



Mike Morrison:

What's up everyone? Mike Morrison here with episode 123 of The Membership Guys Podcast. Today, I'm very honoured to have a very special guest on the show, none other than Mike Stelzner from Social Media Examiner.

He's joining me on the show to talk all about social media marketing, and what's currently going on in that space. Because, social media marketing is one of those areas that seems to constantly be in flux, and it's changed dramatically over the past few years.

From the live video explosion through to the huge drop off in organic reach that everyone seems to be experiencing with their Facebook pages. There's always seemingly a new platform launching and then disappearing just as quick. It's little wonder that the average busy membership site owner struggles to keep up with what's working and what's not working when it comes to using social media for marketing their business.

Fortunately, my guest today Mike Stelzner is a man with his finger firmly on the pulse of the social media marketing industry. He's the founder of Social Media Examiner, the biggest and one of the longest running, if not the longest running most likely website all about social media marketing. And, he is the man behind the largest conference in this whole industry, Social Media Marketing world, which takes place every year in San Diego.

He's the first port of call for experts and influencers worldwide when it comes to what's working right now in social media. So, in today's episode I've had the chance to talk to Mike not just about social media and the current state of what's going on in that space, but also about how he's using social media as well as content marketing to not only promote his conference, but also to promote his own membership website the Social Media Marketing Society.

This was a very interesting and insightful conversation. You're going to want to grab a drink and put some time aside to listen in carefully to this one. I'm going to jump in right now to my conversation with Mike Stelzner.



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My guest today is the founder of Social Media Examiner and the man behind social media marketing world. The industry's largest conference. He's also host of the Social Media Marketing Podcast, founder of the social media marketing society and host of the weekly Social Media Marketing talk show.

With so much going on, I'm very very grateful to be able to welcome to my show today, Mr. Mike Stelzner.

Mike Stelzner: Well, thank you Mr. Morrison. It's super nice to join you and I'm very honoured to be here.

Mike Morrison: We're very honoured to have you. I know this is obviously a busy time of the year, and I'm getting a inside glimpse of all of this ramp up towards social media marketing world, following along with your journey on your brand new show, which hopefully we'll touch on a little bit later on.

But before that, I wanted to kind of take your temperature. I know you usually open Social Media Marketing world, which for anyone who hasn't heard of that event, first of all, welcome from under the rock you just crawled out of. But, I know you open that with [inaudible 00:03:06] looking at the state of social media marketing.

Mike Stelzner: Right.

Mike Morrison: I don't know if you can give a little bit of a preview of where you see things going by the time you stand up there in [inaudible 00:03:16] in San Diego in February. But, what is the state of social media as a marketing channel? Is it all pay to play, or is there still some mileage in organic non-paid marketing activity through social media?

Mike Stelzner: Well first of all, it is a bit of a scary time for anybody who has a Facebook page. Just last week, Facebook was running experiments in a couple of different countries, where they took all Facebook page content and moved it into the "Explore" category, which a lot of people don't even know exists.

Mike Morrison: Ouch.

Mike Stelzner: People that had paid just saw 60 to 80% drop in their engagement reach, traffic, all that fun stuff and it freaked everybody out. Facebook came out with an official thing saying, "Hey, it was just a test da da da," but I read the Tea Leaves, and I believe that we could be getting to a day and an age where pages content will not be visible anymore in the newsfeed.

That does mean we will need to try something else. I'm monitoring it very closely. I think the reason they ran these experiments in these countries was, they figured it was kind of a low opportunity without creating a lot of hub bub, but it still did.

But on the flip side of this, I think there is a certain kind of content, particularly that we're seeing across all social channels now that is a new type of content that is gathering a lot of steam. Anyone who wants to get exposure with it, ought to figure out how to do it. It is video of any kind.



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We are beginning as you mentioned, we launched an episodic documentary show, which is starting to get a lot of steam. Facebook Watch just came out recently in the last couple of months, which is their kind of answer to television. You're beginning to see all of the major social networks including LinkedIn doing native video, and there's rumour that very soon there will be live video coming to LinkedIn.

So, we're beginning to see what Mark Zuckerberg said years ago coming true that the future will be very much almost all about video. So, if you can figure out a way to create video content that people want to consume across whatever social platform you're on, that could be your ticket to success, because it seems that this type of content right now is being rewarded by user activity.

Let's remember that in the end, there's algorithms, which are computer technology monitoring everything. Right now, people enjoy watching video on social media and it seems that smart marketers are heading in that direction Mike.

Mike Morrison:

On that front, and I'm not a big fan of live video, and certainly the increased attention that Facebook and other channels now are putting on it is great to see. But, are you concerned as someone who watches this industry very closely that on Facebook, this is just another bait and switch?

Kind of like they seem to do with pages. They're seeming like they're gearing up for with groups, are we going to be on this conversation four or five years time talking about, "Okay well, what's the state of video now that Facebook won't let you stream without paying?"

