



JAMESSCHRAMKO

Case Study - 3 Steps to Go from \$100K to \$330K in Just 3 Months

Last time Nils Vinje was with us, he'd generated over \$100,000 revenue in just nine months. That's become \$330K since, and he's back to tell how.



Nils Vinje

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back. I am very, very pleased to bring back my special guest, friend, Nils Vinje. Welcome.

Nils: Thank you very much, James. Excited to be back.

James: So this is episode 922. But we've had you on before. We had you on Episode 825, where we were talking about your stuff, which is [business leadership](#), which is a great episode. You came into my world, you did really well. And in Episode 890, we talked about your [progress from zero to \\$100,000](#) and what you did to do that, so it's a super awesome episode. I got so much feedback on it, people saying thank you so much for showing us what's possible.

I'm kind of excited about it because I've been watching back seasons of Undercover Billionaire. It's really appealing to have a story of a start from scratch, because it's probably the most common question people ask, you know, if you were to start again, what would you do? And I'm super fortunate because I get to coach you, as well. And I've been able to work with you along the way to see what would you do, but I do it through your eyes and ears and your business with my knowledge.

Nils: So I do it faster, I get to do it faster because of that.

James: Well, you get to do it with a friend. Like, one of the big key lessons from these episodes is that you've got to have the contacts. You've got to have the network and the contacts, people who have already done the thing that you're trying to do, and you've got to get there, and you've got to have grit and determination, and you've got to stick to it. And avoid making huge mistakes.

In each of the episodes I've watched, they do make mistakes. And then they say, Oh, that was a mistake. So when we work together, we try to eliminate the mistakes. And what we're seeing is a really fascinating thing play out. Episode 890 sort of showcased how you went from nought to \$100,000. And it took nine months for that.

This update, Episode 922, we're going to be talking about how you went from 100,000 to 330,000, in just three months, and that's cash collected. That's not even sort of internet marketing math, where they're sort of, all out for annual subscriptions, and, you know, if you collected it, that's real money.

So we're going to break it down. I think there's a couple of things that have caused that. And I think they're really worth sharing and could be super instructional for our audience. So first, I just want to acknowledge you for A, getting the result, like actually doing the things and getting the result. It's a huge celebration, of course. You've got a fantastic run right now, and you're very likely, you're sitting on a seven-figure business if you want to talk annualized figures.

And secondly, thank you for coming and sharing, because I know you don't have to do that. But it's just so damn exciting to see what you're doing. And the things that you're doing are not unique to your business. They're not all about luck. I mean, even in Undercover Billionaire, some of it's luck. There's no doubt about that.

Some of it's great fortune, you know, you're born a white male in Western society, we have to acknowledge that it's just probably much easier for us. So that's something I really became aware of in the last few years. You do take it for granted. But that being said, these lessons, I've seen it apply to all different races, colors, ages, sexes, different businesses, so I want to just cover them because they're critical.

And I think one of the most important ones that came up was you've got to a point where you had to make some choices, because you came to me and said, Listen, I've got this old program I've been doing. But I'm not feeling it anymore. I'm like, something has to change, but I'm not sure how to go about it or what to do.

And I talked to you about a sort of a process to go through what you might do, to decide whether that's something you can do something with or whether you don't do something with it. I'd love it if you could just sort of talk through what happened there, with regard to any sensitives that need to happen there.

Nils: Yeah, of course.

James: But yeah, it's really fascinating, because this is what happens. There's even, I think, a Goldsmith, Marshall Goldsmith quote about like, what got you here won't get you to the next, to there. Now, you have to change as you go through the business. And some of them are difficult choices, especially when you've got a profitable income stream, but you know that's not going to continue the way it is. So what happened?

What lead to closing a profitable income source?

Nils: Yeah. So thank you again, for having me on, having me back. I love being able to share my story. I still can't even quite realize that the numbers you said are the numbers that I told you, that they're real. And that is cash collected already in the bank, and it's only barely into the start of 2022 here, so it's pretty amazing.

So, the first leverage program that I built was this higher end program, and I charged \$15,000 a year to get access to this program, and it was a very intentionally-built small group program.

So I only had three members in the program, because when I had the coaching calls with these members as a group, the choice was to be able to go deep with each individual based on the situations that we're going through, all leadership focused, all things about how they were performing, how their teams were performing, how they were marketing themselves, inside their organization, outside their organization, and how they could just continue to progress and push on their leadership development.

And when I started this program, as I mentioned with, the very first, like, real leverage program. And I was ecstatic. Like, finally, there was something that was not one on one, either coaching or consulting, that I could serve this group. And I knew exactly what contribution I was going to have to give, and when, because I defined all those parameters as part of the program. And they were very happy with the setup of the program, and everything worked great.

So for two years, I've run this program netting \$45,000 each year from each of these three, which was great. And that was huge, because it was always a boost in the early part of the year when the three of them signed up originally. And once we've gotten to the point now at the B2B Leaders Academy, where we're starting to see these numbers on the subscriptions, it forced me to question everything.

