
Jaime: Welcome to Eventual Millionaire. I am Jaime Masters and I finally get to have my friend Chandler Bolt on the show. You should check him out at SelfPublishingSchool.com. He's also been on the Inc. 5000 twice in a row. He's been on top California fastest growing companies. Thank you so much for coming on the show today.

Chandler: Jaime, great to be here.

Jaime: So, I've known you for many, or it feels like, many, many years because you came from doing this when you were like 20, 21 and you've grown it to be a ridiculously huge company. So, I cannot wait to dive in. Tell us a little bit about what Self Publishing School does and how fast you've grown it.

Chandler: Yeah. So, Self Publishing School, we're an online education company and we help people write and publish books and use those books to grow their business. So, that's kind of our bread and butter is helping people go from blank page to published author in as little as 90 days and then use the book to drive more leads, more sales, more referrals. And so we've grown, gosh, we've helped a little over 5,000 people publishing books over the last, a little bit over five years and we've been on the Inc. 5000 list the last two years in a row, soon to be three years in a row, as one of the fastest growing private companies in America and then one of the only companies in the publishing industry.

Obviously, declining industry and very fast-growing company in that industry. I'll mention this, Jaime, because it's one of the things I feel like I'm saying to you multiple times. But, I don't know, it's probably been a while. But, I was talking to someone the other day is literally you and James Shramko were like the two first people to ever give me a chance. And, I remember we had met in Colorado and like you were one of the early supporters. So, basically, I owe you in perpetuity forever.

Jaime: Yes.

Chandler: Because, you're one of the first people to say, "Hey, I'm gonna give a chance on this kid that is, you know, doing cool things. I like him. I believe in him. I believe in his product," all that. But, like you and James Shramko literally the first two people to promote Self Publishing School to your audience way back years ago and that's what gave us our start.

Jaime: Yes.

Chandler: So, crazy full circle.

Jaime: And, look what you've done now. No. I mean, I think that's –

Chandler: Yeah.

Jaime: -- the important thing is that I could see your intense drive. Like, you didn't even have any data and it converted like crazy. I mean, your just excitement and your drive over what you really wanted showed like crazy. But, is that enough to take you from where you were then to where ... I mean, you must have grown like crazy. Tell me about some of the pivot points or the pivotal moments in this six-year journey because it's insane to see how much you've grown.

Chandler: Yeah. It's, I mean, it's a really great starting point, but it's definitely not enough, right? And, I think my mentality, and I definitely owe this to my parents is, you know, growing up in very much a blue-collar family, like my parents met at a factory working night shift in the middle of nowhere South Carolina, which is where I'm from. And, so they instilled in my that kind of, hey, you might not be out-of-the-box more skilled than people that you're going up against, but like there's one thing you can control ... Well, there's a couple of things. But, like your attitude and your work ethic.

And so, I just always had this mentality like I will outwork everyone and that's gonna get me in the door and I don't know if that's maybe ... I mean, yes, it's a long-term recipe for success, but you know, certain priorities change and things like that and over the years it's like you can muscle it and you can work hard to get to maybe your next six figures, or maybe even to a million a year. But then, it's really, okay, I can't muscle this. I have to get better at leading people. I have to better at recruiting and hiring. I've got to get better at systems. I've got to get better at like, you know, all the things that it really takes to go from six to seven figures. From seven, I mean, we'll do about \$8 million this year. And, that's just a different, that's a different ballgame.

Jaime: Really, it is.

Chandler: And, you're leading and you're getting work done through others. So, there's a lot of blind spots and a lot of failure and I think ...

Speaking of failure, like that's probably one of the biggest things that's helped us grow so quickly is, you know, we have a core value: Fail fast, fail forward, fail often. So, my goal has always been to fail as fast as possible and I have a whole lot of times. And, doing so it's like, it's quick feedback loop, so we keep learning and growing.

Jaime: So, that's one of the main things that I hear over and over. We call it speed of implementation, right? When you make that feedback loop faster, everything sort of compresses. So, that's why you've become so successful so quickly. And, tell me about the first few years. When you were first getting to the first six figures or the first, you know, \$500,000.00 or so, like you said, it's a different sort of skillset. So, when you were muscling it, how many hours were you working? Like, give me a picture of what you were testing and trying, especially with lower revenues. You can test smaller things at a time, right? Less marketing budget, etc. Tell me a little bit about the beginning stages and that way we'll go farther into deeper waters later.