Do you think [crosstalk 00:06:32].

Mike Stelzner:

Here's why I think this is going to work. Let's think about this: There's three different types of content. There's the written word, which is typically a blog post. We know that Facebook doesn't want people to leave Facebook, right? So, they're incentivizing publishers to publish their content on Facebook, right?

So, that's content typically that you have to leave Facebook to consume. There's audio content, which is podcasts, what we're doing right now. Right now, Facebook doesn't have a major play inside of that space.

Then, there's video content, which is consumable content within the platform. It's the one type of content that it seems as if the creators, and the social networks are in agreement that it's okay for us to create content that lives within the platform.

So remember, Facebook is like the Hotel California, you can [inaudible 00:07:15] but you can never leave. As long as that video lives on Facebook, and as long as there's enough people that are opening up the opportunities between Facebook and the creators to monetize that video ... which could mean revenue shares deals on advertising, subscription models, all that kind of stuff, as long as that exists ... which it is all coming, I think video will actually be a pretty solid place that creators, in particular video creators, will



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be happily co-existing with Facebook, because right now it's really all about YouTube when it comes to video creation.

Facebook is kind of in a land rush to compete against YouTube and become a really viable alternative to YouTube.

Mike Morrison: Yeah, and that kind of make sense. Actually, the more you're saying about Facebook wanting to create your content in their platform, because they seem to trying to get people to use, was it Facebook Notes for their written word content, and that didn't quite take off in that way?

Mike Stelzner: Yeah, and Instant Articles also is another one.

Mike Morrison: Yeah. You mentioned that "M" word monetization, and that's obviously something a lot of our audience are very interested in. Now more than ever should people who have perhaps put in a lot of time and effort over the past few years to build up a large following on their Facebook page, on their group, should they be trying to think smarter about monetizing their following? Do they need to adjust their approach to do that?

Mike Stelzner: Well, let's explore this a little bit. When you think of YouTube and you think of monetization, it's a revenue share deal, right? So, you see those little ads that you can skip after a few seconds, you know what I'm talking about Mike?

Mike Morrison: Yeah.

Mike Stelzner: Those ads, if you watch those ads, that revenue is shared with the creator of the video, okay? Some of those ads are non-skippable ads, so sometimes you'll see a 30 second ad that you're not able to skip.

All that stuff is brokered behind the scenes with YouTube and it is a revenue share model with the creators of the content. Facebook is beginning to enter into this space. So, we'll first see it in the Facebook watch platform. We'll begin to see inserted advertisements, which will be revenue shares with the creators of that content.

We'll begin to see it on live video, where there will be a commercial break where you can literally push a button and then a 15 second video ad will be inserted. Then, that rev share will happen between the live video producer, and Facebook.

So, Facebook will be rolling out in 2018 more revenue sharing monetization models between the creator, and Facebook themselves. Now, that's going to be a good opportunity for those that have really big followings and are doing video.

We're even hearing, I'm even hearing from people that do a lot of these 60 second videos. I don't know if you ever seen these videos, a lot of times they're in the cooking space or they'll show how to make a recipe really quick.

Mike Morrison: Yeah.



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Mike Stelzner: Even some of those videos are going to begin to offer advertising very shortly, a couple seconds of advertising that can be injected into the middle of these videos as they get shared, and as they go viral. So, there will be a lot of revenue share opportunity in that front.

Now on the other side of it Mike, there is the kind of unspoken behind the scenes backroom deals that a lot of people do, where they either become a paid influencer for a brand like a software company, and then every time they go live and talk about it, or every time they post about it, they're getting monetized or paid or it's part of a brokered deal.

So in this case, Facebook is asking you to disclose it. They have a brand link that you can insert in there on a page, and also on a verified personal profile. We're going to see more and more of these things, and the word "Paid" inserts in there so you'll see it like right next to the timestamp, it'll say "Paid." It's actually not an advertisement that is being monetized by Facebook, it's just a brokered deal between like Facebook page "X" and brand "Y."

Mike Morrison: Yeah.

Mike Stelzner: So, those disclosures need to happen. There's other backroom deals where people do, "Hey, I'll share your content on my page for this much money." We're seeing this on Instagram for example, it's a very common little back market if you will, where people will share your stuff for a certain amount of money.

So, there's so many different ways that people are choosing to monetize. There's affiliate links, all that kind of stuff. So, that stuff's all happening right now.

Mike Morrison: It's going to be interesting to see that progress, because there's got to be a fine line between the desire of creators to monetize, and push back for that going a little bit too far in the wrong direction. Especially the nature of ads being positioned for a competitor potentially can drop their ad in the middle of your video. I'm sure that may ruffle a few feathers.

Mike Stelzner: Well, and where I understand this is going to go is, you can exclude certain kinds of ads or certain kinds of companies from advertising into your video in the same way you can on YouTube.