And that was what I brought to you. It was like, Okay, well, I've been doing this for two years, I love being able to invoice and get another \$45,000 a year with the same layout of my effort that I've done the last two years, but I was like, Wait a second, maybe this isn't the right thing. Maybe there is the leverage that I have in the B2B Leaders Academy is actually greater than what I have in this, even though this is a much higher ticket item.

And you gave me the very astute advice to look at a couple of things, things like [EHR](#), your flagship effective hourly rate. And I had done an EHR calculation on this one a while back, but it had been a while since I revisited it. And I was a little shocked to see, when I accounted for even more than I had, I think the first time was a little bit of rose-colored glasses.

When I went back to it this time, it was clear that it was not at the level that I thought was appropriate, or given the effectiveness of the B2B Leaders Academy, in comparison to that one, it was at a significant disadvantage. So that was one thing. The other thing was the joy I got from the program. And that was still pretty high. Because I love coaching, I am a coach, being in the moment with my clients is wonderful.

And doing it with a small group is really cool, because we've built some incredible bonds. And many of these individuals in the program have been promoted from director to VP. And I've seen their growth, much like you've seen with me and your other clients as well. And then there were a handful of other metrics that you mentioned. And you listed off like five or seven things. I won't go into all of them here. But they were just really great primers.

And I took a step back after that call, wrote down my list, and then I sent it to you. And I said, Well, here's where I ended up. This kind of tells me the story of what I need to do without me really acknowledging it out loud. I said, I'm going to sleep on this, and I'll send you a note tomorrow. And that was a decision, but ultimately, I was going to wind down this program, perhaps retool it in the future. But right now, it wasn't going to serve me in the same way that it served me before, even though it was my highest end product that I offered at the time.

Breaking down the decision

James: Massive. There's so many things there I just want to unpack and just make sure we reinforce. One is, you were astute enough to recognize that the environment had changed. So what was amazing in the beginning, it's like probably like your first car, like the difference between not having transport and having a car is huge.

But 20 years down the track, you got a choice of different car, maybe that first car you got, it's not going to serve your family needs anymore. So it's recognizing that things have changed. And as I've often talked about, if you can be comfortable with change, if you can embrace it, and sometimes even look for it, it stops you from going stale and from just drifting along and letting everyone go past you and not even realizing why. So that was good. You recognized there was a change.

Then we pulled out some scoring tools, one of them's the effective hourly rate. There are other things we look at, we'll mention a couple. One might be byproduct. Does this thing generate other clients? But in this case, it was probably the end program. So that wasn't such a big factor. There was the joy and you know, when we start out in business, this is usually optional. You're going to have to do things you don't love.

I mean, Undercover Billionaire, they're cleaning toilets or whatever, mowing lawns. They don't want to do it. But it's a necessity. As my mentor said, You've got to eat beans for a while sometimes. So it's what got you going and fueled up your capital to be able to do something better.

Then we have a look at things like, where does it sit in terms of your percentage of the portfolio? Is it five percent, 10 percent, 50 percent? Obviously, if it's all your income, you've got to be careful, you can't just turn it off. Well, you can, but I don't recommend it. That'd be like Tarzan swinging from one vine just letting go midair before he grabs the next one. It's a bit risky, and you could splat on the jungle floor.

I know my team are going to have a lot of fun editing this video. The next thing is, is it a good effective hourly rate? Do you absolutely love it or not? Because you've got the choice now. Is it generating a byproduct or saleable asset at some point? Possibly not in this case. So the effective hourly rate had slid a little bit, or was now no longer as good as what you can get set somewhere else.

One of the critical things we look at is, is it reversible? I think there's a huge one that helps us. I sort of take this a little from Jeff Bezos, where he talks about, is it a one-way decision, or is it reversible? If you turned off the program, and you decide, Oh I really miss that, and I want that program in my life, how hard would it be to just put it up again?

It's like, it's an offer, it's an email out letting customers know, Hey, we're back on. I've done that before. I remember my subject line, because at the very beginning of [SilverCircle](#), I'm talking about 2010 maybe, I sold it for three months, and then I enjoyed it. So I sold it for another three months. And I'm like, Okay, I've got to stop, like, selling it for three months, and then stopping and starting. I need to close and retool.

So I retooled for a couple of months. And then I came back with one forever program, which has been running up until now, I still got clients in that. And I remember the email, it was like, Hey, the band's getting back together.

Nils: Yeah, it's as simple as that.

James: So you can restart again. You don't have to feel so like, gosh, it's not the end of the world, is it? It's not like selling a business, or it's not like you can't have it again.

If you can't have it again, or whatever, then obviously, you've got to be a little more careful. And I've learned a lot about this process through my surfboard collection, because some surfboards I might sell and then feel remorse, or, maybe I shouldn't have sold that one. But if I can go and buy that exact same surfboard from any surf shop in the country today, then I'm not going to sweat it if I sell it.

