

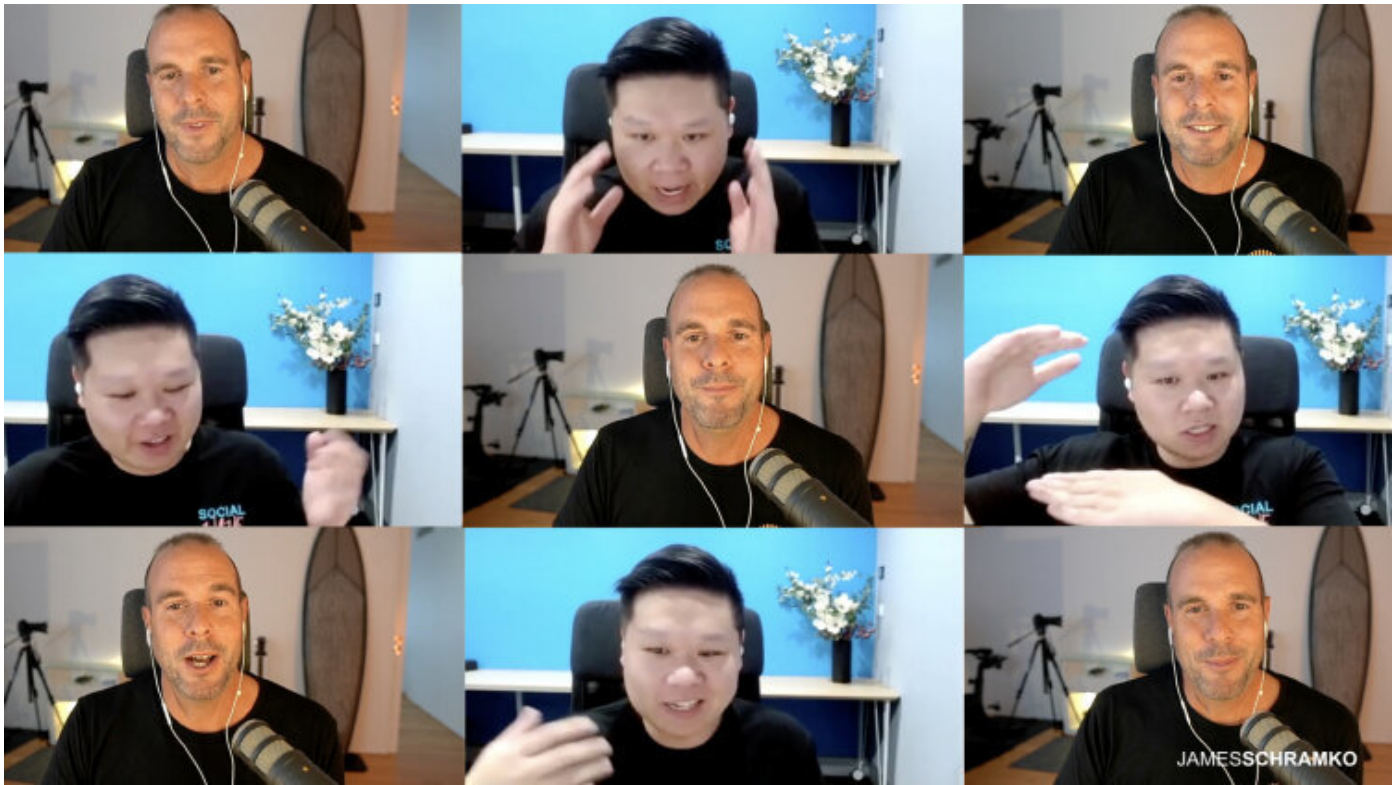


JAMES SCHRAMKO

# 10 Lessons Learned Growing a 7-Figure Agency in 18 Months

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Kan Huang's agency, Social Wave, made over \$1M in revenue over just one and a half years. Here are the 10 best lessons he learned in the process.



## James Schramko and Kan Huang

**James:** James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. This is episode 929. Today, we're going to be talking about 10 lessons learned growing a seven-figure agency in just 18 months. Of course to do that is my special guest, Kan, who's the person who did that. Welcome back, Kan Huang from [socialwave.com.au](https://socialwave.com.au).

**Kan:** Thanks, James, good to be back.

**James:** One thing I like about your story, Kan, is just how fresh to this industry you are. We've had you on this show many times. And we've talked about lots of things you've learned and how you've helped customers, especially with video marketing, but you also do lots of things, from SEO through to offer creation.