The keyword here is "Disclosure." If you are doing a deal with someone else, you just need to disclose that this is a paid influencer kind of relationship that complies with American FCC rules. But, we're seeing a lot of people making a lot of money because they have a big audience and the right audience, and they're just brokering many different kinds of deals. Some with the social platform of choice, others with partners.

Sometimes there's no money exchanged. Sometimes there's just, "Hey, share two of my things and I'll share two of your things, and we'll all help all the water rise" if you will.



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Mike Morrison: Yeah I particularly personally would love to see something like that, or the patron kind of model for video creators, that sort of thing I think would really push things over the edge. We've been hearing rumours for a long time that there was going to be some potential for monetizing groups.

This kind of swirling around, we have obviously a lot of our audience are building communities. So, we try and stay as tuned into what's going on in the industry around groups. But, we've heard some rumours about potentially a learning features coming into groups, and maybe there's some form of monetization on that front.

Mike Stelzner: Well first of all, there is a "Donate" button that you can put into a live video, and I've hypothesised that today it's "Donate," tomorrow it could be "Donate to a cause," but tomorrow it could be like YouTube super chat where you just maybe buy your comment up to the top to have it stick up there. I'm sure these things are coming.

The key thing with Facebook is, I've got to bring the creative community over and then they'll start bringing some of those other monetization models.

On the group side of things, Mark Zuckerberg did say that meaningful groups is going to be a big focus for the next year into 2018. So, we're beginning to see a lot of cool functions rolling out into groups.

As a matter of fact, in the last few days they started rolling out some cool features into groups that I still haven't wrapped my brain around. I do think we're going to eventually see advertising into groups.

Mike Morrison: Yeah.

Mike Stelzner: The real question is going to be whether or not that is going to be a shared revenue model, or whether or not it's just going to be the cost of doing business on Facebook where if you want, is our groups for free? You're going to have to be okay with ads being inside of them, because that's what LinkedIn does right now, right?

They don't share any of their revenue, they advertise right into your group on the side bar on LinkedIn, but they don't share any of that revenue with you.

Mike Morrison: Yeah, and honestly that is perhaps one of the biggest reasons we get when people seek recommendations for where to hold a paired community, or the community to a paid membership or a paid cause. It's one of the biggest reasons we give against Facebook, the fact that they have already been testing ads in groups.

But, if they're perhaps coming at this with a different angle where there's potentially revenue share there, particularly if they give you the ability to exclude competitors, I think that tends to be certainly from our own audience the main thing they're worried about. That they'll have competitors selling their products in their groups.



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Mike Stelzner: I would say that there won't be rev share, because they don't rev share on the page, right?

Mike Morrison: True.

Mike Stelzner: If you think about it, right? You built this audience on your Facebook page, they show other people's ads right up against your page, and you have no control over that. So, I think that Facebook will continue to provide the best features for groups, and the cost of having a group. It is the fact that there's going to be ads in there and you won't be able to do anything about it.

Mike Morrison: Yeah.

Mike Stelzner: That's my personal assessment, because they do not rev share on pages and other things inside of Facebook. With creators it's different because you're creating original content that you could choose to publish anywhere. But, with groups I'm not so sure that that'll happen.

Mike Morrison: Yeah, that sounds a little bit more like Facebook to be honest. So, we mentioned obviously we're talking a lot about Facebook here, I think that's pretty much the biggest game in town still in terms of general social media. Now, with all these developments coming and obviously LinkedIn, we talked about about being [inaudible 00:16:12] video I'm seeing personally a lot more plain text conversations going on over in LinkedIn.

I don't know if that's just within my networks, I'm certainly seeing more just discussions happening over there than I typically see in my newsfeed on Facebook. Obviously YouTube, they're going to be trying to change things up. Should people be looking to get a spread in terms of their presence and activity across all of these channels so that they ...

Mike Stelzner: Yes.

Mike Morrison: Yes.

Mike Stelzner: Yes, do not put all your eggs in one basket. I think it's really important to look at what has historically happened on these social networks, and how people are following the leader.

So right now, Facebook was really the first to come out with an algorithm and then to kind of scale back what you see. But now, every social network has an algorithm, okay? I think that it's really wise, because any one of these social networks could change the rules and everything could ... You could be in a real world of hurt if you don't have a decent audience built on some of these other platforms.

So, my word of advice to anyone who has a monster audience just on one platform and not on another is, you better figure out a way to diversify your audience and grow at least two or three substantial platforms.

In our case, Social Media Examiner has over half a million on Twitter, a half a million on Facebook, and then it goes down quite a bit. We've got about 50,000 on LinkedIn, about 50,000 on Instagram, and maybe about 50,000 on



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Pinterest. Then, maybe about 14,000 on YouTube. I think that what we're trying to do is grow our Instagram account in particular right now, knowing full well that Instagram is owned by Facebook.