Chandler: Yeah, absolutely. So, I mean, hours working it's ... And, everyone lies about this. Everyone thinks that, you know, they take the time that they wake up and then the time that they go to bed and just add that up and say, "Oh, I was working the whole time." But, like I log my hours on my computer so that I actually know. So, like I press start when I start working, I press stop when I stop working. So, I think it's more of a true, the effective executive Peter Drucker is like, "Unless you know where you're spending your time, you can't improve where and how you're spending it."

And so, I started tracking and logging time for myself. We do it for all of our employees. And, that helps me figure out how like, oh. There's nothing like seeing like, oh, I spent an hour and 23 minutes on that stupid thing today that I should never be doing and seeing it helps you stop doing it. But, I mean, early on it's probably 60, 70-hour weeks. Pretty traditionally like up at 6:00, work 'til 7:00, nap, I nap every day, that's a non-negotiable. And then, usually like a half day on Saturday in the early days especially at least. Now, it's probably more ... It's 50, 55 hours a week. So, 10, 11-hour days pretty consistently. And, that's kind of the work piece.

As far as what we were testing, I mean, I'm a firm believer, until you have sales, you don't have a business, you have a business idea. And so, we were very clear about early on it was sales and marketing, sales and marketing, sales and marketing. Like, we've

got to generate revenue because revenue will solve problems. It's like the gas in the vehicle that is your economic engine that helps you drive the car of your business. So, you need revenue and so that's what we really focused on in the early days and we were a bit fortunate because we did a virtual summit. Which, actually I think you were on.

Jaime: Yeah.

Chandler: Either the first one or the second one. And so, we doubled our business in one month.

Jaime: Really?

Chandler: For the year. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So, we did hundreds of thousands of dollars in the month of July 2015 and we launched in February 2015. So, we did more money in July of 2015 than we had all year.

Jaime: Wow.

Chandler: And so, that helped us go from zero to \$1.32 million that year. I think it was \$1.3 in sales, \$1.1 in revenue. But, I mean, like that's the tip of the iceberg, the highlight reel, right? Like, no one sees the four businesses before that, the failures, all that. So, I mean, it's like the ... What is it? The bamboo tree or whatever.

Jaime: Mm-hmm.

Chandler: It's like, it's under the soil for nine years and then the last six months it grows 10 feet and so it's like, oh, well, did the bamboo tree grow, you know, 10 feet in the last six months or did it grow over 10 years? So, there's a little bit of that for sure, but that was the piece where, you know, there was a huge injection of capital, we were able to hire our first employee, and then just scrap and boot strap and keep scaling.

Jaime: That was years ago. So, how long ago was that and would you say that that's something that someone could take now as a tactic and try as far as the virtual summits go and ads and stuff? Yeah, go ahead.

Chandler: Oh, 100%. So, that was in 2015 and it's funny because they're coming back now.

Jaime: Right?

Chandler: They're just all challenges. And so, it's the same exact thing that we did years ago, virtual summits, but now people are calling them challenges and they're slightly changing the mechanism, which is super smart. So, they're using the mechanism of a Facebook group to build engagement, to build all that, where I think that's way more engaging. There's way more of a community. It's the ease of watching a video is much higher because you're integrating on a platform that people are already on versus like previously it was all these webpages and we'd send an email and you'd go to the webpage and then you watched the interview and things like that.

So, it's the same exact thing and a lot of people are doing it. We've debated it. It's just, our mutual friend, John Lee Dumas, I love what he says and I've always thought the same exact way. It's like, "I like to zig when other people are zagging." So, like in my opinion way too many people are doing these challenges right now, so like as much as I really want to do it and see the potential, I'm like, I don't want to be another like, I'm also doing this. Like, I want to innovate and do new things. So, like that, it totally can work today and a lot of people are doing it.