I think you're remarkable for a few reasons. One, is you are a bit of a Swiss army knife, you are an all-rounder. And it's actually rare that I find anyone who scales as a general specialist. Two is you haven't been in the industry very long, but you've achieved a lot of success. And I've asked you to come along and share your insights with our members in my own membership. And I thought it was good enough that I'd love to share your story a little bit broader to our general podcast audience.

So we've put together 10 talking points that you covered in your full presentation, which is inside my membership. And I think they're just really inspirational.

So who's this episode for? It's great if you've got an agency, because that's what Kan grew. So this is a direct guideline as to how you might get some insights.

It's probably going to be applicable to you regardless of what type of online business, even if you have ecommerce or you're an affiliate marketer, or you sell information products, you can't help but find something out of one of these points that might sort of jog a little bit of inspiration, or trigger you into a positive action.

So that will be my wish for this episode. Of course, Kan, you're coming along to share this, I know you actually have a program for agency owners who want to grow their agency with your help. And it's nice that you're at that point so quickly, where you can say, Hey, what I've done is a little bit uncommon. And if you haven't been able to achieve it now, maybe I can help you.

**Kan:** Yeah, that's right, James. And I think it's sort of all come off the back of just general, you know, as you're an agency owner, you sort of talk to other agency owners, and we've had many conversations about this. And sort of, a lot of these owners were actually ending up coming to me for advice, over a long period of time, just trying to understand how we were able to sort of grow so quickly, but also to scale, you know?

If you're an agency who has this sort of issue around not necessarily lead generation, but actually doing the work and doing it at high quality and having a good team around you, this would be sort of the perfect episode for you. But you know, as you mentioned, as well, even if you don't own an agency, I think a lot of service-based businesses, if you've got sort of, you need a team to basically deliver the high quality of work that you do, a lot of these lessons are going to be super relevant for you as well.

### **One more reason to do good work**

**James:** I love it. Well, let's get into the 10 lessons. The first lesson, you said, good work creates more work. What does that mean?



**Kan:** Well, it means that a lot of people, you know, they get the clients in, they do all the hard work, which is get the sales, get the leads, and they promise these people the world, and then they end up falling flat on their face in terms of doing the work. So you've got to be actually really good at what you promise you're going to do.

I know it sounds really obvious, but actually a lot of people don't really do that. I mean, particularly in agency world where, you know, they sort of sell you the dream, they throw the kitchen sink at you.

**James:** I reckon every single industry in every category, I mean, it's absolutely rife with coaches. There are coaches who take on clients, and they've never actually had success, or they don't even directly coach, and they have sub coaches or whatever. So what you're saying here is have a great product, be actually really good at delivering on your promises.

**Kan:** That's right. And if you do great work, it creates more work. And so what that means is if you do a great job, your customers are really happy, they're going to champion you. And they're going to refer people over to you, or they're going to advocate for you as well. That's your number one form of marketing.

And so I think, a lot of businesses out there, agencies or no agencies, are spending time trying to actually do more marketing and sales, when in actual fact, you should just concentrate on doing more great work, because that's what's going to drive more leads down the track for you as well.

**James:** That's so true. You know, I never advertised [SilverCircle](#) for 10 years, because it was just referrals from people who are already in the program and happy. So I've seen this pan out over a long period. And when you're not having to spend all your energy marketing, life's much simpler. So whether it's Steve Jobs or whoever else, there's lots of examples of where people have put the work into making great product, and then letting that speak for itself.

## **Make more luck for yourself**

Lesson two, you can manufacture your own luck. Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity. So these are sort of bordering on platitudes we've probably heard before. I know one of them is Eli Goldratt's, got a whole book on this, about creating your own luck.

And I've truly believed this, that there's sayings like, the harder you work the luckier you get. If you do put yourself in more situations, you're increasing the odds that something could come your way for success. But I wonder how you interpret this?

**Kan:** Well, I think sort of, in the early days of the agency, I want to say, like, the first six to 12 months, at the very least, you know, there was always sort of this case where, in the first early iterations of your agency or your business, you're always trying to just keep the lights on. And so you're always like, trying to go bright, I'm just going week to week, just trying to make sure to make ends meet.

And I'm just worried about, you know, one week at a time, you know, these are very cliché, they're very sort of like your isms. And it always happens so that when either something went wrong, or something didn't go to plan, the following week, or the following month, or you know, soon after, something would happen that would end up working out.