But, we're also trying to grow our YouTube account because we want to be able to ... We want to be able to have that as an option to us as well. So, I think diversification is key. I would never give up on your "Platform" that you have the largest audience, but instead I would track and monitor like, "Are you still reaching people? Is it going down?" If it's going down, then it's not worth it to keep growing that audience anymore.

Maybe it's worth it to just let that audience grow on it's own, and just do a little bit to maintain things. Instead, start looking at some of these other platforms. Maybe even consider creating content that's independent of the social networks. This is where podcasts and blogging comes in really really strong Mike, because a blog is pretty independent of the social platforms.

It might be dependent on Google search, but for the most part, if you capture an email and you can email with your audience and get your content communicated via email or RSS, then you should be pretty in an okay position for a while.

Our largest audience is really our email list. We have 650,000 people on our email newsletter list, and we know that if something goes wrong, we can just send an email and say, "Hey, follow us over on this new social network," you know?

Mike Morrison: Wow. Yeah.

Mike Stelzner: But, if you don't an email list, you don't have any way of conveying any of these types of things.

Mike Morrison: Yeah, and I think it was certainly, we see ourselves in people focusing so much more about building Facebook's audience, or Twitter's audience, and not their own mailing list, their own database.

Mike Stelzner: Right.

Mike Morrison: The sacrificing of any level of control over your ability to reach those guys is a little crazy, especially within our own community where that ... On my audience, the business is entirely online. You need to at some point bring that following into your camp and work with them there. Otherwise you're always going to be on the wings of Facebook.

I very early on with Facebook ... I'm sure you remember back when they used to allow you to essentially have like apps on your page, so you could have those little graphical widgets. One of the very first kind of little side ventures I had online was one of those really cheesy kind of apps around which 80's movie icon are you? Then, when you got Mr. T that picture was plastered on your Facebook page for eternity.



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I had a whole bunch of these, and you can monetize them and then, pretty much over night Facebook would just like, "Yeah, we don't want to be Myspace anymore, shut that down."

Mike Stelzner: Yeah exactly.

Mike Morrison: Yeah.

Mike Stelzner: Well, everything's always changing. By the way, another area of exciting features really with the whole messenger and bots ... So, this is an area that I think people ought to be paying attention to. Bots are simply technology that can auto magically respond to people without human intervention.

When those bots work via messaging platforms like Facebook messenger, WhatsApp and others, that's like kind of an exciting feature that a lot of marketers are paying attention to, because it's the closest thing to email. It's almost like sending a text message to someone.

Most people on messenger have their notifications on and they get those messages almost immediately. So, that's another area where you might want to experiment. The good news about Facebook is, when they are trying to grow a platform, they tend to kind of un-restrict it in the beginning. They tend to kind of let the rules kind of go to the side and let it be a little wild west. A lot of people, they just go kind of hog wild with the thing. Then, once things get out of control, they bring the sheriff into town.

Mike Morrison: Yeah. Yeah, with bots in particular. It's an area I try to keep myself away from a little bit, because as a geeky techy guy, that's a big rabbit hole you can potentially fall down. It was [inaudible 00:21:57] who broke me on that, and actually showed me just what you can do through bot. It's incredible.

Right now, we've been experimenting in our membership over the last couple of months of using them for engaging our existing members to keep them in the loop about what's going on. So, we want to play with it on the acquisition and the lead generation side, but we're kind of looking further on that user journey and the response has been incredible.

We're getting people who otherwise would just be kind of slipping away or maybe forgetting to login to our membership and consume our content. Their engagement is just shooting up through the roof because we're able to engage with them through messenger, it's been crazy.

Mike Stelzner: That's very cool.

Mike Morrison: It's very cool. I just want to switch gears a little bit now. Obviously we've talked a bit about creating content, and we've touched on monetization, and I found the survey that you conducted a few months back on Social Media Examiner where you surveyed about four and a half thousand content creators about monetization.

62% of them stated that they weren't satisfied with the revenue they were generating from content. Where do you think people go wrong on that front?



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Mike Stelzner: Well first of all, it is fascinating. Just to give you a little context, we surveyed bloggers, video creators, and podcasters and we just asked them just bazillions of questions. First of all, I don't think that people are ever satisfied with how much money they make.

Mike Morrison: True, true.

Mike Stelzner: But, it's quite interesting because there's so many different ways that people are making money. But, I think the reason why a lot of people aren't satisfied is because if I'm not mistaken, advertising was the number one way that most creators were making money followed by consulting, and then selling their own products.

I think the amount of money that's coming in from advertising has been kind of decreasing. A lot of this has to do with ... a little bit of a technical discussion, but I'll simplify it, but simply said, there is a lot of automation going on bidding on advertising on what's called like "Excess inventory."

