslist to try to fund the dream. We used the funds that we got selling stuff we found and selling stuff we got at storage unit auction, selling it on Craigslist pouring every dime we had into our first website and into local speaking opportunities. That's kind of where it grew from.

Frank: Oh my God! Okay.

Mike: (Laughs)

Frank: Tell me more. How were you selling trash? What was that actually look like for you?

Mike: It's cool because a lot -- when I say, a lot of people like, "Really dude? Like you really sold trash?" We totally did. And the cool part -- Here's where I really like to share with folks is here's this guy, right? I'm fresh out of prison. To just keep kind of the listeners a little bit of perspective of the world I left and the world I came home to.

The world I left there was no such thing as Google. It had not existed yet. Flat screen monitors didn't exist. iPads, iPhones, smartphones. Internet on the phone didn't even exist yet. And so I come home to this technological, like almost avalanche. I'm like, "Wow!" Holy crap! What is going on? But I was kind of like a kid in a candy store.

When my wife lost her job we kind of dug deep and said, "You know what, we no longer are we ever going to make ourselves dependent on someone else for our livelihood, for our direction in life." We would literally drive around late at night and find -- like people would try away flat screen monitors or vacuums or printers and we would get them and we would just resell them on Craigslist. It got pretty lucrative at some point and we will just use every dime into funding this online business that we wanted to get into.

It's funny because as we look back in it, you know, my wife and I we chuckle, we really enjoyed it because, first of all, we'd waited to be together for eight years and I'd spent 10 years in prison. So just the ability to drive around in a car late at night, I was having a blast. That was fun. I was not in prison, I was having fun. I was just making my own way. So we really, really enjoyed it and we just looked at it as this is the first step to get us to where we really want to go.

Frank: Man, that's incredible.

One of the things I really want to pull out is a lot of starting entrepreneurs tend to get caught up in the details, right? How do I best leverage Facebook? How do I best leverage Twitter? What about this new thing, Periscope? Should I be on it? Should I be using it? If so, how? What I want to pull out is that imagine that you did not keep up with any of that for six or seven years -- excuse me, 10 years, like Mike did, right?

For those of you who are wondering what's the next step or how do I keep up with technology, here's a lesson. Somebody caught up with technology after a 10-year hiatus from it so I would ask yourself what is really holding you back from getting out there, learning, and leveraging these new platforms.

Mike: Exactly. What did I share from a strategic standpoint is -- and I think this has really helped my wife and I to really be very, very [pointed 00:11:38] and focus is there's so much to learn and we knew that, especially for me. There was so much to learn. I started with one thing and got good at it. Until I mastered it and until I could use it to profit and until I could use it to grow my business, I did not allow myself to get distracted with all of the other things. Because every one of those tools that you mentioned works: Periscope, Twitter, Facebook, all of them work. But the problem that a lot of entrepreneurs say to my wife and I is "Oh, it's not working for me." What we find is because they're way too diluted trying to do all of them and they never do any one of them well.

Frank: What was that one thing for you guys? What did you focus on in the beginning?

Mike: So we start with Craigslist, right?

Frank: Yup.

Mike: So we started juicing Craigslist. Craigslist really worked well for us because at the same time as we started doing the Craigslist, as I was also going to college and I was learning HTML, Craigslist became our very first online marketing platform. At that time, a lot of local businesses knew that Craigslist was really valuable to get their products and services out to a local market. So we started selling to these local businesses HTML Craigslist ads. I would write the HTML code, we post them on Craigslist, and we would start getting clients that way. That's kind of how we started way back seven years ago in the online marketing space.

What we did is we got really, really good with that before we moved on. And it was cool because at that time everybody was screaming, "You got to be on Facebook" and "You got to be on Twitter." We were like, "Yeah. We do and we're going to be but we want to get good and profit and be able to create systems around Craigslist," at that time, "before we started getting into the other." Because we knew if we started trying to step in to that, it was going to just dilute our efforts and we really wouldn't be able to utilize it well. We probably wind up just being overwhelmed.

Frank: Give me a sense of what you guys were doing roughly in terms of your revenue as you got the Craigslist business dialed in.

Mike: Very first year we did \$18,000.

Frank: Man, selling junk.

Mike: Selling junk. That was probably the first -- because I came home at the end of 2009. So it was 2009, into '10, and then 2010 things started kind of really picking up.