And so I can remember a time when we lost maybe just one client, you know, it was a fairly large client of ours. We were pretty upset by it, because it was a significant amount of revenue loss. But the following week, a massive client came along, out of nowhere. And I put that down to luck. But I think, over time, I started to realize I was like, this is not a one off, this kept happening to us.

And partly just because, like you mentioned, you've got to be in the right place at the right time, you've got to put yourself out there, because that's when you actually manufacture your sort of luck. And so I did it unconsciously. But I was actually out there networking, I was out there marketing myself, talking to people, that eventually led to conversations and eventually leads and business coming to us. And it worked out really nicely for us.

**James:** I love it. And I love the acknowledgement that there is some luck involved in being successful. And that it's most likely, you're going to have some bad luck and some good luck. But if you keep putting yourself out there and trying, then you can actually manufacture luck. I love it. Lesson number three, do you want to introduce this one?

## Keep improving

**Kan:** Yeah, So lesson number three is, you need to constantly try and find new ways to improve and deliver greater value. So that is a bit of a vague one. But I suppose the example I can give here is, we started out as basically just a video marketing, a video production company. And over time, we started to learn about algorithms, we started to stack on knowledge around copywriting, ad creatives, you know, a whole range of skill sets that we otherwise didn't have at the start.

And now, some companies really focus on just that one area, that one niche, what they're good at, and there's nothing wrong with that. But I did find that a lot of the opportunities came about in terms of growing our business through things that we otherwise probably didn't cover initially as an offering or as a product.

And so, if you have an open mind, and you try and explore these new ways to improve and deliver greater value, sometimes that comes through in terms of being more proactive to your clients. So take for example, we may have clients where we're just taking care of their video production or their video marketing, we might find, hey, like if you actually did ads this way, or you had a funnel set up this way, and constantly provided value, that actually ended up helping us grow the agency in general.

**James:** I love this one. It implies being tuned into your client. And it implies a growth attitude, that you're not resting on your laurels. It brings in ideas of innovation, thinking of Kaizen, like the cycle of never-ending improvement. For me, I know this is true, because I started off teaching people how to build websites. And now, I am more of a sounding board for business owners.

So I've moved into a different area, but I can create the most value for them doing those functions, by just understanding what their challenges are and finding the areas where they can't get supply, they can't get that help from anyone else. So it's created this little sweet spot for me.

## Are you actually applying what you learn?

Let's talk about lesson four. This is a bit risqué. Stop fetishizing - can't even pronounce that one - learning and get good at deploying.

**Kan:** So I speak from personal experience. I was one of those guys back in the early days where I'd like, buy online courses, like get these books, I'd read about them. And I'd be like, cool, I'm just like learning, learning, learning, but I never deployed, right? And now, sort of thinking back, I actually do speak to people who, I see those red flags, like they essentially are doing a lot of learning but not enough deploying.

And what that basically means is like, you can learn about something, which is fine. But you can very easily learn about something, do nothing about it, and then move on to the next thing, and then move on to the next thing, and then end up not actually applying that into anything whatsoever. And so what I made a rule for was, as soon as I learned something, I wouldn't move on to learning anything new without deploying what I just learnt.

And I did that over time where I would learn about something, apply that within the agency, within the business, so whether it's learning about the YouTube algorithm, learning about copywriting, whatever the case may be, once I got really good at that, do I feel okay to then move on to the next thing and learn about something new. And so it's more about the order in which you learn and then deploy as opposed to just constantly learn and do nothing about it.

**James:** And I think you're describing every single person who's listening to this or watching this podcast. I actually, recently, found out there's a Japanese word called Tsundoku. And it's the art of buying books and never reading them. And it really resonated with me because books often don't get finished. And you know, sometimes they don't even get started.

And the same applies to courses. I mean, how many courses have we bought that we've never finished, you know? So there's different ways. One way I've solved it for people is to deliver live trainings. I ran one today, for example. And that sort of forces a deadline, and it brings together community, it's what we do in the membership.



It's why I think, when I do the weekly calls that I do, people learn, because they have the deadline, and they got the community. So to get good at deploying, you have to say, Okay, I'm going to stop inputting, and I'm going to start outputting. I would summarize this one as more output, less inputs. You know, once you've stocked up enough, turn that tap off for a while and just deliver, and then restock. I like this one.

## **The boring stuff is important**

Lesson five, do the boring work. And when you think you've done enough, do more of it. Sounds exciting.

**Kan:** Yeah, exciting and boring. But I know this is probably one of the big things why I work with you, James, which is to keep me on the straight and narrow.