As a result, the amount of money that advertisers are willing to pay has continued to drop and drop and drop. What this means for creators is that, they're actually getting paid less to do the same amount of work that they've always done through advertising. A lot of them are not happy with that, they're very disappointed.

As a result, they're seeking alternative ways to make money. This is where membership comes in handy. This is where consulting services, this is where private labelling products, any of those kinds of things are of great interest to lots of creators because they're beginning to realise that the downward trend on the amount they're getting paid for "Advertising" is pretty substantial and they want more.

Mike Morrison: Yeah, and again, I guess this comes down to control. Again, control of the platform, control of the source of the revenue, having your own products versus relying on advertising networks.

Mike Stelzner: Yeah. Exactly. Most people are pretty much just turning on some sort of thing like ... and just letting the money roll in and just assuming that it's always going to be better than it was the prior month, but obviously it's not.

Mike Morrison: Yeah. I still remember the glory days of Google Ad Sense when you could work the system so that you essentially paid less to drive traffic to the ads that Google would then also pay you for clicks on. You had the whole arbitrage thing going on.

I think that was about six months until Google figured out that that wasn't quite working, and a lot of people's whole revenue model and their dreams of kicking back on the beach somewhere sipping cocktails disappeared out of the window when Google changed those rules.

Mike Stelzner: Yep, that's the pipe dream folks.

Mike Morrison: Yes.



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Mike Stelzner: We're allowed to sip drinks on the beach but it's going to be just for a couple of days, because [inaudible 00:26:06].

Mike Morrison: All right, so obviously ... I think one of the best things with what you guys do over there at Social Media Examiner is, not only are you kind of the front line reporting on this stuff, you are a living breathing case study of the very stuff you're talking about. It's kind of like with us, membership about memberships, you've served out your purpose.

So, when we're talking about marketing products and monetizing through content through social, how is your own strategy changed over the past year when it comes to using content marketing, using social media to promote both Social Media Marketing world and Social Media Marketing Society, which is of course your membership site?

Mike Stelzner: Well, it's changed a lot. First of all, we've published a lot less content on our social platforms. We made the decision to not post to any content that is not our own content. So, in the olden days we used to post lots of other's people's content, and we began to see that those articles would do really well and ours would suck.

So we just said, "You know, we're not going to do that anymore, so we're only going to post to our own stuff with the rare exception of breaking news when we're publishing to a news site like Tech Crunch or something." So, that's the first thing.

The second thing is, we decreased our frequency of posting quite substantially to just a couple of posts a day across all the social platforms, where we used to do enormous frequency. We're not publishing less.

We also increased the output of our original content from the show side of things. So, we used to just have one show which was my podcast called "The Social Media Marketing Talk Show," and now we have three weekly shows. We have a live show that we do every week, which we repurpose into a podcast and that's called, "The Social Media Marketing Talk Show." In that show, we talk about literally the breaking news that happened in the seven days, so it's a true news show.

We multipurpose that, so it's a live show on Facebook, Twitter, and Periscope, and CrowdCast, and then we make it into a podcast and we put it on iTunes and Google and Stitcher, so it's all over the place.

Mike Morrison: Yep.

Mike Stelzner: That full distribution model is really something that only happened in the last couple of months.

Our third show, which is brand new as of this recording and it's only about three weeks old is our episodic documentary. So, we got inspired with the Facebook Watch platform looking at this episodic content, which is like an ongoing weekly kind of show where there's a to be continued.



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We decided to do what we call "Short form episodic" content. So, we have a guy in the office here that's filming us constantly, and creating an ongoing show about us and about what we're doing and about our mission and stuff. People love it man, I got to tell you, people love the content, these shows that we product, which are all some sort of video show, right? One is a live video show ... Actually, one is a podcast, one's a live video show, and one's an actual video show.

People go gang busters over this stuff like, if we stopped this, people would freak out. That's what we want, because they share this stuff, they talk about us all the time, they tell us they love what we're doing, and that has been a very powerful marketing vehicle for us Mike, because you know that people buy from those whom they know, they like, and they trust. If they love you, then they're really going to tell everybody else about you.

We don't need them, those people that love us to become customers as long as they let others know about this content we're creating. They'll bring that new audience to us, and a portion of that new audience will become customers. It's kind of a beautiful thing, really.

Mike Morrison: Absolutely. Honestly, I am loving the new show by the way. It was something that I think I'd seen you mention that it was coming or dropped some hints that it was coming, and so when it hits that first episode, it was a curiosity, "Well, let's see what this guy's doing." I was like drawn right in.

It's quite clear from about 10 to 15 seconds in, that you're really going out there in terms of transparency. It's not a fluff piece, it's not necessarily dressing up the next few months towards the launch of the event. This is actually a real documentary.

But, I've got to say you killed me a little bit with the cliff hanger in episode two.

Mike Stelzner: Did you watch episode three yet?