Jaime: Yeah. But, that's what I find so interesting is going back then it made perfect sense for you, especially for how new and how cool, you know, head of the curve you were. And so, but things change as we go through. So, we're gonna continue through what that is. So, do you feel like you had that virtual summit and then you went, "Oh, we've made it." Or, were you like, "Oh, crap. How do I handle this and how do I grow it even further based on that, knowing that that worked the first time, but where are we now, right?"

Chandler: Yeah. Yeah. I love that. I've never thought that we made it. We still haven't made it. I think if you start thinking that you've made it, then you're toast and you stop innovating and you stop trying new things and all that stuff. But, I mean, that was definitely ... There's a confidence barrier, right? Where it's, hey, like I'm hiring this person that has a family. And, that feels like a lot of pressure. I think we forget about that. It's like there are tons of people's livelihoods resting on my decisions and my ability to steer this company and that was ... It's, you lose that little bit when your company gets bigger, but with your first hire I think that emotion is really high.

So, it was like we were kind of holding, holding, holding and then we were like, okay, we just did like 300 and something thousand dollars in a month. Like, I'm pretty sure we can hire an employee. Like, we are dying. And so, there was definitely like that, like you have to get over that fear bar to hire the first employee, but then ... And so, then it was like, okay, how can we use revenue to solve problems? And then, I think along the way you start to realize, that was a big realization for me, and I know we already touched on this a little bit, but it's like I can't muscle this anymore.

And, I had to really like ... The one thing that I asked pretty much every day, and I think it's one thing that makes me different and it's like one of those things that you don't know is a skill that then you finally realize it is just waking up every day and saying like, "What's the bottleneck? What's the bottleneck? How can grow faster? What's keeping us from growing faster? So, every day waking up and asking that question and then asking it for myself every year as well of like, hey, what's the bottleneck in me that's keeping like my leadership – Like, for a while it was my leadership and probably still is to be honest.

My ability to grow as a leader is one of the biggest bottlenecks for growing the business, right? But, at one point I identified, and this is probably super relevant to your audience. It's like, if you're in that six figure mark or even close to six figures or honestly it doesn't matter the revenue amount. Most people screw this up. It's like that realization of, I've got to transition from Herculean effort and just, oh, I'm too talented, you can systematize this, like this is just skill. Like, everybody thinks they're different, right? I was no exception and having to transition from that to, okay, I have to learn to love because I did not love systems, process, what we call a playbook.

Learned this concept from our mutual friend Dan Martel. So, just like you have plays for to run a team, football team, basketball team, you have plays to run your business. And so, when we started creating a playbook, when we started creating systems, when we started creating all those things, that was when, oh, man, that was when it felt like, all right, now we've got some velocity and we can bring in people and not have to spend five months training them because nothing's documented or written down.

Jaime: I love that smile. Like, "Ah, I did that before."

Chandler: For sure.

Jaime: I think that's really important, especially in the hustle mentality that we are in where it's like, as long as you can hustle. But, as soon as you start hiring and they're not in the same level of hustle that you are, you're like, "They suck. I'm great. I have to hustle more."

Chandler: Yeah.

Jaime: And, you pull things back instead of actually giving and creating a team and letting them go because you can go so much faster with a huge team behind you.

Chandler: Yes.

Jaime: So, as you started growing, as you started hitting about \$1 million or so, what changed not only on the systems side, but on the sales and marketing side too? Did you have a big – Like, did you grow your marketing team huge first or did you grow internally on the systems side? Tell me a little more about that.

Chandler: Great question. And, I think I want to touch on one thing you just said and the answer to that question is, I think you're totally right. It's like, you hire people, miss-hire, and then pull back. And, a challenging question for people that I really want you guys to consider and think about, and this is a question that hit me very hard is, if you keep hiring people and you're really excited about them, they're really good, and then they perform well for a time and then they stop performing well and then you think, "They suck. They need to improve. I can do it better," all those things. There's one common denominator and it's you.

So, that's what happened to me is, I'm like, "Man, why am I hiring all these amazing people," and I'm so excited and then they do well. And then, at some point they stop doing well and I want to fire them and bring in someone else. And then, I had to realize, Chandler, there's only one common denominator in that whole thing and that's you and your leadership. You suck as a leader. You need to get better as a leader. So, then I had the year of leadership and I was reading a **bajillion** leadership books and like working on that all year.