**James:** Because I'm boring. I love it.

**Kan:** No, not because of that, but because of the fact that I, and I can say a lot of people definitely have the same issue, which is we get shiny object syndrome.

**James:** Oh my God, visionaries are a nightmare to work with. Every single week, they bring a brand new entire business idea, like, because they're creative and brilliant, and they can solve every problem, it is absolutely, it's a significant situation with entrepreneurs. And I think this is a really important point.

Yes, sometimes you need to close the excitement door, like the social medias, or that great new idea or the fantastic new person you just met, and they want you to come and do this project with them. Sometimes you have to say no and put up the bumper rails, like in the 10-pin bowling alley. Come on, we came to the bowling alley to get a strike, let's not go and play golf yet.

**Kan:** Yeah, definitely. I mean, I've got actually an uncle, who literally just, he runs a \$100 million business, importing all forms of Coke products. So he works with some of the biggest retailers out here. Like for those of you in Australia, you know, like Bunnings Warehouse, these sort of big retailers out there.

And I remember speaking to him, and I said, like, What's the secret to like, growing such a big business? And he's like, Stay in your lane, don't get distracted, and just keep doing the boring work. Right? And when you think you've done enough, do more of it, that's where I got this thing from.

And it's just a classic case of just saying, you've got all these ideas and like, you know, we talked about myself being a Swiss army knife, I want to do a little, I want to try many, many different things. But what I found was, if you just spread yourself too thin, and you try to do too many things at once, you end up doing none of it great. Like, it's all pretty mediocre. It's all pretty bad.

And so I've really sort of narrowed that focus and really gone, right, if I really want to make this agency grow and do really well of it, I've just got to keep focusing on the agency and nothing else, and not be distracted.



**James:** Yeah, I think, you know, cheers to the discipline that that takes. But you'll find almost everyone who's achieved success has been through some difficult times. I know even in my surfing progression, there's been times where I've been smashed around, or held under the wave, or belted by the board. And I just think, d\*mn it, I just want to stop, like that's it, this isn't for me. I'm not able to do this.

But then I push through. And that's when you get the big success. It's like, it balances out all that pain and punishment, and difficult work to get to the thing. Like any Olympic athlete, they would have done a lot of boring drives to the track at four in the morning to do their exercising and stuff. It's part of the story of success, and people gloss over that. But I think it's absolutely critical. I really like that point.

## **Have a long runway**

Lesson six, business success can be predicated on having a long runway.

**Kan:** Yeah, I think, you know, I really underestimated this. And I think it's just the world of marketing. Everything is about, like, the quick hacks and the silver bullets and like, getting the quick results. You know, the overnight millionaire, that sort of success.

**James:** Even the title of this podcast is not far off that, you know, like...

**Kan:** It's not far off it.

**James:** 18 months millionaire or seven-figure agency, you actually have had a fast track, but it is uncommon. I can tell you from coaching a lot of people. I've helped people get to six figures very quickly. But it's rare that you see someone get to seven figures from scratch.

**Kan:** I mean, I had this notion that you could build a seven figure, and I'm sure people have definitely done this. But you can do it in like three months, you can do it in six months. And so, you know, prior to hitting seven figures in 18 months, I really didn't quite understand just how long it actually does take.

Now, 18 months seems like a really quick time, but it also seems like a really long period of time as well, because if you think about it on a day-to-day basis or the daily grind, you're slogging away literally for a year and a half. And there were times I would say, like, it's not like this linear approach of just growth where I was able to just hit seven figures, I'm like, Hurray, like, this is all fantastic, you know?

We had our ups and downs, you know, whether it was through revenue, we lost clients, we lost staff, you know, team had to go through a restructure, there was some bumpy roads along the road. But I think it's more about, I guess the lesson here is to stay the course.

You know, Seth Godin talks about the dip, which is like when your business is maybe not doing so well - like I went through patches where we weren't converting any sort of leads we were getting, I was doing lots and lots of sales calls, it wasn't having great success - that if you just stayed the course, and you just believed in the process that you just don't know when you're going to come out of that dip and come out the other side.

And I remember going through a really rough patch a couple of years ago at the end of 2020. And one of the toughest things was I think I did about a dozen or 15 sales calls. And I didn't convert a single one. And then I was actually talking to a lot of like, businesses, and I was saying, like, I think I'm ready to tap out, I really don't want to sort of keep doing this. I'm really sort of beaten down by the whole process.