Mike Morrison: I did, I did. I was waiting for the reveal of the biggest thing to hit the industry of all time, and you kept the cards close to the chest in episode three.

Mike Stelzner: If you've ever watched a good TV show, they kind of make you guess a little bit and keep you tuning in.

Mike Morrison: Yeah.

Mike Stelzner: Maybe it'll reveal itself in some future episodes Mike, who knows.

Mike Morrison: Hey, if we get to a point where we're getting call backs to past episodes, that's good. Yeah. Yeah, that's going to be cool.

Mike Stelzner: So yeah, we try ... this is something we started only recently doing is to try to leave ... end on a cliff hanger every episode if we possibly can. We ended episode three with just a quick little, "Here I am with Gary Vaynerchuk," and then boop we ended the episode.



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In episode two we ended with like, "This is perhaps the biggest thing that anybody could ever know," and then boop we ended it. A lot of people were wondering what in the world it is, and we didn't fully reveal what it is, we just revealed some of the reactions of some of the people.

Mike Morrison: Yeah.

Mike Stelzner: Right now, I will tell you in full disclosure that that big idea is still in development, which is part of the reason why we haven't really been able to reveal very much about it. And it may or may not show it's head, we'll see. That's the fun of creating a story, which has multiple storylines going on at once.

It's like, when do you inject certain parts of this? How much do you keep people hanging? Are they willing to stay on to find out what this thing could be? It's just been a blast for me to do it.

Mike Morrison: I was going to say, are you enjoying the process having someone follow around and film you?

Mike Stelzner: I love it man. By the way, let me just say [journey.show](#) will get you over to our YouTube channel. What a great domain huh? [Journey.show](#).

Mike Morrison: Yeah.

Mike Stelzner: The Facebook is where most of the people are watching it, because that's where we have our huge half a million audience. So, we're getting like almost about 17 to 20,000 watches per episode on Facebook, and much smaller on YouTube. But, I love it for so many reasons.

First of all, I've never had so many positive public and private comments from people that are friends, and even people that are like hardcore YouTubers are like, blown away and what we're creating.

I love it, it's time consuming. It's super time consuming. To produce an episode that's five to seven minutes, I'm spending a good six hours a week sitting in the editing room with our guy, and just literally trying to make it tighter and try to cut out stuff, and find the sound bytes. There's hours and hours and hours of footage that we have to go through to kind of bring it all together.

We don't really know what the story is going to be. For example, for this week. It's whatever happens in the office, and sometimes we have to say, "Okay, we have to film a little bit to come back to this thing that we started over here," you know? It's, we're just kind of going and we're shipping it man. So far everybody loves it.

Mike Morrison: It's been great. I loved in the third episode that you included the two or three attempted takes at walking through a door into the landing area with a guy outside the window.

Mike Stelzner: Yeah.



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Mike Morrison: Love it.

Mike Stelzner: We're on the second floor of the building, there was a guy cleaning the windows and it kind of freaked out my camera man.

Mike Morrison: Oh I love that. I think as well, it works like gang busters for I think just raising that interest level in the event, because obviously it's the journey towards next year's social media marketing world. But, I saw you stand there with Gary Vanychuk my first thing was, "Oh, is this Social Media Marketing World related, is this something else?" So, I end the episode with a dramatic music, which you've nailed for the cliff hanger and leave me wondering.

I'm going away thinking, "Huh," and I go and say to Callie, "Have you watched the latest Mike Stelzner's just put out? Gary V at the end of that, that's interesting isn't it?" You're not going to get that from a link to a blog post.

Mike Stelzner: Yeah, and we purposely make it funny and dramatic, and we always make sure there's lots of things that people learn by watching it too. We do film really like all the struggles that we're going through, and how we're trying to solve these struggles. It is really ... I think people find it fascinating, and I don't think anybody's ever seen a short form documentary like this, right?

Normally, a documentary is like a half an hour to an hour long every week kind of thing. This is really just super short, and it was more because it was just all we could do you know what I mean? Then, we began to realise, "Wow, actually people really like the format of it, the fact that it's so short." So, and I've had so many people tell me, "You've inspired me. I'm going to start one of these episodic documentaries now."

Literally, like a half a dozen people have reached out to me saying, "I love it, I'm going to start one of these." These are known entities in our space. So, I'm super excited to just kind of see where this goes.

I think in hindsight, this may be one of the most important marketing things we've ever done in the history of the company by the time it's done, you know?

Mike Morrison: Yeah. It's that evolution of the typical kind of logging that you see, where there's just a road diary to actually just put a little bit of structure and a bit of narrative around it is very interesting to see. Do you think people need to be thinking more in terms of just opening their world up and being transparent with their business on social, or is it something that suits ...

Mike Stelzner: I think in our case, it's not just because I'm being transparent. It's also because I'm actually solving these problems in front of the world, so they can watch how I'm solving these problems. So, I think if I was just complaining about all my problems, but I didn't show how I'm actually trying to solve the problems, I think that's what makes it good.

