



JAMESSCHRAMKO

Social Media Videos won't Make You Rich

Going viral isn't a guaranteed payday. James and guest Stefanos Antypas shed light on the real impact of social media videos on business.



Stefanos Antypas

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. Today, what a special occasion. I have a great friend of mine, a new friend who's been like an old friend, Stefanos Antypas, welcome to the podcast today.

Stefanos: Nice to see you, James. I mean, I don't know if it's a special occasion for you. It definitely is for me. After so many episodes, so many podcasts, finally, I'm here, it's phenomenal. Quite excited, to be honest. It's like, you know, when you have a dream as a kid, and you want to go to a specific place, and then finally it happens. Like, Okay, I need to do this, I need to build up a business, I need to have a good idea. And then I will be able to go and talk with James. So thank you for having me, actually. [laughs]

James: It's great. I mean, we should just sort of give a little reference as to how we know each other. This is Episode 1027, by the way, so we're into the next thousand episodes. You came along into my life, last year, I think it was, where I had this sort of frustration around social media and video. I'm going to share some vulnerable behind the scenes stuff a little bit in this episode.

A history of trying to do video

But to really understand this, we have to cast our net a little bit further back. Around about 2007 or 2008, I became aware of Gary Vaynerchuk and his Wine Library TV. And I realized that there's this guy out there creating videos, and he's not a TV presenter, he's not an actor. He's just someone in the business with a wine shop, making shows on the internet. And he backed down, I think he was actually on a website called Vidler. And then he went to YouTube.

So this is very early days, in terms of who was pioneering it. And I tried to start making videos, too. It was pretty hard to make videos and put them on the website. Really hard to make players, hard to host it, hard to encode it, and then people's internet connections were much slower back then. Young people now wouldn't really understand that. To connect to the internet, I had to wind out a cable and plug it into the wall socket and dial up, you know, make all these noises, and it was very slow.

I tried it and I did it for a while. I started on Vidler. It didn't really get much traction, and I kind of moved on to other things. I got onto podcasting. Then later, I went back and started doing videos for real, and this was probably 10 or 12 years ago. And I was inspired by one of our other guests, [Ryan Spanger](#). He had come to my apartment, he had proper DSLR equipment, he showed me how to set it up, my scenes, and I did pretty high-quality stuff. And I was also doing my yard.

So I had DSLR cameras, I had separate audio, it was a big involved process to film the stuff, and then edit the stuff, and then upload the stuff. And it was mostly just me, and I was starting to build a team at this time. And I think after four or five years, I did okay, but it was just sort of going along, not that great. And then I fired up about three or four years ago.

Again, this is like round three. And I started putting out a lot of stuff. And then I'm still not quite in getting the traction that I want. So last year, you were my course instructor in a course that I purchased, just to learn about videos. And I just came to it with an empty cup. I climbed up the mountain to find the guru. And I brought my empty cup and like, I'd just pretend I don't know any of this stuff. And I'm going to start from scratch.

And I learned how to script videos, what camera settings to use, how to make these short videos in a more produced way. And I started to get traction - it was the first time I uploaded a video and got hundreds of views, I think actually a couple of thousands, 2700 views or something on the first one I put.

So I was actually excited, because instead of getting 27 views or 300 views or whatever, on a breakout video, I started to get some views. And we're going to talk today about the difference between views and actually making money, because I think that's a really good topic. But I got some traction.

I'm still on this journey. There's actually six people on my list of advisors here. I do want to shout them all out. Here we go. So Stefanos, you were my instructor, and you taught me plenty of stuff about the structure of the video and which social platforms and so forth. You're very social-connected. You have the right age group.

I've also got Charley, [who we talk about on the show a lot](#). He helped me get this high-quality camera and stressed the importance of videoing my podcasts. My friend Mark over in the UK, he's been helping me now with the proper setup of DSLR, and proper story, and actual producing and editing in a new and fresh way to bring the real me to the camera.

Justin, who's a local guy, he has a very big YouTube channel, Primal Video, it's got 1.5 million subscribers, and he makes plenty of money from that channel. And he's been teaching me about SEO intent, and playing the long game, and doing the content game, not just doing clickbait stuff. But on the clickbait stuff, I've got another friend Isaac, he's my thumbnail guru, he teaches me what you need in a thumbnail and what titles you should have, and what type of content people are going to be interested that might even go viral. And then that's my team.

And beyond that, I'm just using some tools like TubeBuddy and AI and my own team, you know, my team obviously help me with editing and distribution. So that's where you fit in the lay of the land in terms of my team, but you're one of my core people, and we're going to see changes to my videos from now. So I want to signpost that, you know, from 1027 on.

So you came into my life, I listened to you every week or a couple of times a week. We logged in live with a group. I was actually - one of those calls, I was driving from Noosa to Sydney. And then the next day or whatever, I was driving back. It was a 12-hour drive, and I was listening to you on the drive. And I did all my homework. In fact, I did a little extra homework. I applied myself. And I just want to say I appreciate what you put into that training.

And since then, we've struck up a relationship, you've joined my community, James Schramko Membership, you're there. You're in a pod with another member, really developed - Gary, we should shout out to him. He's awesome. I'm watching you grow your business now. And it's exciting to see what you're doing.

And as you do that, I think you've transitioned from a world where you had predominantly students who are often - probably not always, but often, you associate with a lower budget or they're entering that world to learn. And now you're in the commercial world of players with money and big business. And I think you're seeing a contrast. And I think that'll be great to talk about today.