They said, Look, just stay the course. And lo and behold, literally, just after Christmas, January, February, we had record months, we had clients saying yes, yes, yes. And I realized I was like, wow, okay, having a runway, staying your course, is really, really important for business and not to tap out too early.

**James:** Yeah. Speaking to your point about it not being linear, you know, for me, this is a lot of circumstance and context that could be involved in this discussion, because when I was coming online, I had a job. So I built my stuff, it went basically from zero to two grand, to five grand, to 10 grand a month, over the first 18 months.

And then I nudged it up a bit to 12 to 15 over the next six months, and then that sort of came to a point where I instantly doubled it. I basically blew past 100 grand a month at about the same time as I quit my job, and never looked back. So I reached seven figures. It took me two and a half years, but I had a job in the meantime. So it was slowing me down, the progression.

If I had nothing else to do but grow the business, I could have done it in a shorter timeframe. But it wasn't practical, because I still needed that income from my salary. I didn't have such a low cost of living that I could afford to only do the online business. So there's lots of context here. But it certainly started off steady, and then it did a big jump. And then it was steady for some time. And then it scaled up as I grew my team and my business models.

And then I sold them off. So it slid back a bit, the revenue. And then I brought the profit back up to the old pre-higher revenue levels. But with a smaller team and a better business model. And over time, I'm just tuning that. But a lot of this also depends on your goals. But I will say this, whatever you're doing right now, in this industry, it's extremely unlikely you'll be doing a similar thing in 10 years from now.

Some of the fundamentals might still be in place, like good communication, good sales copy, maybe building a database, having great integrity, delivering amazing products, having excellent support, all those things are fundamentals. But there'll be lots of nuances. We might be doing NFT tokens and all this sort of stuff, who knows, in 10 years from now, but it's likely that it'll be different. But think long term, but like you said, focus on the short-term process. The process is what's going to save you in the short term.

### **If you've made \$100,000, a million is much easier**

Lesson seven, oh, by the way, do you have a poor uncle?

**Kan:** Hmm. I would say yes, yes, I do.

**James:** Just think, you could probably do a book, like Rich Uncle Poor Uncle.

**Kan:** Might have to call Robert Kiyosaki about that and see what his thoughts were.

**James:** It could be a huge hit.

**Kan:** It could be, it could be.

**James:** Lesson seven, making your first \$100,000 is way harder than making your first million.

**Kan:** Look, I think this is from personal experience, but also talking to other business owners, whether you're an agency owner or not, definitely you're a nobody at the start. I guess that's the key here, is that the first \$100,000 you make, you're really slugging it out, because you're trying to make a name for yourself, you're trying to grow your reputation, you're trying to get the awareness out there about what you do. And I can say that's definitely the same for us.

But your first million is different, because from 100,000 to a million, you've got social proof, you've got sort of results, you've got a track record, and generally that bodes pretty well for you. And it sort of leads back to sort of, I guess the first lesson we were talking about, which is good work creates more work.



Now, provided that you're a really good operator, and you deliver on the value that you promise and your product or your service is great, I do believe that once you build up the velocity of making your first \$100,000, the progress to get to one million is actually far more straightforward. Now, this may not be the case for everyone, like you said, context is everything here. But this is with the assumption that you are doing the baseline minimum, and you are doing a good job in terms of looking after your clients or your customers.

**James:** Yeah, I think this is a really interesting one. I would say that making your first 100 dollars online is way harder than making your first 10,000, you know, or making 100 grand. That's the bit where people get stuck, that finding your offer, getting the thing, you know, busting down the doors, finding that thing that people will actually pay you money for and trust you, and that you can actually deliver. It's so hard.

But you know, as a coach who specializes in taking people from six to seven figures, I will say that you need to be a different operator to get to a million dollars than you are at a couple of 100,000. And I am going to suggest, in this case, I think you must have some special skills that are not widely shared, because the thing that people get stuck on, firstly, they often get stuck on the mindset.

Are they worthy of a million dollars? Could they even do it? Is it even possible? Another thing they will struggle with, is getting enough reach or network or marketing to be able to actually have the volume required for a million dollars. They might also struggle with building team, because you very rarely, you're going to make a million dollars with a small practice, you know, with one assistant.

If you're a super highly specialized consultant, maybe, if you are a software developer or a songwriter, or you somehow can score some royalties, maybe. But for most people, you're going to need a team, and it's going to be quite a few people in that team.

And then the final thing is you're going to have to be able to deal with customers. Because to get a million dollars, you're going to need at least 10 high-demand \$100,000 customers, or 100 \$10,000, high-expectation customers or 1000 \$1,000 customers, you're going to have to be good at communication.