And I did this with a set of fins actually, I sold a set of fins with a board, because the guy didn't have fins, and I felt sorry for him. And it was everything for him. And it was probably inconsequential to me. But I actually wanted them, I missed them. So I just ordered some online and they arrived the next day, like no big deal. So is it reversible or not?

Changeability, sleeping on it, and whitespace

And then beyond that, you know, there's a couple of other subtle things. But the most important thing is, just before you do it, it's always worth saying, well, could it be changed? Or is there some tweak? There's a few techniques for this we've got, Eli Goldratt's constraints theories, like we figure out, we remove things and see what would we do if we were hamstrung or if our hand was tied behind our back and we could no longer do this or if it's illegal, for example.

And we could also use a [SCAMPER technique](#). I've made videos about both of these, I'm sure my team will link to it somewhere in our show notes at Episode 922. But the SCAMPER technique is like, reverse the use, do the opposite, change the market, etc., etc. So it's always worth just saying, Look, is there a small action you could do that would completely transform this thing?

And in this case, there wasn't something super obvious to us. So it's like, hey, you know, you're absolutely crushing it with your B2B leadership business model. If you were able to spend your time and attention there and not worry about this to the side, what could be possible? And I think we're beginning to see what's possible.

I imagine as soon as you made the choice, oh, the final thing I want to say about sleeping on it, great advice. Our grandparents used to do this, two things on it. My grandfather used to write these big long letters and just get it all out of his head. And interestingly, I saw my friend [Peter Shaw](#) wrote something similar in an email recently. It's good to write long letters and get it all out. And then he put in the top drawer.

And if he still felt the same way the next day, he'd send it. This is when they did letters, right. And you could apply the same principles to emails or big decision making. I won't make huge decisions like buying investments or assets, or killing a program, or tuning up a staff member or whatever, I will not make those big decisions if I'm tired or in a bad resourceful state.

I've got to be well rested, and I have to have thought it through. So I create a lot of white space in my program. My week has so much whitespace. In fact, yesterday I did nothing. I literally did nothing yesterday the whole day. And that whitespace, I was just actually reflecting, and one of the big reflections I had, thank goodness I've got this time to just put things away for a while. Leave them, and I see what finds me, and I see what thoughts come.

And the biggest thought I had was, thank goodness for the whitespace. And then I did log in at the very end of the day to check my community, which I do every day, one of my members said, you know, One of the things you keep talking about, and he found this great quote about space, you know, you've got to be able to think things through, but you can't think them through unless you create the space to have that time to think. And that's critical.

So you didn't rush it, is my point. Long-winded way of saying that. How did you feel once you made the choice and started cleaning up, communicating with the clients, obviously, getting the messaging right, seeing if you're going to make alternatives or pivot. Sometimes, it's not too far from where you start, but just a small change.

I'll give you a couple of examples. One is a friend of mine, [Rob Moore](#), a previous guest, I saw one of his clickbait headlines today is like, why I'm completely getting rid of my business. And I log on and all he's doing is changing the name of it.

Nils: Classic clickbait.

James: He's just changing the name of it, he hasn't binned it or thrown it away or whatever. He's just changing the name of it to serve a bigger market. Well done and kudos to him for doing that. But anyway, that wasn't a huge change. It's just like, a name change. Okay. Beyond that, I've seen people go from one to one to group with the exact same fee and just telling them it's going to be more beneficial to them.

Would you rather just chat with me by myself? Or would you like to feed off the energy of six or seven other great people? Like, I know, for example, in our weekly group call, Nils, you are a source of energy. You're a beacon of positive enthusiasm for the other members. They just love seeing what you do, you contribute so much, but I think you also enjoy those calls as well.

How it felt to drop \$45K off the table

So how did it feel?

Nils: So it felt like a level of control I don't think I could really say that I ever really had before. So prior to building this leverage site, and in the leadership space, everything for the previous five and a half years was all one-on-one consulting. And if you know anything about consulting, you know the rocky mountain nature of the income that comes. It's either feast or famine, that's the best way to describe it, right? Feast or famine.

And so when projects come, you take them, and when they don't come, you're looking for more, and it's this constant cycle. So there is a long time where I didn't feel like I had a whole lot of control over my business, I got a family of five to support. And I've been doing this now for seven years. So there were a lot of ups and downs that I've been through.

And when I got to that decision point a couple of weeks ago, with you and walking through all these metrics and scorecard and kind of reflecting on this and giving it some space and time, I was like, Huh, if I make this decision, I'm willingly saying, I'm going to drop \$45,000 off the table this year. That's totally okay. And I was like, Wow!

I can't really say that I've ever been able to put that on the side and never taken a \$45,000 deal. Because if that was put in front of me before, guarantee 100 percent, I would have found a way to deliver it, because that's what I had to do. So it comes back to this control, and control influences and increases confidence.