Where James is at now in his video journey

But first off, where in the world are you today? You're famous for having new kitchen backdrops.

Stefanos: Oh my God, every time, Gary says the same. I don't know. We opened up the Zoom call. And he doesn't know what I'm going to see behind me. Right now, I'm still in Greece. So I'm originally Greek. And it's very rare that I'm in Greece. But because of the occasion and since I had a conference too, that I was part of in Bulgaria, I decided to stay a little bit more. So I'm enjoying the Greek sun. It's really nice.

But soon I will be back in Manila, probably when this video goes live, I will be back in the Philippines. And yes, I will continue this lifestyle, I think I will be changing - I remember you told me last year, Stefanos, if you want to focus on your business, just land somewhere, stop moving around. I didn't listen. So sorry about that. Sorry about that.

So you mentioned something interesting before, you said that you tried making videos, three times, if I count it correctly.

James: Four times, I think, the first time, the second time, the third time. I'm in version four and a half now, I think the next one is fifth. And this is over 15 years or 16 years. So to give a fair period on this. It's something I've never nailed or been particularly good at. And I know there's great opportunities. I've had so many guests talking about YouTube, I coach people who blow up on YouTube.

In fact, I've got clients who make enough money just from their YouTube channels to not do anything else. And that's actually quite appealing to me. I do generate money from my [surfing website](#), in totally passive advertising income. And I really get that, and I also get royalties from [my book](#), from Amazon and Audible.

I think that's the most passive type of income that I get now, because I did that work six years ago for the book. I did the book six years ago; I've put in the work. I paid for help as well with [Kelly Exeter](#), she helped me with it. And I still get royalties. At the first of every month or whatever, they get put into the bank account. I love that.

So I think that's one aspect, but I've never been big on that. And I think some people who want to be a YouTuber, specifically, they're eyeing off that ad revenue, that is their business model in their mind. I've come at it a completely different approach. For me, my videos and my marketing, my podcasts, my blog posts were always about finding a customer to come and buy my products.

And in the last seven or eight years, also buy my partner's products, or maybe affiliate's products. And that's a totally valid business model. And I love that business model. But I do feel like there's gains to be made if I can improve my video marketing. Because to some extent, I'm still quite a secret.

You know, I've got a small following. But I've helped some people with big followings. And I think if they knew that I was, you know, what I'm helping these people with and how I'm able to get them result, I think that if I can get my message out to them, that would really benefit me. So that's mission number five.

What would one million followers do?

Stefanos: So if I were to give you right now, one million followers on YouTube, what would change in your business?

James: It would depend on the million followers. It depends on the million followers, right? Do they have intent? Or are they just clicking on something that's interesting? Like the videos that I watch of surfing on Instagram, for example. I'm probably not likely to buy anything from most of the people that I'm watching. Or if I'm watching a sports car, you know, I might go to my local dealer and buy a vehicle at some point. The only way that a creator is making money from me is the ads that I sit through while I wait for their content.

So if they're buying, intent-type people, that will be great. If there's enough people, and I've got the content that will generate enough ads that that's all I did, and I enjoy making the videos, then I'd say it would mean that I stopped doing some of the things that I do right now.

Stefanos: Exactly. And one of the first things that I feel people should understand before jumping onto social media is what is their intent. There is one thing about being famous and being able to go to someone and say, Look, I am a big name in my industry. I have one million followers on my YouTube channel. That's why you should be working with me.

James: That's like actors.

Stefanos: Just like actors, exactly.

James: The actor with the massive following will always get the part over the small player, and I think that's super tangible street cred. It's an appealing thing for studio.

Stefanos: It's all about what you're saying. And I think one of the things that I said now, while I was in Bansko, when I was doing my presentation, is before you start with social media, ask yourself, what is that that you are selling, because you are selling something. In that case, you are selling your viewers, you are selling the fact that I have one million pair of eyes, which are ready to jump on to the movie, if you are an actor, or they're ready to jump into the product that I will drink while I'm doing my live.

On the other hand, you might just want the intent. You want this type of people who have an intent to buy, to spend money with you. So you offer them a solution. You build up trust with your videos. And then eventually, they are ready to spend some money when you say, By the way, I have this offer. Okay, so this is two completely different things.

But it's very interesting what you mentioned in the beginning. And I would like to break it down as clear as possible. Because since people will be listening to this podcast, I want them to come out with a thought pattern, like a few questions that they will need to answer themselves before doing the next step in social media.

So I asked you, what would you do if I were to give you one million followers? And that was the right answer, by the way, it depends really on what type of followers you're going to have.



Intention and offer

Before you start your social media following, that's the first thing. You need to know the intention. You need to know what you want to do with that one million followers, say you have it.

But then the question is, what are you going to sell to them? Sit down and try to realize what's happening. You already have your program, you know, the podcast is bringing in memberships, the podcast is proof that you are in the industry, that you are a name, you have a website, you have testimonials. I bet that even if I give you one million followers, the amount of work that you're going to get from word of mouth is going to be much greater. I mean, I don't know. You tell me if that's true or not.

James: No, no, I think it's very true. Look, I've got a friend, this is a good way of explaining it. I have a friend who has 30,000 Instagram followers, or he did have a couple of years ago. And I had, I think at the time, I had 1500 people. And I said, Dude, how did you get 30,000 followers? He goes, I just bought them. [laughs] It was just that simple.

And when you're looking at the post, it's true, like, there's very little interaction with the posts. But the only reason, it's basically just a pay-to-play credibility thing where people see a big following, they think this guy must be an authority. It's the same as publishing a book, it doesn't really cost that much to publish a book.