If you think of any good storyline, you've got a reluctant hero in this case it's me, trying to accomplish an impossible mission. In our case, it's 5,000 people



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by 2018 and then 10,000 by 2019. The inevitable roadblocks and the creative ways that the "Central character" tries to solve them, you know?

That's any good movie. That's Harry Potter, that's Lord of the Rings, you name it. It's Star Wars, it's that theme and it's bringing that in a kind of structured short form way with really good music, and dramatic cuts and pauses together that makes it fascinating. So, I don't think it's just the transparency, I actually think it's the fact that I'm out there with this impossible mission that anybody can relate to, and they're all rooting for me.

I think that's part of what makes them want to keep watching it.

Mike Morrison: Yeah for sure. It's storytelling.

Mike Stelzner: Yeah exactly.

Mike Morrison: Yeah. That's awesome. I'm really looking forward to following it along, and that genuinely that's not blowing smoke up any ... I'm kind of hooked in.

Mike Stelzner: That's why I think I'm really ... In the end let's be honest, this is content marketing, okay? So, the product that we're talking about is our company, it is our product, which is Social Media Marketing World, and as people watch this, the hope is that some of them A. Will want to help us.

We're creating this for our community first and foremost. We're not creating this to necessarily grow a new community. We already have a community. We're doing this to help to get them to actually love us, and want to help us and maybe even turn into a customer.

If we grow a new audience as a result of it, that's is totally a side effect, because this is really meant to help them appreciate all that we're doing so that they actually want to support us. That is marketing at its core.

Mike Morrison: Yeah for sure. All right, I wanted to talk about your own membership again, just changing gears a little bit here, Social Media Marketing Society.

This may just be me, this may be that whole thing of, if you buy a red car all of a sudden you notice everybody on the road has a red car. But, it certainly seemed to me in Social Media Marketing World this year, that there was a little bit more of a focus coming from you guys on your membership in terms of how it was positioned as part of Social Media Examiner's ecosystem.

Mike Stelzner: Yes.

Mike Morrison: Is that fair to say? Where's the thinking ...

Mike Stelzner: Absolutely.

Mike Morrison: Yeah.



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Mike Stelzner: Well, we shut down one of our products, which was our Social Media Marketing ... Our Social Media Success Summit, which we had been doing for eight years. The Social Media Marketing Society was always meant to be the iPhone that killed the iPod in our case.

Mike Morrison: Yeah.

Mike Stelzner: So, we knew that we needed to do a major push at our conference to get people to understand that this membership community is a way that you can take what you're experiencing here at our physical event, and keep it going 12 months out of the year.

So, and you're going to see more of that as the years grow, because it is really our only other major product. We have our conference, and we have our Society. So yeah, it's become a very important part of our future and our presence even, our current situation.

Mike Morrison: Now, that's great. As you say, the fact that you're able to use Social Media Marketing World, which is the big headline event as a jump off into Social Media Marketing Society, is awesome. I think finding those ways of tapping into the things you're doing and the fact that you have access to this unprecedented network of experts who can come in and do a workshop.

You've got attendees who you can arrange, or private meet ups for. When they're already in the society I think that cross pollination is the sort of thing we love to see as big membership geeks.

Mike Stelzner: Exactly. We work really hard to try to create a uniquely special experience for everyone who comes to our conference, but those that belong to the society, we go above and beyond. They get on the aircraft carrier before anybody else does, or we have just all sorts of stuff. They get special pens, and just all sorts of cool things that we try to do that make them want to feel like they're special and a little bit elite if you will, or like a little bit more than what everyone else is.

Everyone else is really well treated, so it's always been a challenge, but that's the feedback to anybody who has a membership side, and also sells other products and/or experiences. If there's a way that you can A. Allow those people that buy into those other experiences to have extra special extras, then that'll help with retention of those members.

Mike Morrison: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. So yeah, I'm excited to see Social Media Marketing Society become an even bigger part of the Social Media Examiner ecosystem, very cool to see.

One last question I had for you, it is kind of going ... I suppose looping back to what we talked about earlier on in terms of how many shows you have going on. Your calls have the main Social Media Examiner Blog, you've got podcasts, video shows, you've got journey.show rolling out now, a lot of work goes into that.

Obviously with an industry like social media, there's something happening almost on a daily basis, it's a fast changing industry and certainly a lot of our



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audience are in similarly paced kind of industries. I'm eternally grateful for the fact that there's not too much develops in the world of membership sites, so I don't have to deal with this, but what tips for anyone in our audience who perhaps has that constant stream of new developments. What tips do you have for keeping on top of it, and creating content around such a fast moving topic?

Mike Stelzner:

Well, I'll tell you how we do what we do. We're not a one man show, so this may not be applicable to you, but you can learn something from this. What we do is we have a private Facebook group where everybody on our team shares any news that they find into that Facebook group.