The more confident I am in everything that I'm doing, the better off I am and the better I can position my B2B Leaders Academy and my podcast and everything around it. And it just helps give me more fuel that I really am truly in control of everything.

James: You probably noticed the theme here. Like, clearly one of my, most deepest mentors was absolutely fanatical about no compromise. And he used to say this expression, he used to say, An empty flat is better than a bad tenant. A flat is the same as a condominium, right, for our international friends. But basically, an empty investment property is better than a bad tenant.

And I've done this plenty of times. I've chosen to turn off programs. When I started online, this blew me away, right? The business model that Grant Cardone used in Undercover Billionaire to be successful in that program is exactly the business model I used to quit my job. Like, I literally even sold my program for the same amount, it was \$5,000 per month.

So back in 2008, when I had a job, I went out and found a couple of clients who are happy to pay me \$5,000 a month, and I quit my job. So it was \$120,000 a year. About seven years later, that \$120,000 a year represented less than 10 percent of my income. And I had one person in my team looking after it, it was a bit of a pain in the butt.

So I was just like, we don't do this anymore. This is not our business model. It's so far removed from what we do now. But that time, you know, I had an SEO business and I had the coaching, I was just going very well. And these days, now I'm even focused on the revenue share deals. I stopped selling the SilverCircle program about two years ago.

Still get some people sort of jimmy their way in with a crowbar. It's like, really rare. Like there has to be a referral from three people in the program. They do. But for the most part, I've stopped selling that because the partnership side of things has just gone really, really well.

JAMESSCHRAMKO

"Having the guts to turn off a perfectly good, not broken income stream to replace it with something better is truly what an entrepreneur is all about."

- JAMES SCHRAMKO



So this is a huge theme here. Having the guts to turn off a perfectly good, not broken income stream to replace it with something better is truly what an entrepreneur is all about. And every time I've done it, I've been rewarded big time. And as I said, the downside is not that big if you could actually just start it up. Like, my worst case scenario is I could go out and get two more customers tomorrow for five grand a month. But that's my worst case scenario.

So it's not the end of the world. Right. So that's big thing number one, is you've made some strategic changes to where you put your time and energy and where you're growing the business. And that's so far paying off, obviously.

Nils: Yes, yes.

The story of a book funnel

James: Next thing that happened, we talked about your book. Again, this is going to impact a lot of people. You've heard me banging on about it, you've got to have a book, right? The word authority has the word author in it. We know this from my friend, [Ron Reich](#). You want authority, you've got to have a book, you've got to be an author.

So you got your book, you're doing what everyone else that has a book does. Talk about what you were doing before, and then the question you brought to me.

Nils: Yeah, when I wrote the book and planned to launch it, I built a book funnel. And that funnel consisted of selling the book for \$10 US, and then I would ship it anywhere in the US for free, a little bit more, 20 bucks, if you wanted me to ship it international. I had a bump offer where I had made a short small course with some key pieces of content on the leadership side that you could do and access very quickly.

There was around a \$30 bump offer. And then I had an upsell offer that was \$199, which was a bit more in depth on some of my teachings and things. And then if they didn't take that, I had a downsell offer that was \$97, which was just one tiny piece of the puzzle. So it was a relatively complex thing.

And it took me a fair amount of time to create, because as I wrote the book, I didn't have any of these courses or any of this content sitting on the side. So I had to invest in creating it myself, and then hosting it. Of course, thank goodness for [10XPRO](#), I was able to host and deliver it all. So that part was the easiest part.

And I ran paid ads to that book over the course of like, I think we talked about this last time, like nine months or so, and spent somewhere in the neighborhood of \$30,000 to \$40,000 to varying degrees of success. Sometimes the return on ad spend was okay, and barely breaking even. And sometimes it was absolutely horrendous, like, oh my gosh, what on earth is going on? I paid people, somebody, \$70 to buy one of my \$10 books, and I shipped it to them.

So it left me with a lot of like, I don't know where to go with this book. And so I stopped the ads. And that was when the podcast launched, the [B2B Leadership podcast](#). And that started being the main avenue for bringing people into my world. And we had a conversation one week, and I was like, I have my book, but I don't know how to leverage it again, because I've had this kind of complex thing.

And when I've sent people there, you know, it's \$10. Like, the book is fantastic. It has great reviews. But it's still friction, it's still hesitation on the part of people who go there and say, Oh, well, that looks interesting. But 10 bucks, I don't know. And you know, it's through my website, so they can buy it on Amazon as well.

And so what you shared with me and what I had seen from [Work Less, Make More](#), your book and your book funnels, is that you give it away for free, the PDF digital version. And then you have an upsell for people who want to get a physical copy, as well as an upsell for the audiobook version. And I said, Hang on, I've got a PDF copy of this book, I have an audiobook version of this book. Why don't I just give it away for free? Let's remove all the barriers.