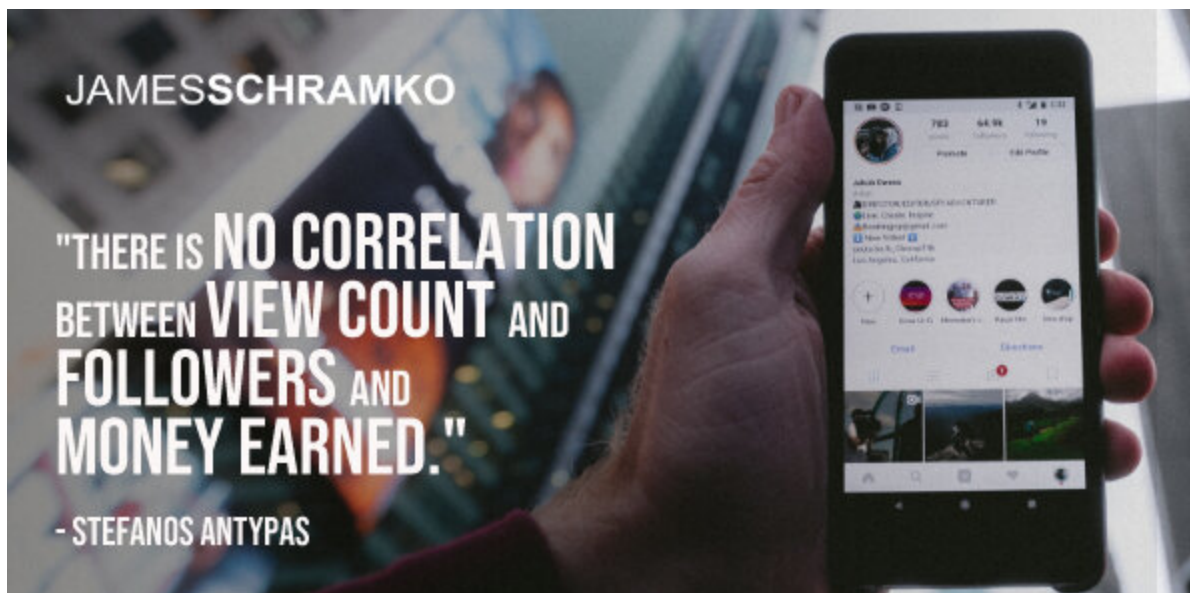
But there's two types of authorities. There's the one that doesn't have the book and the one that does have the book. And the person with the book is automatically going to trump the one without, because they've got a book, and the book equals authority. Right?

And so the big following absolutely is going to help improve conversions. It's going to open doors and opportunities for podcast guesting and speaking from platform, again, because the platform promoter is going to look at the following and think, they're going to help us sell tickets to this event, they're going to lift the value of our rent, because they're more famous.

There's plenty of people we could name with big followings out there in social media. We all follow the ones with the big followings. We know their names. We all know who they are. And they have the ability to open doors. I mean, if you want to take the ultimate example, you take someone like Arnold Schwarzenegger. This guy could just carve his own... but the guy ran for the governor of California, right? I mean, once you got an audience, you decide what you want to do, and you can get them behind you, then you can open doors.

It's not all about the numbers

Stefanos: Absolutely. But the thing is that there is - I found out through the years that I've been working with Nas Daily when I was working with the Academy and the years before that, while I was in Greece, before I started traveling, I was working with Comedy Lab, at that time, the biggest comedy production company on the internet, on the Greek internet.



And I had the opportunity to look many creators. So I've worked with creators who just start, just start. They had some time in the pandemic, and they wanted to learn how to hold their phone and film a TikTok, all the way to creators who have amassed billions of views. And there is no correlation between view count and followers and money earned.

In fact, the sole purpose that I built my business at Successful Content Creator, was when I realized that I've been working with many creators who have a hundred times my followers, and I was earning three and four times more than them. Then I had the opportunity, while I was in Manila, to work with a company, which their specialty is to build websites, some sort of sales pages, something like a Shopify for Filipino creators. The reason is that they have incorporated the payment methods that are popular in the Philippines. So that's how it's specific to them.

And after a chat with them, they told me that it's the same problem with the creators they're working with. They have creators with three million followers, they name some in particular now, just trying to remember. Three million followers, and they are earning three and five times less than creators with 50,000 or 100,000 followers.

The only difference is that the smaller creators understand the value that the viewers have. Whereas the big creators, usually, and this is a little bit painful, in my opinion, because this is a social matter, and I will not expand on this but just mention it, many of these creators became famous by chance. They worked hard, they made some videos and these videos blew up. And then people jumped on to them, they offered them some money and that started escalating.

But you have a person with a business, without the training to run a business. You have a person who held \$100,000 without the knowledge on how to distribute this \$100,000 to achieve longevity in their business. So the social media business looks very lucrative, looks very fancy. But in reality, we don't have enough data to see the problems that can arise.

The challenges of trying to make it

And actually, now we start having some data, Matt Koval did an amazing research, Mark Koval was working on Google for 10 years, I think, eight or 10 years. He has a video on YouTube. And he explains that the average life expectancy of a creator up until 2020 was four years. That's it. You go popular, you earn the money, and then there's a collapse.

And this gradual collapse is not only a collapse in income, it's also a psychological collapse. Imagine being famous and then losing relevancy. So you have to battle your tough financial situation, and the emotional burden that you have that people don't like you anymore. This is very heavy of the heart of a person who built their wealth by being someone. Right?