But, to answer your question specifically to like ... So, ask that question. Like, if you're listening to this right now, it's that Michael Hyatt question, which is, "What about my leadership led

to this result?" And so, anytime you don't like the result you need to ask that question. And, it's a really hard question, but it's a great question. But then, specific to your question about when we hit the million-dollar mark and then changes in the marketing and sales organization. So, early on we were a very marketing driven company. We've always been really, really good at marketing. I really went after that skillset and like learned a lot and I think of all the functions, if you've got like product, marketing, sales, operations, I'd say marketing is probably my strongest skillset.

So, there's a lesson there too of like your strongest skillset often becomes your company's weakness as you grow because you don't hire good people in that because you can cover up for that. So, we definitely went through that. But, we really transitioned. I mean, we had a small lean marketing team and then we transitioned to going more up-market because we realized, hey, we're an online education company. Like, we get better results for our students if we were actually helping them and coaching them. So, we need to invest more in ... We've got a full team of coaches, a team of student success. Like, we really try to go the high touch, not just like online course, login, you're good to go.

But, really like going up-market and saying, hey, how can we ... because we were just seeing night and day difference in results of like the self-serve versus getting help. So, we said, "Hey, we're gonna go up-market." But then, you can't just sell via marketing anymore, right? And, the times have changed where it's like webinar, email marketing, super-high open rates, and you convert two percent of your leads into paying customers at a \$9.97, \$19.97 course price point. Like, we just saw the market shifting and I saw what I thought would be a defensible moat for us, which kind of has turned out to be so. Which is, the ability to build really good fulfillment systems on the back end like a team of coaches, student success, like all of that, but then also a really good sales team.

And so, I think both of those things suck. Most people can't do either one. Some can do one well and almost everyone can't do both well because it's really frickin' hard. And so, we shifted towards that and that's when we started building out a sales team. And so, then it like shifted a little bit to where like, okay, we are scaling in customer-facing roles. So, that's how the business scales, right? We hire more salespeople, SDRs. We hire more coaches, student success. So, in theory as the business scales we should be hiring more people to service customers and help serve customers and then the other stuff is good, but it's in support of

those two functions.

Jaime: I think that's the thing that's really difficult is, especially with the hustle mentality. We've got the marketing mentality where all marketing will solve all problems. When in reality ... Yes, exactly and especially when you –

Chandler: Copywriting is the answer, basically.

Jaime: Exactly.

Chandler: **[Inaudible] [00:17:38]**

Jaime: Yes.

Chandler: Oh, my gosh. And then, it was marketing is the answer. What's the question?

Jaime: Yes.

Chandler: And then, for some people sales is the answer. What's the question? It's like, hey, there's only two things that matter, getting customers and making customers happier. And, you shouldn't be doing anything outside of those two things in your business. That's a Keith Cunningham-ism. I think you maybe know of him in Austin, Texas.

Jaime: Totally.

Chandler: But, I mean, like those are the only two things that matter and I feel like it's the biggest mistake that I made is, I over-focused on the getting new customers part for probably two, three solid years. Because, all the people I'm talking to and listening to are like, "Cool, sales and marketing. That's the only thing that matters." What are you, a sucker? Like, you're focusing on your customers. Like –

Jaime: You've already got them. They're fine, basically.

Chandler: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's like, they're good. They just bought. They're good to go. And so, I think I really have had to and continue to have to shift my mentality and the mentality of the team of like, hey, we've got to get customers results and that's the most important thing.

Jaime: Well, I appreciate the integrity behind that also for any online business in general. But, I also checked out your SEO beforehand and you ranked No. 1 for how to publish a book. So, you have 80,000 keywords that you're ranking for, so there is definitely a marketing component. What are your top like three marketing components and how have you really built those over the years?

Chandler: Gosh, you did your research.

Jaime: Yep.