What really was cool was that Craigslist kind of opened up the door for us to start working outside of our local community because we would start posting our own ads to do stuff, to do marketing or to do like landing pages or build websites for clients.

The very first real, like outside of the local market client we landed, was in Australia and it was right -- maybe nine months after I'd come home -- and it was a \$13 an hour kind of online business management where just manages websites, keep products up to date, and I was so excited about it because it just prove to me, "Okay, if I can do this once and I can get a client and I can utilize

this online marketing stuff to get clients, I can do it better, I can do it more, I can do it more efficiently, and I can scale it.

Frank: Wow! Okay, I love that. For the first client at \$13 an hour doing general online marketing stuff, proving to yourself that you're able to scale that.

Mike: Exactly.

When I first landed a client it was really like a confidence boost. It was really like, "Wow, dude! You can do this." People will pay you and the systems that you've developed will work to attract clients. That's really kind of where it grew from there.

My wife and I, we wound up from that spot growing a very lucrative, multiple six-figure done-for-you marketing business where we actually got -- We went from that \$13 an hour very, very quickly. It completely changed. It was no more an hourly type of a way just we got experience. We started landing a lot of the really, really big name folks in kind of some of the coaching space getting to work behind the scenes doing the marketing, running Facebook ads campaigns; running contest, creating landing pages, optimizing funnels.

So, we got to utilize big budgets to test some of the strategies that personally we didn't really have a lot of money to really put to the test and so we got the client's budgets to utilize and test and grow their businesses and we grew this done-for-you business probably about 18 months to the multiple six-figure mark.

There's kind of a caveat to that because when we got to that spot, one of the things that we didn't take into consideration, we only really thought, "Well, we just looked for a monetary goal." We're like boom! "We just want to get to this multiple six figures where money is not an issue anymore, we're financially free." That's all we were thinking. And then we got there and we realize, "Wow! Holy crap! We have no time for anything."

And so it cost my wife and I to step back and realize that there's more to growing a business and there's more to what we want than just monetary. We took a step back and we really looked at what is the real, the number one thing that we wanted. And it's really been true for us throughout and it will make a lot of sense to the listeners considering where I come from in, that number one most important thing for her and I has always been freedom. Freedom has always been so important.

The ability to just up and go where we want, when we want, with whomever we want. The ability to just take our kids wherever we want and not be tied down. Growing that done-for-you business we found we really weren't that free. We

weren't. We were really tied to it doing a client work or managing projects and we completely shifted our business model.

Frank: Oh man. Alright.

There's two paths that I want to go on. What I really want to do is first talk about how you built that done-for-you company but then I actually want to dive into the example that Mike and I spoke about before this interview where he's absolutely crushing it for himself with the strategy that he teaches.

So, what I want to take the listeners down the path of is not only does Mike teach people and do this in a done-for-you type way, but he leverages that to implement it, to prove that these strategies work for himself.

So, let's start first with how did you actually start building and growing that done-for-you service from the original Craigslist postings?

Mike: Cool. Really, really cool.

One of the main things, I think, is important is the hustle, man. I think it's really important to say this to the audience because I think Facebook and social media kind of glazes over what's really involved to grow a successful business and the time, the dedication, the commitment. We see these folks with these multiple seven-figure launches or their Ferraris and people kind of don't get the chance to see the behind the scenes of how long it took them. I love Gary V. and in that he always says his overnight success took him 10 years.

Frank: Mm-hmm.

Mike: And it's so true and I want to share that with folks because we grew this done-for-you business but there was a lot of behind the scenes, a lot of work until midnight, 1 o'clock in the morning. Especially because one of the first clients was in Australia and they're like 14 hours ahead of us. So he would be awake answering emails, one, and interact with us really, really late in the day, late in the evening, and we had to make ourselves available.

There was kind of that side, just the pure hustle, just continuing to press and continuing to go out and go after the clients. There was also just the side of starting to utilize the things that we were seeing that our clients were doing, starting to get in using Facebook, putting these things out there, and doing a really, really good job for clients where it became kind of a word of mouth.

That done-for-you side really grew as we got the first client and our number one goal was to wow them beyond measure knowing that they work with other businesses and it kind of grew itself that way.

Frank: What was the rough price point for the done-for-you service initially?