So the whole business is - it's a tough sport. It feels like technology evolved faster than human brains, in a way. So the way I see social media, and that I think encapsulates everything, I remember back in 2004, 2005, I was working a little bit after... no, that was under age. So it was in 2008, I think, I was working as a salesperson, I was going door to door, and I was selling internet promotion.

We have some websites. So we had hairdressers.gr back in Greece, we had motorcyclerepairs.gr, things like that. So we'll go door to door, and I'll try to pitch these websites. And I realized that our strongest pitch back on that time, because Greece was a little bit behind in the internet, and I first got an ADSL in 2009. So again, technology hasn't really caught up.

The biggest sales point was, Hey, how can you have a business and not have presence on the internet? Before that, I imagined in the 90s would be something else, Hey, how can you have a business and not have fliers, or not be on the page of any of the local newspapers, something?

James: The Yellow Pages.

Stefanos: The Yellow Pages, exactly. In that case, you have your own business. It can be anything, from a bakery to running a social media consulting business. And then your friend will come and say, Hey, how can you not be on social media? And that applies some pressure, that applies some psychological pressure.

So then you will drop everything you're doing, and you start creating your Instagram, your LinkedIn, without intent, just because you should be there. And that's fine, you can start creating something for the sake of creating it. That's how websites work with SEO. Just create it, and you wait a little bit for it. So it's fine to just have the presence.

Problem is that we have these numbers who are visible to everyone. And eventually, the mind starts thinking that, wait a minute, I should be doing more. Wait a minute, why this Gen Z 23-year-old boy has a Lambo, and he's making 50K months as a coach and I do not?

James: Because probably half of it's bullsh*t, which is an important - just to speak to your point, you've got these businesses, and they're like, how could you not be on social? The biggest problem I see is these people who are on social but don't actually have a business. They think the social is the business, but that's often shortsighted.

And I can be absolutely certain the influencer math is not right, because I get under the hood. A lot of them rent that car, a lot of them are talking revenue if payments are made, if it's a good day, or they have extrapolated a whole week by 52. And they come up with some annual revenue run rate, which is not real, it's hypothetical.

And then you sprinkle in a little bit of bravado and falsity, and then you get these big numbers. But I mean, I just can't imagine where these people are going to end up if they don't get good guidance or some business structure under them, because I can see how four years is an average span. It's like a sports athlete, you know, same thing, isn't it?

Stefanos: That was on YouTube. Right now, we're on TikTok era. Now we speculated, Mark Koval said the same. He said, now probably, it's going to be one and a half years. So it's even less.

James: Well to your point with intent, that's the reason I'm not on TikTok. It's not part of my plan. I don't want to be there. I don't like the platform. I'm not certain my clients are there. And it was a very easy decision not to participate. The same as I haven't started a thread at this point, on Meta, whatever they call it.

Everything's changing. Twitter's now X, like how do we even keep up with it? Even the original platforms are changing names. But the point is, I'm wary to participate in anything new, until I at least get my basics under control. But I always started from a business perspective first, and then the socials adding extra reach to it. But those people who their social is the business, I think, this is a really valuable lesson to talk about this, that having a big number of followers isn't a guarantee to make a long-term business model.

How much are you willing to invest?

Stefanos: No. Absolutely not. And the biggest issue is this. If you go as a business owner to a coach like me, and you tell me, Stefanos, I have this problem. I want to grow my audience. I'm like, Okay, sure. Let's grow your audience. We can grow your audience, there are techniques that will boost your audience.

But the question is, let's say that we grow your audience, let's say that you make the money, let's say that everything is perfect. Do we know if in four years from now, you will be happy to keep on grinding the same way with the same intensity in order to keep on getting these followers? So that's the next question.

And this is a question that I have to ask myself all the time. That's why, you know, when we had the meeting in our community, I asked you, I'm like, James, you know what, I want to take a pause from videos. What do you think? In the end, when you build a business, you build the business on trust and results.

There is a business model that it's all on launches, launch after launch after launch after launch. And having a strong social media presence definitely helps. But my point is, I want people to understand that huge creators, now I'm working with a big media company, and they're making six figures just by uploading videos. They have 20 shows, and they shoot them out in quick succession, they make more than 10 videos a week.

Problem is that when the algorithm changed, when there was a shift from the platform that we're uploading to another platform, then they started taking the video from this platform to try the other one, it didn't work. Suddenly, they saw that for 10 hours of work, they used to make \$10. Now from these 10 hours of work, they started making eight or seven.

So immediately, they start thinking, Alright, so we need to double down, let's throw more videos out. So in order to make that \$10 again, now they have to work for 15 hours. And that's not sustainable. And that's why they summoned me, they summoned me to cut everything that is not working, and try to propose new sources of revenue.



Social media is not a magic pill that if you grow your followers, you're going to see results. And when you go to a doctor, to the pharmacy, and you tell them, Hey, my nose is blocked, give me something to unblock your nose, your nose will be unblocked. I can make your followers more; I can give you more reach. But if you are allergic to the cat, the medicine that you got will not solve your problem.

So if you want to have a proper business, we should understand where the social media fit in the ecosystem of your business. And depending on its fit, then we build a strategy that will give the results that you want. And probably if you're a business, you want cash flow. You want cash flow, you want to make sure that your employees are happy and you don't leech out every last bit of energy from them. You want to make sure that you are a business owner, and you have time to go on holidays with your family or walk the dog in the afternoon or train.