Chandler: Yeah. So, I mean, we ... If you Google anything about writing or publishing a book you're probably gonna land on one of our sites. So, we've got two properties. We've got Self Publishing School and we've got SelfPublishing.com. And so, I bought that site a year ago and it's growing really, really fast. And so, those are two high-quality things. I mean, obviously, paid, so Facebook ads and YouTube ads and then we're experimenting with some other things. Affiliates are still a – That was like a huge portion of our revenue early on and now it's definitely a significantly smaller portion. It's harder to scale and also, again, Herculean effort. Like, I was the person driving that and it's really hard to scale.

Jaime: Yeah. Kissing babies, shaking hands, doing all the things you're supposed to do.

Chandler: Oh, yeah.

Jaime: Yep.

Chandler: And, keeping it in integrity and then also like if you're someone who values integrity and values relationships it's like it can be tough. Not impossible for sure, but it's just tough. And then, speaking. So, I've learned a bunch of stuff from Pete Vargas and then we've even experimented a bunch on our own and tested a bunch of stuff. And so, speaking went from nothing, it wasn't really something I did, to 2018 it was about \$1 million custom acquisition channel for us. Dropped a little bit in 2019 because we got way more picky about the stages and opportunities I was doing and it's kind of been a mixed bag in 2020.

We had **[audio cuts out] [00:20:34]** and obviously COVID-19 hit and so that's, you know, hurt some of that. But, we've just transitioned to like doing a bunch of online webinars and shifting some of those business developments, speaking opportunities into

online stages or virtual stages. And so, I think that about covers – I mean, that’s the main thing. We’ve grown, like we’ve got the Self Publishing School Podcast, our Self Publishing School YouTube channel. I’ve got my Seven Figure Principles Podcast and my Seven Figure Principles YouTube channel. Which, that’s more of just a fun side project, like teaching all the nerdy operations business stuff that my visionary entrepreneur friends always ask me about. It’s like, that and developing my team.

So, that doesn’t drive a ton of business, but YouTube channel is definitely growing and so now it’s getting to where you start searching anything about how to write a book on YouTube and you’ll find us or we’ll rank on Page 1 for the video excerpt. And so, there’s some good synergy there between the written content and the video content and the next stop is world domination from a podcast perspective. So, it’s vertical SEO, right? Like, we want anywhere that you could be searching, anything about writing and publishing books and using those books to grow your business, like we want to be there.

And, our standard is, if we’re gonna write about it it needs to be the best or if we’re gonna create content on it, like step No. 1 is, it needs to be the best content on the internet for that topic. Step No. 2, promote, get backlinks, all the other stuff that people talk about. But, if the content’s not good then you’re just pouring water in a leaky bucket, you know, and it might temporarily rank or you might gain the algorithm or you might whatever, but it’s not going to be a long-term thing that’s gonna actually be sustainable.

Jaime: I feel like people don’t talk about – Like, SEO is unsexy. It takes a lot of consistency. It takes a lot of ... you know. And, we’re like, “Oh, Facebook ads are super sexy,” or whatever it is. Like, scaling, blah, blah, blah. But, it sounds like you’ve been really putting a lot of effort into SEO for years and years and years. That’s the only reason why you have it. Do you do it internally? Do you outsource that? Have you before?

Chandler: Yeah. We do internally. We outsourced a little bit in the beginning and that was super helpful to get started. I just hate outsourcing. Like, I don’t hate outsourcing, I hate working with like agencies. It’s one of my least favorite things. And so, like I’ll use it to prove concept, but then if it’s a repeatable thing, it’s almost always more profitable. It’s harder for sure, but it’s more profitable. And just, yeah, faster to scale everything to bring it in-house. So, we definitely went through the phase. If you want to talk about like, or

this is circling back to the question you asked earlier, like how did the marketing team change? In the beginning it was all agencies.

And, it was death by 1,000 agencies. It's like we got this agency to run this. This agency to do that. This agency ... And then, you're all weekly calls. I mean, agencies are cool and they serve their purpose and there's definitely some benefits and some cases we're just like, okay, awesome. This is what we need. But, it's usually temporary. If you know how to hire, if you know how to develop people, if you know how to train and all those things. So, we try to pull in-house whenever possible.

Jaime: Which makes logical sense. I mean, the agencies are making profit off you. That's why they work.

Chandler: Yeah, that's true. That's true, yeah.

Jaime: So, that's that only ... right?

Chandler: Yeah.