We have a number of our staff that's just kind of sees stuff and puts it in there. We have certain members of our staff that are actively looking for that stuff. Then, every single Thursday we meet, and we look at all the news that came in in the last seven days, and we put a live show together.

We start the process of putting a live show together, and there's about four of us that meets every Thursday morning. We kind of look at all the news, we decide what is relevant, and what is not relevant for us to cover in that live show.

Now, before we do the live show we add just a simple Saturday blog post wrap up, which somebody else could do, right? Which is just like, "Here's all the news we're curating" if you will "All the news that's happened in our industry."

Now in our case, we do a live show where I'm the host of show and I have co-hosts, and I bring on guests, and we just break it down and we talk about what it means and whether it's worth looking at. That live show is free, that blog post is free, that podcast that's created from that live show is free, it's all called the Social Media Marketing Talk Show.

So, it's really just a huge marketing initiative, because during that show, we will promote whatever product we're selling at the time, which is either our conference or our society.

So back to the core of your question, the key thing is to keep your eyes open for the news. If you're just by yourself, you could use some sort of a news site like Feedly, and you could put all the websites that are in your industry into a Feedly, whatever they call the thing on Feedly. You could just every other day look at the RSS feeds and start capturing the news items that are relevant to you. Then, you could maybe curate a little blog post and put it together for either your membership, organisation, or for your public blog.

Maybe that's the starting point, and then if people start to say, "I love this. I'm not as reliant. I'm going to 20 million other sites," then maybe you could start experimenting with maybe a weekly show where you comment on some of the news. If that begins to work, then you could maybe keep ratcheting it up until you produce a full scale show like we do.



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Mike Morrison: I love that, and of course for people who are paying attention to your process and how you start, you take a live show and that can spin off into a podcast. It's not just [inaudible 00:44:42], it's getting mileage from it as well.

Mike Stelzner: Right.

Mike Morrison: That's great. That's awesome. Thank you so much for coming on the show. I've really really enjoyed our chat. I could quite happily go on for longer to prod you for insights into the upcoming episode of the journey, but I shall let you go. I know you're a very busy guy.

Before we wrap up, can you let our listeners know if they're not already following you where they can connect with you, find out more about Social Media Examiner, and of course Social Media Marketing World?

Mike Stelzner: If you go to socialmediaexaminer.com, or you just Google Social Media Examiner, first of all you can find all three of our shows. We have a little button that says "Shows," and you can find our podcasts, and our live news show, and the journey. So, you can kind of like watch what we're doing and just say, "Hmm, can I do any of this?" Or maybe just watch our live show, because maybe you want to keep up with Social, because it is ever changing.

We have another button that says, "Conference," and you'll also see ads all over our website. You can check out Social Media Marketing World. We have a whole bunch of different ticketing options that are rather pricey, and some that are rather economical. So, kind of study it and see if it makes sense for you to get a virtual ticket, remotely and experience it remotely, or whether it makes sense for you to come to the conference, because like I said, we do have a huge array now of ticketing options.

With that I just want to say, thank you so much Mike for allowing me to come on the show and share a little bit of my story and my journey. It's been an absolute pleasure to talk to you today.

Mike Morrison: Pleasure is all mine. Of course, we will have all those links in the show notes for our listeners as well. Mike, it's been great having you on the show. I can't wait to follow along with the journey, and of course to see you again in San Diego at Social Media Marketing World.

Mike Stelzner: Talk to you soon.

Mike Morrison: Thanks once again to Mike Stelzner for coming on the show. I thoroughly enjoyed our time together and I hope that you've got a lot out of our conversation. If you want to find out more about what's going on from Social Media Examiner, head over to socialmediaexaminer.com. They put out wildly useful blog posts, their podcasts, and their live shows are a must subscribe.

Of course, if you really want to be on the cutting edge of what's going on in the Social Media Marketing industry, Social Media Marketing World is the event to go to. It's taking place in February next year in San Diego, and I'm very honoured to be there taking place as part of a session at Social Media Marketing World too.



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So hopefully, I'll see you some of you guys there as well. While you're at it, be sure to check out [journey.show](#). That's the documentary that Mike was talking about during our conversation.

Now we know, sometimes in these interviews, the interviewer makes a lot of noise about how much they love what the interviewee is doing and all of that sort of stuff. I just want to assure you, that when I was talking about the journey, their whole new video documentary and saying how much I enjoyed it, that was legit. That is genuine. I am really enjoying it, it's a very interesting, very transparent look behind the scenes of something as huge as Social Media Marketing World.

So, it's definitely worth a look at. Head over to [journey.show](#) to check out the first few episodes. That's it for me for this week. Hopefully you've enjoyed today's show. Thanks again to Mike Stelzner for being a part of it, and I'll be back again next week with another instalment of "The Membership Guys'Podcast."



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