So these are the results. And if you just want to grow your audience, that might not solve the problem. You might have extra work. Right? So this is how I feel, and this is what I've seen. And you said at the beginning that I saw a big difference between small creators and big companies. That is true. But the problems are the same.

The only difference is that the small creator who hasn't understood what's happening in the industry, they're still excited. They just learned how to hold the camera. They made a video, they threw the video on TikTok, it got 5000 views. They got comments. This is an emotional boost. This is dopamine. This is dopamine in your brain. It feels good. You don't know what it means to have to do this every single day for years and years to come. Nobody's talking about that.

Now creators are coming out and they talk a lot about burnout. I think especially last year, there was a huge thing, Viably made a whole research about it. But first of all, we need to be a little bit more honest. And I feel many companies are not doing as well as they say. And it's all a matter of how you show it to the audience. And I'll give you a very quick example.

I fall into the trap of digital nomads who have 10K clients, that's the 10K month, for example, you know, like okay, that's amazing. Then I realized that this 10K client is a six-month coaching. So that is recurring for the next month, and then they don't get another one. So in the end, well, it's a 1.5K type of client. And that's how you start to see that things are not exactly as they seem.



You've got to do what you love

So social media is, in my opinion, a way for you to reach out to more people. It's a tool, not your business. And if you do want to make it your business, you need to really like it. You need to really enjoy making videos. I have friends, my friend Cassandra, she's a spectacular, spectacular content creator from Mexico. Amazing videographer, very passionate and emotional, and very honest. What you see is who she is.

Whenever she has two minutes free, she will be on the phone and she will edit a video. That's what she enjoys. So how can I go to her and tell her, Nah? That's her pleasure. Well, it's not mine, though. So I need to figure out a different way and use social media as a tool. And I think most of the people who are listening right now also want to use social media as a tool and not as a live business, as a live dream, right?

James: Yeah, I think you're right. And I'm thinking the people who I've worked with who have had such success on those platforms, like [Scott](#), Scott's Bass Guitars, he loves making videos. That's his absolute passion. And he teaches bass guitars. It's like strawberries and cream. Sorelle. She just loves art. And now she's making music, right? She's gone into a whole new category.

Pat Flynn with his Pokémon channel, Deep Pocket Monster. He loves it. He absolutely loves this. It's his prime passion. And good on him, because he's sort of proving that adults are really just big kids. We never stop being a kid. We just get all the fun beaten out of us at some point. And he's found it again. And he loves it. He's so good at it.

So I'm actually interested in the creativity and the art of making better content now. It's a luxury for me now, because I do have spare time. And I do have the equipment, and I've got access to people to help. But it's certainly - I don't think I want to be a YouTuber, per se. I still think that's fraught with danger. The platform could change. Maybe a billionaire will buy the platform and change the name and tank the algorithm.

Stefanos: That will never happen. What are you saying? [laughs]

James: Highly unusual but anything's possible. I mean, look at Zuckerberg, he went from pretty much broadly hated to now being half cool with BJJ and working out and stuff. Like, things change. So I take your point.

Now, if we want to use social media as a tool, and by the way, I was thinking Gary Vee would be a classic example. He just loves content creation, like he lives for it.

Stefanos: He loves it.

James: Lives for it.

Stefanos: And I have to say that I have friends who are working in his agency, the guy is a master. He keeps on teaching them. His personal social media is better in a way than his agency, just because he gets it. And that's, I think, it's impossible to train. It's impossible. But Gary Vee I think has the best social media presence, short content, social media presence on the Internet of this type. It's amazing.

James: He's a master, and he's an absolute veteran, been doing it forever, and improving, and he's right on the edge of where it's going. And he's got volume as well. He's got the data, he's got the big clients, you can see all the stuff. So it's brilliant. And he created that reality for himself. So he was my source inspiration.

And luckily, I mean, I'm a classic case of someone with a very small subscriber base, who has a great business, because I've really only focused on the people who are a good fit for me to be able to help. And I also acknowledge that a lot of the people who view my content or listen to this podcast may not actually be a buyer at any point. But that's okay, because it's so leveraged that as long as the buyers find it, it still works out.

When you want to make videos but not be a YouTuber...

So what do you suggest someone does? They want to make social media videos part of their toolkit to grow and assist their core business, which isn't them being a YouTuber. What are their steps?

Stefanos: So the first step would be to realize what they're selling, as I said. And I have a very black and white way to explain it. You either sell high ticket or low ticket, if you sell low ticket, that means that you need 100 sales to pay your rent. If you sell high ticket, you need one sale to pay two months of rent. So this is a very black and white way of explaining it.

So depending on what you sell, then you need to craft your strategy. If you sell low ticket, then you need volume. If you need volume, and if you're just about to begin, just about to begin, right? Zero. if you need volume, then probably you need ads. Honestly, why spend time trying to create organic reach, and organic leads, and figure out the audience, and study your avatar client, which are things that we have to do if you want to create organic content? You just want to sell.

You want to sell 100 stickers. So you create ads, you work on the ads. And eventually, you build your organic reach on the side. Unless you're some kind of omnipotent being, and you can do all of them at the same time. I've met some people like that.

James: You can also accelerate organic content that's going well organically, with some paid ads, as well.

Stefanos: Absolutely, absolutely. Now that's the first step. If, on the other hand, you're selling high ticket, I'd say that social media is an elaborate phonebook. It's the Yellow Pages.

James: Oh, I love that.