Mike: So we started out -- we would do websites. I think our first website packages, we would do WordPress sites, start at about \$1,500 and they were kind of just your basic site and then we had some that went up from there to \$5,000 or \$10,000. Kind of depend on what the clients wanted that they want like a full funnel implementation with that, what were kind of the aspects.

So it start at about \$1,500 and at that time we sold things up to even \$25,000 for straight done-for-you and it just depend on what it included.

Frank: Cool, cool.

Give me a sense of what were the top two lead generators for you. Because I know we've mentioned before focus on the one or two things that matter. When you guys were actually building and growing that business, what were the top two drivers of leads into you guys for that done-for-you service?

Mike: So at that time because we were doing done-for-you, one of the number one leads that I was just meticulous about this every day. One of them was Elance which is a site for freelancers. So we would go on and scour the job towards looking for really, really high-profile, high-quality clients. Knowing if we could just land one or two with them, it would grow itself.

Every morning I had a routine of getting on there, looking not for the folks who wanted these \$5 and \$10 an hour virtual assistants but we were looking for folks who wanted high-quality, willing to pay, and that's what we would go after. And then the other side of was Facebook, man.

Facebook has been our number one source of leads in any business that we've ever done. From done-for-you, to consulting and coaching, to physical product, Facebook has always been our number one source of leads.

Frank: Awesome. Alright.

First, I want to pull out the fact that hustle has been a factor in every single stage of this and I think that's coming through with what Mike's saying is that one of his top strategies was just to get out there every single morning on Elance and get these jobs and go after these jobs. I really like that and I want to pull that out.

When you're starting a business, there's all sorts of awesome strategies and tactics that you can employ and model but ultimately it just comes down to do you want it and what are you willing to do to get it.

Mike: I love that, Frank. That's so true. It's just so important, man, because I'm so immersed in the online world and in the online business world where -- like we said earlier, man, that folks kind of see kind of the outside. When really hardworking, genuine entrepreneurs get started, things aren't as easy as maybe they thought they were going to be or they weren't as easy as maybe they were sold that they would be and folks give up or they get discouraged. But people need to really be encouraged and it's not an overnight thing. It takes continuous commitment, continuous hustle. You really have to be resolved that I'm going to make this work, I'm not going to give up, I'm going to keep pressing forward.

Frank: Yes, alright.

Let's take people now through a specific example. I know we'd spoken a lot about how to use Facebook to actually blow your business up.

So before the call, Mike, you shared with me something that you guys started in November and then have kind of blown it up in a big way since then. So what did you guys start in November of 2015 right after me and you initially talked?

Mike: Cool.

2015 was an interesting year for my wife and I. As I shared, we shifted away from a done-for-you model. That was about 2012. Since then we've done strictly consulting, strategic development with clients.

So 2015, a lot of our businesses leveraged and we started getting kind of introduced to the world of e-commerce. Because we're online marketers, and my wife and I are very competitive folks as well, we kind of said, "Let's put our skills to the test in a market and with things that we've kind of never really touched on" and that's the physical product market. We said, "You know what, let's dive in and see if the strategies that we used to grow coaching, consulting, transformational type businesses, if those will work with physical products of varied markets." So, we did.

When you and I spoke, we had already started our first kind of e-commerce store and it was kind of t-shirts, phone cases, and it was doing pretty well. We've grown it pretty well. We've grown a community of about 20 something thousand on Facebook, sales were coming in, and then my wife and I really dug it and said, "We really want to get into this."

One night she's on Facebook and she found somebody was selling a store. This guy had this store that he built. It was a e-commerce platform. The store was alright. It was profitable. I think in 90 days the guy had done \$8,000 in sales, \$3,000 in profit. My wife had presented to me. She said, "Hey, I know you're

really wanting to get in and really learn, and I know that if you invest some money into this, it will propel you to just go all in with it.”

So I looked at the store, I contacted the guy, and I saw there was a great opportunity and that he wasn't tapping into. I said, “I know that we can take the things that we do in our business and that we teach our clients and apply it to this and blow it up.”

So, I buy the store from them, \$800. That's all I spent. \$800 I buy the store. I lose \$1,000 in the first month. The second month -- by testing. I lost \$1,000 because I was in this test to kind of proving the concept which is something that we want to talk about. I know that you and I spoke before the call about the proving the concept idea which I think is tantamount to anything folks do online.