Jaime: So, my question is, especially when it comes to failing fast, especially hiring agencies, it can be very hit or miss. So, like what percentage were you like, our agencies were amazing and awesome, versus like, eh, I spent so much money and it all went out the drain.

Chandler: Yeah. Yeah. I'd say probably like 60 to 80% success rate on agencies.

Jaime: Great.

Chandler: Which, is probably higher than most. I mean, I think it's one of the fundamental things of hiring. It's like, you've got to understand what's being done to be able to hire well and people, like everyone tries to, or not everyone. A lot of people try to outsource their marketing, right? And, that have no clue what good marketing looks like. So, if you have no clue what good marketing looks like, you're not gonna be able to interview agencies. And so, I look at working with agencies just like I look like hiring an employee.

It's like, I'm not gonna pick the first person I talk to. I'm gonna interview multiple people. If I don't know the right questions to ask, I'm gonna ask someone who does that I know to give me the questions that I should be asking and then ask. And then, price

shop. You know, just like the full scope. But, we were very fortunate, I mean, getting good referrals and all that early on was super helpful for getting good agencies. That and knowing what you're looking for, asking good questions, interviewing multiple, like all that stuff.

Jaime: Thank you for saying that though. Like, there's so many clients where I'm like, "Let me talk – Can I talk to your agency?" And then I get off, "Fire them right now."

Chandler: Yeah. Yes.

Jaime: Because you're just pouring money in a leaky bucket. Right?

Chandler: Yeah.

Jaime: And, unfortunately we don't know what we don't know. But, like you said, having friends to give you the questions to ask them.

Chandler: Yeah.

Jaime: And, like you don't even have to know what the answer is as long as you can bring it back to your friend and be like, "Does this make sense?"

Chandler: Right.

Jaime: Yeah.

Chandler: And, everyone looks good if you don't have a point of comparison.

Jaime: Yes.

Chandler: Right? I've wanted to hire employees just like I've wanted to hire agencies where I didn't have a point of comparison, so I need at least three to five data points –

Jaime: Yes.

Chandler: -- to understand what's good and what's not. And, it doesn't even matter how good you think your agency is. If you haven't talked to four or five others, they're probably not the best or as good as they could be. And so, I think that's super important. And then, I love to have people compete. And, sometimes it's like, I'd rather spit out \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00 a month of my marketing budget and hire

two agencies and say the best one's gonna win in 90 days. And, I'll get more bang for my buck than going all-in on one. And so, I'll do that or sometimes I'll have an external agency compete with an internal employee.

And, I mean, you gotta be careful because it's not like us versus them like whatever, but it's really like, "Hey, best case scenario, I work with you both for a long period of time. Worse case scenario, one person does significantly better. We'll give it 90 days and see what happens."

Jaime: Put them in a pit together. This is great. One's coming out alive. Let's see.

Chandler: Yeah.

Jaime: That's hilarious.

Chandler: It's a meritocracy, though, always. And, I think that's something that's super important and everything, from a business perspective, it's like everything is a meritocracy. So, this is, I give opportunities based on merit. I give promotions based on merit. It's not fair. It's what's merit based. And, the same goes for me. Like, as the owner of the business, which I think a lot of entrepreneurs mix this up, is like, I am an employee of my business and I'm also an owner of the business. Those are two separate roles and you need to have KPIs for each one.

Because, as the owner of the business my responsibility, if I'm performing poorly as the CEO is to fire me as the CEO and hire a better CEO for similar market-based wage that can deliver better performance. All right? And so, that looks like I can look everyone in the eyes on my company and say like, "Hey, look, I am ... Like, I'm just like you guys. Like, I'm an employee. I also happen to be the 100% owner of this business, but like I've got to earn my job every day and I've got to make sure that I'm delivering value to the shareholders. It just so happens that that's also me, right?"

So, it's just merit-based like through and through and I think that's super important whether you're looking at agencies, whether you're building a team or things like that because the right people respond to that because they love it. It's like, "Oh, wow. You mean if I do a better job I'll make more money or I'll get promoted or I'll, you know, have more opportunity, like sign me up."