Stefanos: Right? [laughs]

James: Tell me you're young without telling me you're young. Yes, Yellow Pages.

Stefanos: No. It's about, you know, my country, we call it something like Golden Guidebook, that's how we call it in Greece. [laughs]

James: Really? Is that the Greek translation of the Yellow Pages, the Golden Guidebook?

Stefanos: But it was yellow.

James: I love it.

Stefanos: Golden Guidebook, the direct translation in Greek.

James: And China would have their own version of it. And I imagine it's heavily edited. [laughs]

Stefanos: [laughs] So it's some sort of an elaborate - this Golden Guidebook. The reason being is that it allows you to reach out to people without having to make a cold email or cold call them on the phone. You see their profile, you can see what they commented on another post, so you can see if it's a good fit. So in the end, in that case, you don't care to have one million followers.

I was able to travel the world and be able to leverage my knowledge of social media and generate 50,000 plus dollars, with less than 1000 subscribers. But that was it. It wasn't my knowledge from my university years, it wasn't my knowledge from anything else that I did. Everything that I have achieved the past three years is social media.

And I managed to do that with less than 1000 followers, just because I was able to connect to people. And I used my social media portfolio as proof that I know what I'm talking about. And then you start getting the connections, and the connections spread. So if you're selling high ticket, don't expect people to just come to you.

If you want to see results in a month...

Open a profile, create a profile, bring the profile to a level that it's kind of clear what you're doing and who are you, your personality plus your offer, and then start reaching out to people. And eventually, it will come. I swear to God, there is a trick, and I'm going to tell it, I'm saying it to everyone, almost no one is doing it. The people who actually do it see results immediately, in one month. I promise you that, I promise you that.

Spend five minutes per day reaching out to five real accounts. It can be on LinkedIn, it can be on Instagram. Maybe TikTok, not the best place; YouTube, not possible. But that's it. On Facebook, reach out, send a message, and say something meaningful. Right? Not the type of spam, Hello, James. I really like your video. [laughs]

James: The template, the flattery, you're doing some great things. I got a beauty today. It's this one. I'm going to pull it up on the screen for myself here because - I go to my messages. And it was in the - yep, it's in the requests one, right? This is the message.

Stefanos: And that's before ChatGPT, before ChatGPT, imagine, people were actually writing those. [laughs]

James: Hi, James. I love the work you're putting out there. So it's in lovely little flattery thing. It's great to see an expert in their field using socials to help others improve their life, especially in coaching business space. Took a deep dive into your content, and it is fire. Right? That's the message. So it's all flattery. It's all cheese, it's trying to draw the mouse out of the hole. Right?

When I click on the profile of this person, then it's like, this person is helping agencies and coaches make \$100,000 per month in recurring revenue consistently. And yeah. But then this is the thing, like this is the important part. I go and look at the followers, 567 followers. I'm not that impressed. You know, there's nine posts. I'm not that impressed. Basically, the posts don't even relate to anything to do with it.

I actually, I don't believe this person. I don't believe this person is helping anyone make 100,000 a month. So why would I even respond to that? But this comes through every single day, these flattery-based messages. So what Stefanos is saying, something other than that. [laughs]

Stefanos: Something other than that, anything other than that. [laughs] And I have some very good examples of people reaching out. Stories are a great way to reach out. So if James puts up a story, and you want to talk to James, sorry James, now your stories are going to be spam, but it's good for your reach. So you can thank me later. [laughs] You can send a message.

James: You know what I always share? When someone takes a picture of [my book](#), and they put it on their story, I'll usually share that. That's an easy way to get shared in front of my audience, because it's definitely speaking directly to me and it's in my nature to want to share that other people are reading the book. That just builds trust and credibility. And so it's an easy way to get someone's attention is to call out their stuff, their work. But actually, like actually, not just pretend like this other person.

Stefanos: So that's it, just send a message, say something honest. A good way to start a conversation would be to see a common thread, because since you are reaching out to them, probably you've seen something. If you haven't seen something, then you're very close to this guy with the admiring James's content.

So you can say, Hey, I saw that you made a comment in James's post, and I was dealing with some similar things or whatever, I've made a video - you can actually say that - I made a video answering that question, really good to meet you. Something, start a conversation. And eventually it builds up. Because in the end, they're real humans. And I feel social media has convinced people that the machine will take care of our lives. You just put stuff out, I will distribute it, and I will sort you out. And eventually, people will come clicking buttons.

Deep fake versus organic

James: I saw an account yesterday, Stefanos, it was fascinating. It was a content creator. And he was doing deep fakes, right? Which is, we know this can be done now. He was getting AI to write the script, AI to do his voice, AI to do his body. And the whole video was faked of him, his voice, his body, but he's not there.

And when I looked through the account, some of them had 600,000 views. But on his account, the last 14 or 15 videos, there was just two types of videos. Seven of them were the top five websites you need to know, these five websites should be banned, here are five websites you should know. So there was like, seven or eight videos, exactly the same topic, virtually the same video. And then the other seven were all about how to deep fake yourself, you know? And they're all variations of the exact same video.

And as a consumer, I'm like, this is so boring and dreary and pathetic, like, where's the dislike button? I'm not going to follow this. It's interesting for about a second. And then when you realize that he's just putting the exact same rubbish over and over again, it's like, regurgitate.

Stefanos: Well, that's a different strategy.

James: But I think we're in for a wave, a wave of automated deep fake. This is like the whole ManyChat thing again, it's the whole robot, automated, crawler, scraper, chat bot thing.