So I went to the process of trying to prove the concept. Once I did, I found some winners and it went from an \$800 investment, it made in profit over \$30,000 in the month of December. And in the month of January, it surpassed \$60,000 in profit. This month in February is we're doing \$2,000 to \$3,000 a day and it's completely blown up. The cool thing is it's almost entirely leveraged, very, very automated, and very, very hands off for me.

Frank: Man! Alright.

First, let's dive in to a little bit about proving the concept. How did you figure out where to go based on proving the concept? Meaning what's that actually look like for you?

Mike: So here's what's cool and here's what I really want to share with folks, if you're just getting started. And I know a lot of the folks listening are new entrepreneurs that they're just getting started. Don't worry about the Twitters, the Periscopes, the Blabs, all the other thing. Those are great tools. Until you've mastered Facebook and Facebook ads, all of those things will distract you.

Facebook ads right now is insanely powerful to grow your business and here's why we're saying that because -- and I've shared this with clients. The difference between Facebook and Google per se for folks that are shopping, or whether they have physical products, or they do services is Google provides a platform for folks. They're searching, they're looking.

Those people generally are in kind of a shopping mode, right? They're looking, they're probably comparatively shopping, they're looking at your competitors. As oppose to people on Facebook where you can just strategically target and put your offerings in front of people that you know based on what Facebook allows you target folks on.

You can put your offerings in front of people that you know are interested in them but the value and the thing that really makes this so crazily powerful is those folks, they're not really in that shopping mode, they're not in comparative, but they're scrolling through their newsfeed and if you can put really good copy and good images in front of them, it kind of draws them, they see it, and they're not in the comparative mode.

They click it, they look, they go, they buy, or they set up a discovery call or a strategic call or whatever you want to call it with you, and it completely changes the game and how you can get things out there.

So, I want to kind of talk about the proving the concept side of it.

Frank: Yeah, please do.

Mike: So whenever my wife and I have an idea, right? Like right now, we're actually starting a new store around this idea of wine. We know that people that are wine enthusiasts are fanatics, right? So, we sit down and initially we think it's a great idea, right? The old school business would be is, okay, we're going to spend \$10,000 on a website and then we're going to do \$5,000 on branding and a logo and then we have to spend another \$20,000 on inventory and all of this stuff whereas we can literally prove whether it's a winning idea or not for less than \$100.

Frank: Oh.

Mike: So what we do is we'll find a couple key products and we will go into Facebook and we'll say, "Hey, we'll spend \$50 to \$100 to just test what kind of response does this audience give to us. Are they really the fanatical audience we believe they are? We can very easily determine that.

One of the fastest ways, we'll throw up an ad and it could be either for a product, like a cheap -- we'll just say an aerator for the sake of talking about wine. So we'll throw up a product that's an aerator, or a corkscrew, or whatever, and do people buy it quickly? Or are they sharing it? Are we getting lots and lots of shares because that tells us, if someone's willing to share something on Facebook, they kind of stand behind and they want their friends to know, "Hey, I love this, I like it, and I want you to know about it," which proves to us that there's at least enough of a response to maybe take it to that next level and go with it.

And so for the folks that are listening, whether you're in the physical product market or you're in kind of the service base market. We use this in our service-based business way before we create services. We'll put out a freebie for instance. Let's say my wife and I were wanting to do -- and I'll just say -- done-

for-you Facebook ads. We would create some sort of a freebie; maybe around top 10 Facebook ad tips, right?

We put it out there and maybe on the back end of that we would put some sort of an upsell offer. Something cheap just to prove are people willing to, first of all, opt-in and then are they willing to pay some money. It doesn't have to be a lot of money but are they willing to spend some money on this solution? And we can generally prove whether that's true or not for, like I said, less than \$100 and then about a week.

Frank: Holy cow! Okay. I'm feeling like this is amazing and I want to know specifics.

Mike: Awesome.

Frank: When you were out there, right? Let's say you've got the wine aerators and example, walk me through exactly what it looks like for you to test that. Are you creating Facebook groups? Are you exclusively using ads? How's that look?

Mike: We generally like to do it like a two-fold approach. So the first thing that we do -- and in order to run Facebook ads, you have to have a Facebook page. So we'll start with a Facebook page and then what we'll do is we will go with Facebook and here's something that's really, really cool for the folks that are listening that Facebook just added. They added this targeting ability that allows us to drill down. So, let's just say for instance we're talking about wine.