Jaime: Yeah. Especially for the world that we live in. Yes, unfortunately. I'm like, to my children, "Life is not fair, just so we're clear. Everybody needs to be clear. It's not."

Chandler: Right. Yeah. Not everyone gets a trophy.

Jaime: But, being that honest – Right? Trophies for everyone. All right. So, we need to be – That's radical honesty, though, about your work as an employee because the other thing is, especially when you're a smaller company and you're not just the CEO and you're wearing a couple of different hats, you might suck at some of them. And, a lot of those ones, especially working with clients is it's like, stop pretending that you're kind of good at something and keep doing it. Be a little bit sort of, back away from the situation and see it. How do you do that so well? Especially when you were holding all the hats and maybe you sucked at some of them. Maybe you didn't have enough revenue to fire yourself, right? What do you do in that situation?

Chandler: Yeah. This is such a great question. I mean, I'm a big fan of job scorecards and I've got, it's a video on my Seven Figure Principles YouTube channel about how to create job scorecards for every role. And so, I think whenever you have multiple roles – And so, we have still to this day, I mean, we've got 30 or so full-time employees, a handful of contractors, and there are multiple people that are wearing multiple hats in multiple roles. But, it's super important, I think you always need to have separate job scorecards for each hat that they have.

Jaime: Mm-hmm.

Chandler: So, like for example, you know, a year or so ago I was running the sales team and I was also the CEO. So, I had a CEO job scorecard and then I had a sales manager job scorecard. And, another example I have, someone on my team who is in an ops manager role and also a financial controller. So, he has KPIs on the job scorecard as ops manager, KPIs on the job scorecard as financial controller. So, we're able to switch back and forth and it's very clear. So, you see the two hats and you know when you're wearing one or the other and you also know what measure of success is, so you know one to three KPI is key performance indicators for each role.

And so, that's super important so that kind of you know like, "Oh, I'm performing well." And then I also, like for me or even my

employees, I like to have like, “Okay, cool. Like, in this case your financial controller role is about 60% of your role and your ops manager role is 40%. And, when in doubt, like financial controller takes precedent.” So, you’re like giving them a super clear of like, “Here’s like ballpark pie chart of your time. Here’s the purpose of the role, the mission of the role, the top three KPIs that you’re gonna be measured on. And, here’s which one takes priority.”

So, it’s still hard. Like, anytime you have multiple roles it’s very hard to switch between. But, if you at least know it and then have indicators of performance, then it kind of helps it be a little less muddy.

Jaime: Oh, yeah. Data definitely rules over everything. But, of course at the beginning, and as you know, setting expectations is a very important thing that goes from vague at the beginning when you first have your first employee.

Chandler: Right.

Jaime: Like, “Yeah!” And then, you start getting better and better and better because of that, right? So, when we’re looking at expectations and you as a leader in general, how has getting better at expectations on both sides of the coin helped your company?

Chandler: Oh, my gosh. Expectations are everything. It’s, in the sales process and the onboarding process for clients and for employees. So, I mean, my dad always told me under promise, over deliver. And so, I’m a big fan of that through the expectation-setting process. But, I think it starts with specific to employees is the job scorecard. So, we don’t hire if there’s no job scorecard and everyone knows that. It’s like, that’s the first step. It’s a book called *Who?* by Jeff Smart.

Jaime: Yes.

Chandler: It’s the ... Jeff or Brad Smart. It’s a dad and son. One of them wrote *Top Grading*. One of them wrote *Who?* *Top Grading* is like 350 page hiring bible. Most people don’t have the patience to read that whole thing, so I just recommend reading *Who?* But, it’s the four S’s of hiring. Create a great job scorecard. Source the best candidates. Select the best one. And then, sell them on working for you. Right? But, most people screw up point No. 1., which is the job scorecard. And, I mean, you’re looking for your clone.

It’s like, when people hire an assistant, which is a lot of people’s

first employee, it's like, "You need to be great at sales. You need to be super organized. You need to love spreadsheets. You need to," it's like, that person doesn't exist or if they do, they're not gonna go for \$30,000.00 a year or whatever you're paying your assistant, right?

Jaime: True.