And so over the Christmas break, I kind of retooled everything and got it in place. And the first week of the new year, I released it on LinkedIn to my network and I said, Hey, let's kick off the new year in style. I'm giving away free digital copies of my book. I was blown away by the response and the number of people that downloaded it, because these are people in my network who've heard me talk about this, who have seen my book, seen my offer, Hey, it's 10 bucks, blah, blah, blah, and never touched it.

But the simple act that it turned into a free asset was incredible. I got to get their email address, so I could build a relationship with them, they got to get a copy of my book, which was usually valuable for them. And it was a huge win all around. And the result or the number of people I've had opt in for that asset has been greater than almost all of my other marketing things in the past that I've done.



And even in a very short amount of time, I'm talking like it's only been less than a month. And it's already been exponentially greater than some of the other things that I've put out there. So, you know, just having that core asset, one that is true to me and is all my beliefs and everything, builds an awful lot of trust.

And number two, being willing to give it away for free. The number one comment everybody said was thank you so much for making this available. And I just said, You're welcome. That's great. Hey, and we'll continue the conversation in a lot of different ways, podcast, emails, etc., from there.

James: Where is the free book?

Nils: The free book can be found at 30dayleadership.com/book. Grab a copy, download it, and I'll share with you the incredible goodness that I have to offer. And you can get a physical copy, if you want, just like you can when you buy Work Less, Make More.

James: That's great. Thank you for sending me the physical copy of your book as well. It was special when that arrived.

Nils: You are welcome.

The stuff Nils sends his list

James: Great book.

So you've basically collected lots and lots of emails since you did that, that you weren't getting when that was \$10. What do you send the people?

Nils: So that was a big question that I brought to you and said, James, I'm going to have these people, what do I send to them? So I followed your guidance and advice to a tee. And as we've talked about before, like I'm all about taking shortcuts. And I know you've tried and experimented all kinds of different flavors and stuff.

I've seen things from other coaches, have implemented things, some of them felt okay, yours always felt like, just perfectly in line with who I am. And just, it's a no-pressure situation. And I share my podcast, I share the fact that the B2B Leaders Academy, which is a subscription-based program to get leadership coaching and training exists, and I make them an offer, because they downloaded the book.

I give them a special discount if they sign up in their first month, which I thought was really an inspiring way when I saw your offer out there. And I was like, wow, that makes a ton of sense. That's huge. I just want to get to know people and give them the opportunity and reduce another point of friction, just like with making the book free.

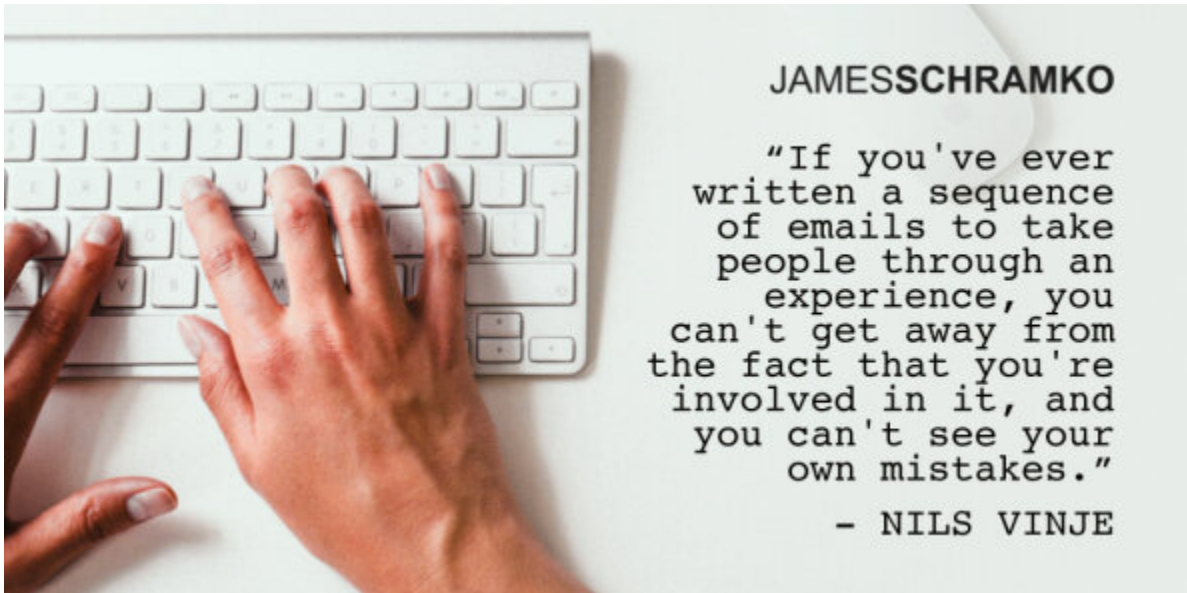
So through the series of emails over a couple of weeks, I introduce myself, share the details about the podcast, add some value, then talk about the program and talk about results. Because that's what it's all about. And I share stories from my members, one who saved five hours a week after just a couple of weeks of implementing these strategies, was absolutely wonderful.