So we'd go into Facebook ads, when we would put a product whether aerator or corkscrew, whatever it is, we'd create a quick ad around the product and the targeting is really where it's going to be powerful. So we'd go in and we would target some pages or some products that we know are wine base. But we want that audience to be around about a half a million. How we do that is we would start with a big page. Let's say wineenthusiast.com. Again, I'm just throwing this out there just for the generality's purposes.

So we'd find out that their audience is about 5 million. Well, that's a little bit too big for me. So, Facebook now allows you to target with what's called "and." So, I type in wineenthusiast.com, right? So I want to target those people. Then I now want to add in another layer and it's an "and" layer. So, it would be like wine fanatics or -- Here's actually one that my wife and I seen recently. It's like chicks in yoga pants that drink wine or something.

Frank: (Laughs)

Mike: You know, like a half a million people. So people who like that page I know they're fanatical. So what I do is I start with these big pages that's like 5 million, and then I add in like that one "chicks in yoga pants who drink wine."

What makes it so powerful is the “and”. So the audience that I’m targeting has to like the wineenthusiast.com “and” chicks in yoga pants, it’s not “or”. So if they like what that first page and the second one, chances are that they’re fanatical people. And I may even layer in a few other pages.

Frank: Wow! Okay. Start broad, go specific, use the “and” feature in Facebook ads.

Mike: The “and” feature is hands down game changer. I work with some clients that are in some of the sport niches, right? So let’s just say, for instance, there’s the NBA, right? So, a client may start with -- We’ll just say the Golden State Warriors, they’re a popular team.

So if you target the Golden State Warriors, their fan page, or their audience, is probably somewhere like 10 to 12 million people. Well, that doesn’t tell me that all of those people are fanatical fans of them. Maybe they liked it, maybe they saw, they liked it. So, we would want to drill down an ad in and/or several of them that are like Golden State Warriors fanatics, Warriors fan club, Warriors.

And so that audience, when we start adding those in there, we take a 12 million people audience and we cut it down to 300,000, 400,000, 500,000, 600,000 and the beauty is that we know that those 300,000, 400,000, 500,000, 600,000 or even 700,000 are fanatical people that when you put your products or services in front of those folks, they are going to respond.

Frank: Man! Okay.

So, I want to recap for everybody so far, right? Number one, we’ve got picking your topic overall then we’ve got kind of creating a freebie or essentially some sort of a lead magnet. Now we’re into targeting. So we’re targeting audiences of about half a million people.

Again, because we don’t want to be too general, we want to be hyper specific, and the way that we can be hyper specific with Facebook ads is by using this “and” feature, right? So we start broad, then we go specific, and we use the “and” feature.

Mike: Here’s one of even more benefits to this to people because a lot of folks ask like “How do you know how much to spend on Facebook?” I will tell you this, I’ve got this directly from working with Facebook, is your budget should be directly relative to the size of the audience. And the cool thing is the similar the audience, the smaller the budget needs to be.

So, for a 500,000 people audience, you can literally spend \$5 or \$10 a day and get really good reach, really good saturation into that market because you’re

only asking Facebook for access to kind of a smaller number of people based on the fact that there's about a billion people on Facebook.

Frank: Whoa! Okay, tell me a little bit about those numbers. If I'm spending \$5 per day targeting an audience of roughly half a million, what kind of number should I be seeing coming in that would let me know I'm doing a good job?

Mike: Again, this varies depends whether it's product or service or what the overall goal is. But for around \$5 a day, we generally see that you should reach at least between 1,000 and 3,000 people a day. Which if you run that -- let's just say you run it for seven days, you spend \$5 a day, you spend \$35 in a week, you would generally reach somewhere around 20,000 people which there's nothing on the planet that lets you reach 20,000 people that are targeted around whatever you're offering is for \$35.

Frank: Man! Okay.

So, we talked about this before and I think this is key. Let's say I'm spending \$5 a day, I'm targeting an audience of around half a million. Once it starts working, should I up that budget?

Mike: There's a couple of things that you can do. One, I always recommend for the folks that are listening because Facebook algorithm is very funky. Nobody really knows kind of what makes it work and what all the perimeters are. I generally recommend when people start finding winners like whether you start out and you're testing and you start proving, "Well, this audience is really responsive," duplicate that audience and adjust the budget there instead of directly doing it on an existing campaign. Simply because it throws Facebook's algorithm wonky and we generally see cost go up when we do that.