Stefanos: You know, there is nothing wrong with that. I mean, I hear so many people complaining. And I'm like, there have always been bad quality stuff. I mean, I remember when cars would last. They would tell you that cars will never die. Now everything is automated to be faster and cheaper. But they break down. And furniture, they break down.

So it's going to be the same thing, in my head. There's going to be a lot of bad content, and many people will fall for that bad content. I will fall for it. Absolutely, sure. But that's okay. That's how things work. And in the end, we have in our hands a tool automation that will allow us to do better work. And then we'll also have the wisdom to separate what's hastily made without heart and soul, and what's proper. And that's also how you can tell that this profile on Instagram is nothing. And how you know, a coach like you, for example, really respects his audience and really wants to give some value to the people listening, right?

James: Well, I'm going more organic, I'm slowing down. Like today, I filmed six different scenes with my camera in different positions and sent it off to get edited or feedback. And that's like, the first of the new version. And it's going to take a bit of work to get there. But I'm interested in doing it. And I think organic will stand out above deep fakes.

I'm not expecting that I'll be doing deep fake AI, automated rubbish. I don't want to contribute to that. You know, when I came online, there was a software called Traffic Equalizer. And it would make hundreds of thousands of web pages. This was before Google was big and was like Yahoo and MSN and whatever. Then Google was starting to become a bigger play. But they ended up creating algorithms to detect these sites and delete them from the search index, because it just became a, like, cancer on the internet, really.

Just imagine a site that was spawned in minutes, that had hundreds of thousands of pages. And then there was all these cloaking tools that you could do, that gets ranked for something, but as soon as you click on it, it takes you somewhere else. I think they'll weed out a lot of this stuff is what I'm saying. But right now, it's the time to get even more personal and more organic.

Stefanos: True. And there was a time that clickbaits were a thing, back in 2013 to '16, I think, on YouTube. You could clickbait people - no, that was before that. I don't remember the day. But clickbait was a way to give a fake impression for the content, and people were falling for it. But eventually things evened out.

To be perfectly honest with you, right now, we are at the best time for social media, because the algorithm has trained itself to understand what the viewer wants to see. I never, ever see stuff on my YouTube front page that I don't want to see. And on Instagram, when I open it up, I never see things that I don't want to see.

Every now and then, they will try to do something, and unfortunately, especially my Instagram is a little bit messed up because I have my students, so I need to go to their profiles and I need to find their competitors. Now I open the Pinterest, because I was working with a clothing brand in Greece. And now I'm just getting all these emails, Stefanos, are you interested in women's fashion? That sounds very wrong, and I'm not, but... [laughs]

James: Yeah, now, I've got a bamboo company keeps sending me remarketing ads for brassieres, because I bought some for my wife when I was getting some T-shirts. And now I'm getting these brand new maternity wear or whatever. I'm like, no, your targeting is way off.

Stefanos: I just want to say to people that eventually if their content is good, it will reach the right people. That's it. That's a fact.

James: Yeah, that's what happened with my very first Stefanos-scripted video. The one about Sudoku, remember the people who buy books, but don't read them? It got quite a few thousand views. And I was like, wow, this is really exciting. Finally, I've paid money, I've got some instruction, I've followed the instructions. And now I'm getting a new result. It was like, 10 times more views. I'm like, wow, okay, we're onto something. So I'm grateful for that.

Try not to get too excited...

Stefanos: My only fear with this thing - so I'm very happy that I was able to help you, but my only fear with this kind of knowledge - is that if people just stay on the knowledge of how to make a video, how to write the script and everything, you run the risk of getting too excited by the next video who's going to get 5000 views and falling into that loop.

And now I need to try twice as hard. And then.... Every time I see one of the students in the big groups we had saying, My video got 50,000 views, I want to congratulate them. But also, I don't know, maybe this is something I need to work on with myself, my heart a little bit shrinks. And I'm like, I know that next week is going to be tough for you, because chances are that next week, your video is going to get 500 views again.

And it's very few people that you see they have the mentality, they check statistics, they look at the data, and they make calculated decision. Most people, they have the one hit, and then they keep on trying, and they don't quite understand. There is this belief, I wonder if this is deliberate, that once you make it good once or twice, then it's only upwards. And that's a lie. In business, it's the same thing. It's not always up.

James: It's just way too small a sample set, you know? Like, you need much more volume. I've done over 1000 podcast episodes, and I could probably pull out from the last thousand episodes, you know, which one were breakouts, and they get an indicator of what type of topics people are interested in.

It's like, the video that I remade today is a remake. It's a redo of one that already went really well before, but I'm trying a new approach with it so that I can see what happens with it. And I have published thousands of videos. [My YouTube channel](#) had 2,260 videos on it. And they were all rubbish. Right?

So like, I have put out more bad versions than most people. So when I do get some good ones, I'll take that win. I've earned it, based on just putting them out there and publishing it. And it'll come, and I'm in it for the long game.

Stefanos: But let's just separate something, it's very important because you haven't outpoured your future on these videos. You're doing it because you're curious. That's what I understood.

James: Well, I do believe there's going to be a direct correlation between my success with the new style of videos and selling memberships, and also helping my partners. Because I'm focusing on the intent of the perfect buyer. And I'm focusing on letting them become aware of me where they may not be aware of me.

So it's very strategic. I'm not chasing mass views, I'm not chasing virality for the sake of it, because I could care less. I do good numbers off a small base. But if I could make my base bigger of the right type of people, I think that I could go even better. It's a leverage thing.