Or people have seen incredible inspiration and innovation from their team because they use coaching skills. And they had never done this before. And they got a new tool, they used it, they got results. And now, I get to share their story, and they get to have tremendous success in their career.

So that's as complex as it is. It is sharing that I have a program, I'm making an offer. If you take me up on it, awesome. I love working with you, I look forward to working with you. And if you don't, that's okay, because I'm going to still send you a brand new podcast every single Wednesday, and you will get a tremendous value out of all the conversations that you hear and the great leaders that I talk to.

When you have James to check your emails

James: It's awesome. So you got your book, your podcast, your emails. Just from the coaching process, when you were talking about the emails, and very cleverly, actually, I thought, you asked me if I could have a look at them. So you shared them with me. Do you want to talk about what that process was like from your perspective, having me just look over the emails?



Nils: Yeah, that was invaluable, let's say, because if you've ever written a sequence of emails to go out over to, you know, go take people through an experience, you can't get away from the fact that you're involved in it, and you can't see your own mistakes, period. So, you know, a peer or somebody else you know reviewing is great, but somebody else has been there and done that, and written it, and has an exceptionally high-performing version of the same thing, whew, that was invaluable.

So very, very quickly. I think you cut out probably half of the stuff that I said. And I was like, Thank you. Wow, that's incredible. I was beating around the bush, I was literally just beating around the bush because I was writing to myself. And I was like, here's what I would want to hear. And you're like, No, just be upfront, just be honest. And I was like, That makes an awful lot of sense.

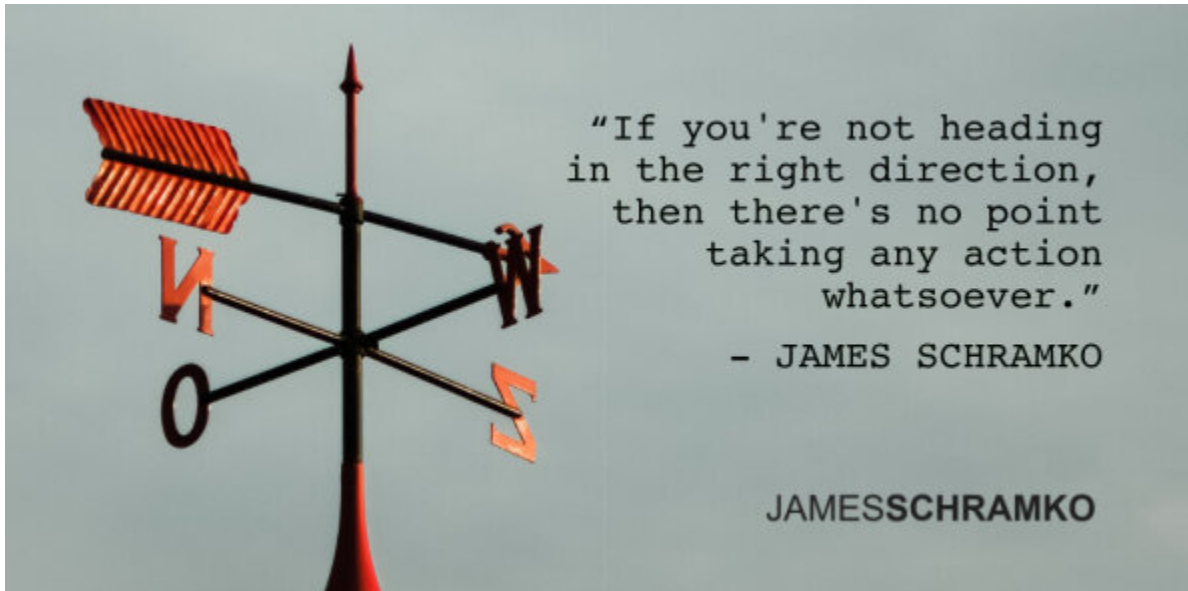
So it cut my time down dramatically going from, Hey, this is what I think this sequence could be. And if I didn't have your advice and guidance, I probably would have just iterated on it for a period of time, and it wouldn't have gotten as good to where it got to in one review. Or I think I asked two reviews we did, because I made some changes and said, Here, check this out. I'm going to totally turn it around. And that is working.

James: And I think the way we do it is I make the suggestion so you can see what I've done. I think you asked for that. And that's how I do it with my team. This is a big tip. If you're the visionary, or the business founder, or a coach, and you're reviewing other people's work, put the comments mode on and suggest changes so they can see what you changed.

In my case, I deleted a lot. I learned a lot from that. There's two people I've learned this from in particular. One is [Bond Halbert](#), who has a fantastic book about editing. And I don't think there's many books on copywriting editing, but his is fantastic. And he's been on the show, and we talked about it. That's where you learn to de-that and to clean up the words.