Frank: Whoa! Okay. So instead of taking my \$5 a day spend to \$10 a day in the same campaign, I should duplicate that and then do another campaign that's duplicated with \$5 or so a day.

Mike: Exactly. So you're still spending \$10 to reach that audience but you're not messing with kind of the existing, you know, what you've created. Because Facebook is -- I can't explain this and nobody else that I know that spends big money on Facebook really can explain why this is, it just is, and we just learned to roll with it.

Frank: Man! Man! Okay, that's awesome.

Mike: I kind of want to chime in. Something else is really --

This entire concept [unclear 00:36:39] proving the concept is so important because it saves so much money and time and ways. I actually just applied it to

something that's completely different than anything we're talking about and it's a book, right?

So I got a book that's going to be coming out, it's called From Prison to Prosperity. Initially, I was going to sit down and write a 250-page book which is what people usually do, right? Well, that's going to probably take me six months, a lot of time, a lot of money invested in something that, at this point, I don't really know how many of them I'll sell, how well it's going to go over, or even what the readers want to know about my story.

So what I decided to do is to write a really short version, like a 15,000, 20,000 word e-book instead of going through the publishing and all the expenses. So I create this Kindle version and I put it out there, I put it out for pre-order; very, very inexpensively for like \$2.99. And so initially it lets me start with a smaller base of people that I kind of know were already have been interested in the story, are they willing to pay for it?

And then it also allows me to take feedback from the readers as to what they liked, what they wanted to hear more of, what they didn't want to hear more of. So that when I go to the next step of writing the book, I'm actually providing and creating something the audience wants as oppose to something I think they want.

Frank: Wow! Oh man. Right now I've got you on the line, you're obviously an expert in Facebook and Facebook ads in order to grow your audience, sell more of your stuff.

So I've got to go down this path for the listener's sake and my own sake. I want to talk about what the anatomy is of running successful Facebook ads. I just want to walk people kind of through a general process here about how do you think about the image, how do you think about the copy, where are you driving people to. So can you walk us through a little bit about what is the overall things that the audience would love to know about creating a successful Facebook ad?

Mike: Awesome. Awesome.

First thing we do, we start with the concept and, again, we'll use the wine one. Before we start, we will use -- and this is a really cool tool for folks listening to utilize, it's called Audience Insights. It pretty much allows you to go to Facebook, you go to this thing called Audience Insights and you just start typing in topics. It will then give you suggested pages, other ideas of things that you can target.

So we start there. So we start with wine. That's where we got all these ideas of these yoga chicks who are wine drinkers. All of these targeting options that we

wouldn't have thought of because we don't know what we don't know. So we start there.

We generally always do what's called website conversion ads and the reason is because when you go to Facebook, they ask you "What's your objective? Do you want clicks to website?" And this is really big for listeners because this is a question that my wife and I get all the time. People asking us what should I do? Do I want clicks? Do I want conversions? Do I want impressions? We generally always start. There's always a small caveat to this but for the folks listening, you're going to want to start with conversions.

The reason is because when Facebook is asking you what's your goal, what they're really saying is, "Hey, what is the thing you want us to optimize this campaign for?" It helps for people to understand, when you go to Facebook, you're paying them to access their audience. So it's in Facebook's best interest to provide you and deliver up to you the best audience that's most likely to do what you want them to do because you'll keep paying Facebook to do that.

So, you say website conversions. As your ad runs and some of those conversions start happening and those conversions could be people opt-in, people buy your product, people signing up for your newsletter, whatever that specific act that you want them to achieve.

Once that starts happening, Facebook now takes what you gave them and you say, "Hey, I like one enthusiast and I like yoga chicks who drink wine." Facebook takes that audience and then begins to match it with all of their data points based on the people who already took action and they optimize it and hone it in to deliver your ad to people who are most likely to do the action that's already happened.

I generally say start with website conversions. That's the beginning.

Frank: Okay.

Mike: The next thing you're going to then do is you're going to do what's called an Ad Set. Ad sets are what controls both your audience and your budget. Like I said, I generally recommend starting out, especially if you're just getting started, \$5 to \$10 a day. Make sure that when you're doing that that you are unchecking. This is really, really big. I only learned this by wasting money.