So I think you've got some special skills, Kan, and that's probably what you help people with, who haven't been able to reach a million dollars. And they could learn that from you. So that's a really interesting discussion point, lesson number seven. I think that's controversial. As controversial as number eight is going to be, I can't wait to talk about that one.



## Do it fast

**Kan:** Yeah, number eight is speed over everything. I can say it is a testament to the success of [Social Wave](#) with speed, which is, we aren't aiming for perfection, we really are just trying to get the minimum viable product out there. And we do believe in, you know, sort of going back to the whole fetishizing learning, which is decorative deploying. We learn something, we improve what it is that we do, and we deploy that as quick as possible.

And that sort of iteration process, the optimization process of this, you know, they talk about this in software development, which is, you sort of go through your Agile processes, and you come out and you come up with a sprint, which is you spent a very short period of time to cut to spit out a minimal byproduct, it's the idea of like, let's not worry about all the bells and whistles of a car, let's just get the four wheels into the chassis and the frame of the car out there.

The same principle, I believe, applies in what we're doing here in terms of growing business, which is, how can you get the bare minimum out there? And a lot of the time, actually, if you think about business owners, is that, they think that, I mean, their standards are very high. Whereas the customer expectations can sometimes be a little bit lower than what you expect.



And so if you're sacrificing this gap in terms of speed, because you're trying to hit some level or some arbitrary standard or expectation around how good you need to be, when in actual fact, you just need to hit this and the customer is quite happy. You're giving them exactly what they expect as well. And so there's a long way around it, basically saying, it's like, don't focus too much on perfectionism. Just focus on speed. How do I get this out as quick and as efficiently as possible?

**James:** Yeah, I mean, this topic is close to my heart. When I was selling, I focused on quantity over quality, or volume over gross, right? This was an important one. I sold a lot more cars. But there was a guy actually, he called me up just a few months ago, he called my number and he said, James, do you remember me? It's Chris. I'm like, Chris!

I hadn't seen this guy, like the last time I worked with this guy was in 1997. Right? So just out of the blue. But he was the top grosser. He used to make the most commission for each car. Like he basically didn't give any discount or whatever. And he would sell just a few cars.

And I sold the most cars, I would sell, like, 17 cars, and he'd sell three, and he'd have the maximum gross, and I'd have a reasonable gross, but I would make a lot more sales in total volume and a lot more profit for the business because I found that sweet spot.

And I've been a fan of speed. I do think that in the early days especially, just move quickly. I'm absolutely not a perfectionist. And I would definitely not have considered myself an artist, right? I'm far more of a process-driven person. And I was quick. I even named my business back in 2007 or 2008, I named my business SuperFastBusiness.

And I've only just now dropped that because just now, at the point that I'm at, where I've been making seven figures for well over a decade per year, and I now recognize there's other elements than just speed, and it's not just quality or being a perfectionist, there can be some art or creativity to it.

There could be things that you should actually be slow with. You listen to guys like Naval or whatever, the biggest decisions are, what are you going to do? Who are you going to serve? Where will you spend all your time in the next 10 years? Those decisions shouldn't be made quickly.

So my main point here is, in general, I think speed can reward you very well. But there will certainly be times when you should be very slow on some critical decisions, especially who you're going to marry, where you're going to live, who you're going to serve, what you're going to spend your next 10 years doing, who you're going to hire, those sorts of things you want to be fairly careful about, because they have huge implications, they will literally change the outcome of your life.

In your case, though, you have been handsomely rewarded for being so quick. And I think that's your super skill, you just roll through things just so much faster. And because I get to work with lots of people, and partner with people, and you're one of the partners I have, I know how quick you are. You're so quick. People are still asleep before you finish the task. That's great.

**Kan:** Well, you sort of touched on that, James, which is also like, I think people, though, they should take these lessons not necessarily like, literally, these are hyperboles.

**James:** No, just a thought. I just want to promote thought. I want to say, right, if you're not getting the results you want, maybe some of these things will lend you some ideas, you know? Or inspire you to focus on that one thing.

**Kan:** I mean, one of the great things that I sort of followed from a speed perspective is Jeff Bezos has got a rule, where he basically says, If it's a reversible decision, move quickly on it. But if it's an irreversible decision, think very carefully. And that's exactly what you said, which is, who are you going to marry? Like, you better be careful, because they're very difficult or impossible to reverse down the track.