The other guy is [Drayton Bird](#), who's like an absolute god in the direct response space. Actually, he's pretty savvy online as well. But he would basically just say, just remove the first part of your copy, and you'll get to the point much quicker. Almost everyone fluffs around at the beginning. So, I get the same feedback over and over again from people who I'm, you know, I don't put myself out there as a copywriter or an editor, right?

But I am direct. And I can get to the point, because my mentor used to say, What's the point? And if you don't know the point, if you're doing something you don't know the point, you should stop. And that's actually what I used to take a lot of offense to this silly expression, just take action, take massive action, fail, fail fast, make lots of mistakes. That's bullsh*t.



Just stop. If you're not heading in the right direction, then there's no point taking any action whatsoever. You've got to minimize your wasted effort and energy. So that's what we tend to do in emails. And as you said, when you're in it, it's hard to think how would an outsider start perceiving me, because you know yourself so well, and you know your program so well. Isn't it obvious? Actually, that's a Goldratt title.

Nils: Yeah, no, it's not.

James: So that's great. So just to recap, so far, the big things that have moved the needle from you going from zero to 100, to 100 to 330, is changing your model lineup, adding in a powerful front-end email capturing device, and then following it up with emails that move people through to a transaction.

The power move you can implement today

And then there's one power move. This one I think, is great, because anyone listening to this, or watching it, can implement this today, and will start trying to figure out how to implement it today. And when it works, it's going to probably be the most powerful tip of all the things we've talked about, and it doesn't cost anything at all to do. And it works instantly.

And this is what I would call developing a really powerful hook. It's the word or phrase you would say to a perfect prospect that makes them want to buy what you've got to sell. And it sounds almost too amazing. In fact, I know a guy who teaches a class on this that goes over weeks or something. He tends to puff things up a bit. And I think he's found a way to charge a lot for this, but we're just going to give it away on the podcast.

And that is that you find that line or the word that you say to someone that when you say it, they instantly recognize they have a gap. And they've also, because you're the person asking it, you're already automatically deemed as the authority for asking that.

So I don't know if you want to share your one that you would say to a corporation, because just for context, Nils, you are a business-to-business leadership trainer, that's your bread and butter, and you're the best at it.

Nils: Thank you.

James: And you've got a fantastic membership. It's hosted on 10XPRO, which is how we met and you came on board. And now you're selling a lot of it. And this is your line that you use.

Nils: Yeah, so happy to share. And with the hook, before I share mine, like, there's a slight twist. So sometimes when we think of a hook, we think of that headline that's like the eye-catching thing. And sometimes it's a statement, but I think it's much more powerful for it to be a question. And being a coach, like, questions are my lifeblood. So I naturally went to that.

And so everybody that I come into contact with who I want to have a conversation about my program or about my leadership membership, I ask a simple question. I say, well, when it comes to the people leaders in your organization, what do you do for leadership development? That's it. Just, what do you do for leadership development?

That simple. And the answers, you know, I've asked this to a few 100 people by now, the vast majority of time, at least 95 percent plus of the time, the answer is nothing. And that is part of the reason why my program exists. Because I know this to be a fact, I know that organizations, while everyone wholeheartedly believes that people are the most important asset, sometimes struggle with making that a reality and turning that into something. Whether it's resources wise, or time wise, or effort wise, it doesn't really matter.

But the fact is, that nowadays, you can have access to a world-leading expert, and virtually any field, me in leadership, you in entrepreneurship, at the drop of a hat, and that's the beauty of it. And that's when they say, if they say nothing, or they say we do some kind of group chat stuff, and we read books, and we have book club type things, I say, Great. Well, I'd love to tell you about a program that I run that's a turnkey solution to empower your leaders with the tools to confidently handle any situation. Would you like to know more?

And then they opt in and say yes, and I share more. So it's a very natural way for me to just identify, Hey, are you already doing this? Most of the time, the answer's no. Sometimes yes, that's okay. And if it's yes, the best part is, I say, Great. Can I tell you about my programs in the event that anybody else in your network is looking for help in this area, and they don't have the same resources or capacity as you, that you could refer them to me?

So even in that moment, where it's no, they already do this perfectly, I'm still positioning myself as someone they could refer in the future.

James: Nils, you're a knock-it-out-of-the-park student for me, because you implement. Like, you're smart. you're good. I've said this last time - whoever you're working with, or whatever you do, you kind of go well, right? Because it's like, you're the right stuff.

But you're smart enough to recognize when people around you are going to slingshot you. And in our case, it's worked out great for both of us, you've been using the platform that I endorse, [10XPRO](#). We talk like this every week, but usually there's five or six others hanging out. So it's great to see that.

A couple of tips around referrals

So you're already successful. I could say to you, Nils, Who else do you know, who could do with a similar sort of transformation that you've experienced? So that's what I could do if I wanted to generate leads. And you might say, Actually, I was telling my friend...