Stefanos: The reason I mentioned this is because I've seen people - because a successful content creator is not only about development, it's about the emotional support as well, because I have been able to offer emotional help to many people as well. And many of them outpoured their whole future in hopes that, of that social media will take them out from a difficult situation they're in.

And this is where the problems begin, when you think that if you work hard on TikTok, in one year, you're going to quit your horrible nine-to-five job. It is possible, but I wouldn't bet all my money on it. So that's what I meant that, of course, there is a business perspective, and there's a business side of it. Of course, this is happening not only for joy, it's happening because you can see some financial benefits in the future for your company. But even if it doesn't work, you can stay curious, without getting emotional and being crushed over it.

James: I think this is good advice. I've seen the press articles of influencers who break down and who confess they've been living a fake life or crying after they make the video or that their life isn't as glamorous as they said. And I think this particularly applies to probably people much younger than me.

When I was younger and had my first jobs, there was no social media platform. Right? There was no internet when I started my first jobs. Certainly it was probably only had, you know, a route net or whatever, it was, maybe for the military or education, at the very early stages. But in the early 90s when I was going to full time work, you couldn't be a TikToker, you know, you weren't a social influencer. This is all new.

So it's really fascinating to me. I feel more relevant than ever because I'm in such a good position to help these younger generation. And I've done the research, and you know what my absolute best sweet spot clients? It shocked me when I figured it out. It wasn't 50- and 60-year-olds, it's 25- to 35-year-olds. Twenty-five to 30-year-olds, I call them young guns, are my best clients.

They're the [Chandler Bolts](#), the [Ezra Firestones](#), the [Ryan Levesques](#), the [James Dysons](#), all the millionaires that I've created are generally in that sweet spot. And that really is fascinating, and most of my partners as well. So that's how I'm going to meet them on their platform, on YouTube, in particular, and Instagram.

At the end of the day, it's a tool

Stefanos: It is just a tool. Social media is just a tool, it's not a one-way ticket to success or to a better life. It's a tool to be used. And sometimes, sometimes, some people get lucky. Sometimes, some people get lucky, and you have more chances to get lucky than in the past. In the past, as you said, without social media, when you have one phone, and that's all you've got, it's a little bit hard in your small town to do something.

But many people can upload something on the internet, eventually they blow up. But that's it. It should be used as a tool. And people should be careful how much of their hope they outpour to something that even Meta cannot tell you how it works. Because it's so random. It's just happening in the background. Even they cannot tell.

James: Yeah, I don't think these guys know. I mean, look at Google in all their might. Do you remember Google Wave, Google Buzz, Google+? I mean, they messed up.

Stefanos: So many things that they canceled, yes.

James: Yeah, they tried social media three times and fell on their face. Like if Google with all their brainiac engineers and brilliant scientists can't figure it out, what chance do we have? Right? It's definitely - luck is involved, right? So that's always a lesson. That's why I'm not afraid to admit that I've tried the video thing a few times. And I'll keep approaching it from different angles until I make some headway.

And if in the end, I don't want to do it, like if I run out of time or whatever, and I stop doing business altogether, well, at least I had a go at it. Because it really is interesting me, especially the joy that my most successful clients on those platforms clearly exude and express. And it's a perfect support act for a proper business.

Stefanos: Absolutely.

James: Stefanos, people are going to ask me, where can I get in touch with Stefanos? You're going to have people following up, you know, by the way. They're going to say, Oh, I heard you on Schramko's podcast. Who do you help? What do you help them with? How do they get in touch? Aside from being in our community?

Stefanos: Absolutely. So of course, they can [follow me on Instagram](#) and on [LinkedIn](#). That's the name, Stefanos Antypas. And they can find my website at the [successfulcontentcreator.com](#), successfulcontentcreator.com, easy, that's the whole point. We want you to be successful. And there is no need to be working a lot. There is no need to be focusing on growth, just on the proper goals.

And right now, I'm putting up an offer, a two-week intense program, three live sessions with me where we do branding, and we create a strategy, social media strategy, for the next year, actually. It's amazing, but with ideation, I have built my ideas for the next year in 30 minutes. That's it, there is a technique. And you can create everything. So you spend less time on social media and you focus more on your business.

So this is something that I will be launching in late September or early October. And this is something that if people are interested in, they can quote me and send a message, and I'll be happy to catch up. And of course, let's have a proper connection. Let's talk. I promise I will not send you messages, I saw your content, it's fire, if you want to have 10 more followers.... [laughs]

James: That's good, beautiful. And you know, that's - for a date reference, that's 2023 we're talking about. If you happen to be listening to this episode after that date, I imagine I will have convinced Stefanos to turn that into a course and be part of his membership in some format. So reach out, find out where you can learn about this 30-minute process. Sounds amazing.

Thanks for being in my life, Stefanos. You've definitely been a pivot point. You're a source of inspiration, and your creativity and your totally different approach to things is so refreshing. And you need these people in your life. You need people who have different thoughts, different opinions, not afraid to tell you when something's rubbish, when you could look at something a completely different way. That's why I love this global internet phenomenon that we have. I appreciate you. Thank you.

Stefanos: Thank you, James, for returning the favor with your community. All the best.

James: All right, this is episode 1027. We'll put up all the show notes. We'll put links to Stefanos's profiles and membership. And also, if you happen to be a member of James Schramko's membership, that's my membership, you'll probably see him in there too. He's a great member, and we're always having wonderful chats about videos and so forth.



JAMES SCHRAMKO

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