**James:** They're really difficult, I can tell you that. So you know, you want to put some time aside, like, there are things that you should be slow with. But for things that you shouldn't be slow with, if you are slow, unnecessarily, then it's a waste, it's a shame.

Like, when Greg Merrilees sends me over designs for a new thing, or whatever, I just look at it and go, Yeah, that's great. I'm not messing around with it, because I do move quickly. And I built my whole brand, like part of my offer to people is that I answer them basically, within a day, I offer same-day service for coaching, and no one offers that, until now, maybe with you, I think that's also an option. But it's rare, because people just aren't, they're just not that fast.

## **Go on offense early**

Let's talk about number nine, go on offense earlier than you think you need to. This one sounds provocative.

**Kan:** Well, this was one of those ones where, I think it was a bit of a mindset shift. And I guess the catalyst for that was, I'd actually, leading up until actually, I want to say six months ago, I want to say that business was on defense. And what I mean by on defense was, we were in like preservation mode, we were like, Alright, how do I take money off the table? How do I do this to sort of minimize any risk?

And so I was always looking at it from a negative glass-half-empty lens, right? And talking to a few business owners again, you can see where I get loads of inspiration, sort of just talk to a lot of people who've been there. They talked about going on offense.

And what offense basically meant was, why don't you go, for example, in my case, they're like, Well, if you need more leads, why don't you go and hire a sales and marketing coordinator? Why don't you hire a business development manager? Why don't you hire someone in your team who can actually go out there and focus on that one area?

And so I was thinking, I was like, Oh, this is going to cost me more in terms of wages, my payroll is going to blow out. And so going on offense earlier than you think you need to is a lesson in essence of understanding that, you don't need to worry about sort of, I guess, taking money off the table, you don't need to worry as much about going into the red.

These are things that can be taken care of down the track, and you should be more aggressive than you think you need to, because the disproportionate results as a result of going on offense are actually far better in the long run. So it's probably a lesson in risk management and just sort of seeing things in a different lens.

**James:** It's pretty close cousins to that sort of concept of people who try to aggressively costcut when there's an emergency or whatever. And that they usually cut sales and marketing, one of the first things, which is the thing that cuts off the oxygen to the business. And then on the flip side is where you sort of reframe costs as investments.

So, you know, I've invested in better sales copy, I've invested at times in traffic. I've invested in a great team. I've invested a fortune in things like website hosting and blah, blah, blah, equipment, to get my business going well. So things that I would spend money on might seem like a lot to a bootstrapper, but they're not a lot relative to the size of my business and the profit margin that I enjoy, because I've been able to be bold.

Basically, if I were to summarize number nine, be bold with your advance. And one of my mentors used to say, don't sell off the back foot. That means salespeople who are shy and waiting for the customer so they could react to them. Get out there, be a go-getter.

## **Continuity leads to success**

Number 10. Continuity leads to success. I already love the sound of this, I want you to explain what it means.

**Kan:** Yeah, so for a business like an agency, I have a very strong feeling about continuity, particularly around team members, you know? And that is, you don't need a team of superstars, you need a team that is just familiar and stays with you, of course, and I know you're a big fan of this, James.

**James:** Oh gosh, you're speaking my language. I'm sick of hearing about how everyone has to be an A player and hire people who are the best in their field. Like, it has not been my experience. So you and I, we're really closely aligned on this one, and we're counter-market.

**Kan:** So I think of like, your team as a football team, you know, you've got like your A-grade superstars, you've probably got, you know, two to three of those.

**James:** All my team are amazing, they're just great.

**Kan:** Oh, there you go. So I mean look, in my case, you know, I think every business needs...

**James:** They're a surfing team.

**Kan:** That's right. You need like a mix of, you know, sort of different roles, you know, you've got, like, A-graders, they drive the business, they're your leaders, they're your senior guys, they know what's going on, they propel the business forward. But you need sort of more of your, you know, so to speak, like your role players, the guys who do their part, they've got areas of specialization. Then you've got your bench players who come in and they do a bit of everything, you know, they have more utility, they can sort of cover three or four areas.

And so if you have this sort of good mix and this continuity, which is really key here, and keeping the same team, then that will lead to great success. And I think, like you said, everyone's sort of not happy with having just a B-grade player. And I think the thing here is that, you sort of need to actually continue to invest in continuity, meaning the same team members, right? The same processes that you do - make things wash, rinse and repeatable. Because that is what leads to business success, because if at the end of the day, you're the one who ends up having to like throw the baby out with the bathwater, meaning you're going to be firing people, you're going to make changes all the time, no one's going to be able to keep up.