Nils: I already do.

James: ...yeah, I was telling my friend about the podcast, they had a listen. And they're like, Can you introduce me? So I would say, like, listen, if anyone you speak to ever says, Could you connect me or whatever, I would say go for it, just flick me through an email, make an introduction, I'll speak to them personally. And I'll see if there's some way I can help.

So that's the variation on this. So this works, basically, if someone has a need, or if they don't have a need, because if they've solved it, they're probably going to recognize that need in others. But they're not in the business of solving it, which means, and you are, and as [Dean Jackson](#) tells us, so with referrals, there's only three components that need to happen.

One is, people need to know that we want referrals. Two is, they need to know exactly the right moment to make that referral. And the third thing is, they need to know exactly what to say to make that referral work really well. So big heads up. Dean, I've got to get him back on my podcast at some point, but at least he's here with a mention in just about every single episode, because he's that smart.

Nils: That's awesome. I told you last time that the episodes with you and him are hands down my favorite out of the 922.

The two-year story that finally came out

James: Nils, those ones are up there. You're telling me you had a little bit of a reaction from some of the people around you who had no idea what you're up to.

Nils: Yeah. When 890 came out, it was time to share the two-year story. I hadn't really shared that publicly. I don't talk about my business side very much. I talk all about the leadership and stuff. But I actually wrote an epically long post for me, kind of highlighting what happened from the start of the pandemic.

That was the trigger of everything getting kicked into a new gear and deciding to build this entire business. And it was when my income went to zero in 48 hours, because I was solely dependent on one-on-one relationships, and one-on-one contracts with companies whose discretionary spending froze in an instant because the pandemic hit. That was it. That was the catalyst. And that was the start of this.

I had been messing around trying to figure this out for a while. But sometimes it's not until you're up against the wall where you really are like, Okay, this has to change now. And that was my bold moment in that point. And that was the point that got me a couple of weeks later to write the book, and then launch the book, and then the course, and then turn it into the B2B Leaders Academy, then launch the podcast, then make the book free. And then, you know, here we are, \$330,000 later, it's kind of nuts. Kind of nuts.

James: It's like, we're basically the not-undercover millionaire, sort of, had a think about this when I had a surf, that's kind of what I wanted. I don't have one of those goals like lots of gurus, like I want to create 1000 millionaires in 2020. Like, whatever. That seems a bit wonky to me. I just thrive on the success of students and partners. I just think that's awesome.

Nils: Yeah. Ten years ago was when I became a certified leadership coach, and the very end of the coach training program, this is a six-month long program, fully accredited, just amazing, amazing program. The very end, we did a very, very important and special exercise, and the instructor put a line of tape down the middle of the room, it was in one of those hotel areas. Taped down the middle of the room, everybody was on one side.

And the only thing we had to do was to jump over the line, now that we were at the end of this program, we were graduating, jump over the line. And while you were in the air, declare what it was you were going to do as a result of now having this incredible coaching skill. And I thought about this for a little bit. And I was more towards the latter third of the group.

And I went, and I jumped, and the phrase that I said was that, I commit to sharing my gift of coaching with the world. And I know for a fact that I was put on this planet to share my gift of coaching with the world, through the way that I connect with people, I connect with my clients. And now having been able to build a business that fulfills that purpose is just leaves my life in complete alignment.

And again, I wouldn't be here without you, and I'm incredibly thankful for that. And the coaching, and I know you share some of that same sentiment, because I feel that every time we connect, and we talk about this. So you know, I just wanted to share how this is not a business that I'm trying to grow and sell and just turn it into an asset.

This is me. This is my life. This is what I want to do. I want nothing more than to help people become incredible leaders by sharing my gift of coaching. And when they experience that, they get great results.

James: Well, aren't we lucky that you're such a great jumper? Because that's a lot of words to say while you're in the air.

Nils: I'll admit, it might have been, you know, a little bit in the air and mostly on the ground. But the feeling was the same.

James: It's an interesting exercise of intention declaration. Obviously, that's what it's about. I would say you're doing what I would call the Ironman business model, which is where you're Tony Stark and your team and your tools, like [10XPRO](#), your team members or whatever, the assets you're building around you, that's the flying suit with the boosters and stuff.

It's a great life. It's very similar to this part of my operation. I love it. I love these podcasts.

Nils: I know. All I have to do is live near a beach and go surf, and I'll be probably modeling you.

James: You do the saunas and the skiing or whatever else you do.

Nils: Of course.

James: I'm just doing me. I do love the surf.

Nils: A hundred percent.

James: So thanks so much. I just love our chats. So I'm sure we'll have a few more. This is episode 922. I've been chatting with Nils Vinje. Website 30dayleadership.co. You'll also find Nils, he's probably pretty active on LinkedIn. So thank you mate. Appreciate it, and continue this upward trend. Let's get you back and see what happens next.

Nils: I look forward to it, James. Thank you so much.



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