When you go to ad sets, that's going to give you a few options of where your ads will be displayed. When you're just getting started proving your concept, you only want mobile and desktop newsfeed, that's it. There's several other options that give you: Instagram is one of them, audience network is one of them, and

right-hand column is one of them. In my experience, those other three will just waste your money when you're just starting.

Frank: Awesome.

Mike: So make sure you just start mobile newsfeed, desktop newsfeed, and then under your "edit audience" you'll select some of the options that we've already talked about where you kind of hone in your audience. The next step is actually creating your ad. So it's kind of like a hierarchy. It's campaign, then it's ad set, and then under the ad set you would have your ads.

I recommend only having one ad attached to an ad set. Don't have multiple ads under one ad set because Facebook will favor the delivery of the ad to the one that's performing best and then you will have real data.

Frank: Got it. Okay.

Mike: And so with your ads, you ask about how do you know for copy, how do you know for images and stuff. If we're dealing with products like from my wife and I, we're dealing with products, we generally use what's called a Carousel Ad which allows us to enter multiple images and each one of those images can link to the individual product where they can buy it. I like to use really nice images of the product or people using the product, link it to that page.

And then for copy sake. We generally like to kind of speak, in this case, generally and then just kind of highlight some of the benefits. So for instance, if there's free shipping we'll say that, "Hey, save X, Y, Z and get free shipping. Hurry now. Supply's limited." Something that creates an urgency because you have to realize you're on Facebook and 9% of folks that are going to see these ads are on their mobile phones. There needs to be a reason that they're going to stop and take action right then and there. So, supply's limited. Something along the line that creates an urgency is a really good idea.

For folks that are in the service-based business, you generally want your image to be what we would like to call like a pattern interrupt. Something that kind of speaks out, that's either there's colors that are brighter or that action -- something that as they're scrolling, it gets their attention.

For my wife and I, in our coaching business, we generally use brighter colors like lime greens, pinks, different things along those lines, or in the image we'll actually ask the direct question. We target coaches so we'll say "Are you a coach?" As the person's scrolling, your mind can't help but read a question. You'll read it and your mind will answer it. Yes. And they'll see the image and they'll stop and that will cost them to take the action we want them to with just a click.

Frank: Man!

Mike: I know it's a lot. Everybody listening probably their minds are like totally blown but it really is a lot simpler and a lot more effective and powerful for starting and testing and proving ideas.

Frank: I love it. Essentially, what we can pull out from your entire story that you've told us is hustle is the name of the game, right? You're not going to learn this stuff unless you go out there and do it.

Mike: Straight up.

Frank: Awesome. Dude, this has been great. Where can people go, right? I know you've got a few things going around. Where can people go if they want to learn more about you or if they want to connect with you or some of the stuff that you're up to?

Mike: Well, since we're talking about Facebook, Facebook is definitely probably one of the number one ways that they can either send a friend request to me and I'm sure you can put the link in the show notes. Or if they want to kind of know more about some of the strategies that we're talking about, my wife and I have a free private Facebook group, it's free to join, it's called Marketing Mega Minds. You could either go to the search bar and type that in or you could go to marketingmegaminds.com and we'll let you in the group. You can see we are in there constantly just geeking out about all of the stuff that we're talking about and some more.

Frank: Mike, that's awesome. Alright.

I love the idea of sending people to the free Facebook group because you've obviously got a lot of value and my guess is you're sharing that value with people inside.

Mike: Definitely.

Frank: Awesome.

Well, Mike -- holy cow! What a story, man. From prison to prosperity which is also a new book you've got coming out sometimes soon. I know you've got the Kindle version of it. What's the plan for the big realase?

Mike: Yes. So for the folks listening, if they want to know just a little bit more about the story, I did kind of a short documentary video. The book will be coming out in the next month or so. They could go to fromprisonstoprosperity.com and they could have them pre-order or they can watch my video. There's some stories. There's

even some pictures of my wife and I when I was still an inmate and some other really cool stuff there.

Frank: Oh man! Mike, what a story that you've shared with us as well as some very actionable information on using Facebook to grow your audience or to build your business. So, thank you so much for coming on.

Mike: Awesome. Thanks for having me, Frank.

Frank: Alright, see you, Mike.

Closing: Thank you for joining us. We've taken this interview and created a custom action guide so you know exactly what action steps to take to grow your business. Just head over to thefoundationpodcast.com to download it for free. Thanks for listening and we'll see you next week.