And then what it ends up becoming is it becomes too founder-centric. And then you don't have a business, you just have a very well-paid job, essentially. And so I guess that's the lesson. We've sort of gone down a different pathway. But I think the continuity with team is probably the biggest success for me.

**James:** I think in continuity, you're not talking about recurring subscription plans, you're talking more about having a stable environment, and a sustainable environment. Actually, to reference back to eight to 10, I'd say the big lesson I've learned in the last few years is emphasize sustainability over speed, because you'll be around to be in business for a long time.

And to your point about team, I mean, I love my team. We're actually a very flat hierarchy, we don't really have any layers of management anymore, because there's only seven people, but they all have their own specialty. They're all good at special things. They're like the A team, you know, each person's good at their thing. But they can cover for each other. And they do care about the success of the business.

And we do report daily metrics that everyone is involved with and can influence, which is part of the glue. And you know, like your lesson number seven about going to a million dollars relatively easily after 100,000, you know, you're just being good at that. I didn't realize how hard it is for people to run a team. I think team is the secret sauce, really. If you can get that right and you're a good communicator and you've got great products, you're going to have a great business.

So one of the reasons I wanted to bring you on today is you've recently decided to help a few agencies to figure it all out for themselves. And part of your track record, I think it should be worth saying, like, just to clarify this, you've helped more than 50 businesses now. And you've generated over \$15 million in revenue for them at the same time as generating a good revenue for your own business.

And so you're helping a few business owners, I know a couple of them actually, to grow their business. And some of the things that you're doing are helping them with their positioning, which obviously is critical, helping them with their offer, crafting an irresistible offer, which is like, probably, absolutely hands down the number one thing you have to have to scale. Without that, you've got nothing.

And then of course, the things that I think you're actually really good at, Kan, are sales strategy and tactics, conversions, and of course, content creation. You've been doing video marketing, you've been running ads, you do SEO. You've got the whole lot.

So how do we get in touch with you if we're interested in getting some help from Kan to grow the agency?

**Kan:** Yeah, so I mean, this is a fairly new, I guess, offering. It's something that I'm actually very passionate about. I think, you know, like I mentioned over the last six months, just a lot of people coming to me sort of trying to understand and getting help with what I've been able to achieve. I think it's just more sort of passing on the torch, so to speak.

But I think, the way I've sort of wanting to frame it up is to be able to do this on a one-to-one basis. I found I got the most out of it when I got really bespoke and tailored advice for my unique situation. Because you can invest in all of the courses and all of these sort of education in the world, but you end up finding, and at least in my experience, you end up finding that there's always a little bit of a gap that you need to fill in with someone who's got the experience, who's been there where you want to get to, who can give you that sort of very, very specific mentorship or coaching that you need.

And so that's what I'm looking to provide people based on experience on what I've achieved. And then for them to get in touch, all they've got to do is get in touch by email. So that's [Kan@socialwave.com.au](mailto:Kan@socialwave.com.au). We'll tee up a time, we'll sit down and have a chat. And I think the main thing is just to find out, firstly, if we're a good fit for one another, if I can help you, and then from there, I can definitely see us helping.

I do also have a membership, so to speak. Like it's not the same as yours, James, it's a little bit different, where there's a lot of resources and tools.

**James:** Mine changes every week at the moment. At the time of recording this, obviously, we've switched names, so I'm having a joke, we've been extremely stable for 10 years. But yes.

**Kan:** Yeah. So I mean, look, for us, probably less to do with some of the training, I know you do monthly training as well. But I think mine's mainly around like, you know, cheat sheets, templates, you know, if you were going to recruit, here are our job descriptions, there's a whole plethora of things, you know, think of it as like a library that you can cherry pick from.

And so when you sort of combine that with the one-to-one sort of consulting that I'm looking to do, that's where I think I can provide a lot of value for agency owners, so they can get in touch with me via email to find out if I can help them.

**James:** There you go. Thanks, Kan. I appreciate you coming along and sharing. I think this was a great discussion. The 10 lessons learned while Kan was growing a seven-figure agency in just 18 months. I mean, that's just really rapid. Kan is fresh, and he's groovy and hip to what's happening now in agency land.

Episode 929. We will put the transcript up on [JamesSchramko.com](http://JamesSchramko.com). And that's [Kan Huang](#) there from [socialwave.com.au](http://socialwave.com.au). Thanks, mate.

**Kan:** Thanks, James. Appreciate it.





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