Chandler: It's just not – It's not a smart move. And so, you need to have a really good job scorecard and then in there is expectation setting, but then also the expectation setting with KPIs. And then, you have cadences. So, like we have just drop the mic like hiring pages and I'm very clear. It's like, "This is for you if this, this, this, and this. This is not for you if you want to like, working remote means you want an internet laptop lifestyle. You want to chill on the beach. You don't work hard. You're not disciplined. You're not coachable." Like, I'm very clear of like do not apply, do not come work here.

I'm there, but also, I'm very candid and clear in the interview process, the hiring process when we make an offer. And then, the one-on-ones are a really great way, weekly one-on-ones, are a really great way to reinforce that and say, "Hey, how are you doing," and just be super clear. It's one of our core values. Honesty, integrity always win and I'd rather have a ... You learn this the hard way, right?

But, like I'd rather have an honest and difficult conversation now than six months of picking up the pieces of like trying to tip-toe around someone's feelings. Which, and they appreciate it way more if you do that. But, it's one of those things you hear it and you're like, "Well, yeah, of course," but then you don't do it for the first year or two years.

Jaime: **[Inaudible] [00:34:18]**

Chandler: Yeah. It's because pain today, it's easier to avoid pain today than it is to avoid pain tomorrow, but it will be painful today. And so, I don't know. It's just weird feedback loops and like things that you learn along the way.

Jaime: A million times, yes. So, emotional intelligence then too because it seems like, especially working with employees, you were a marketer. You were a hardcore marketer. Dealing with people, totally different than the hardcore marketing –

Chandler: Yeah.

Jaime: -- data and understanding that feedback loop. Totally different skillset. So, how did you start learning more about emotional intelligence and working with employees?

Chandler: Whoop! That is hard. I don't know. Having a high EQ. But, the same thing, I feel like I really suck at empathy, so it's very hard for me. And so, I think knowing your weaknesses and building a team around that, like I feel like I've always had one person, whether it's my assistant or like key person on the team or whatever that's the person that can kinda come behind me and help clean up. And, like if I'm just a total jerk, they can be like, "Hey, you know, Chandler loves you and he's like, you know, he wants the best for you. Like, we all love you. It's okay. We're here to support you." Like, that person who's gonna like listen longer, be more empathetic, send flowers, you know, things like that.

So, I feel like I've always kind of staffed, I've like worked on the weakness while also staffing for it to help with that. And then, I think I'm an S on the Myers-Briggs, which is, you know, sensing or observing.

Jaime: That's weird. Yeah.

Chandler: It is weird. So, not many people, not many entrepreneurs are S's. And so, I think that's kind of been my super power is like ... The clearest way I can explain it is like, so an S versus N for people who aren't familiar, sensing versus intuitive. Most people, entrepreneurs, I meet are N, intuitive. The clearest way I have to describe it is like, imagine you have a ladder and the more of an S you are, the lower you're down on the ladder. Like, I need two feet on the ground, two hands on the ladder. Like, what's the here and now? What's the action plan? What's -- All that stuff?

And, the more of an N you are, the higher up you are on the ladder and the very top is like up in the clouds like, "Guys, there's so much possibilities. There's big ideas. This is huge up here." And, all that stuff. But, there's also sensing, right? There's sensory to that. And so, I think I've always just like picked up on body language. There's a big reason why webinars were really hard for me early on, but then when I started going out and speaking, they got better because I could see the audience nod at something and I was like, "Oh, they really like that. Oh, that totally bombed. That

was funny. That wasn't. They're taking notes right there. They're not here."

And so, like within just – I did webinars for years, but then when I started actually, you know, not staring at my computer in the chat and actually going out and seeing people, my presentations just got so much better and so much faster. And so, the sensing thing, like one time I was at a ... We were at an offsite and at a dinner table and I was trying to explain it, what an S means and like no one could get it. And, I was like, "All right. I can tell you right now. Like, that person's still hungry, wished there was more food. That person wants to go home 30 minutes ago. That person is like really wishing," blah, blah, blah. And, I just like went around the whole table. And, it wasn't planned or anything.

And, everyone was like, "Whoa. Yeah, you're totally right." So, I think like ... I don't know. There's a mix that's probably like **unreplicable** super power or just like who I am. But then, there's also like genuinely care about people and care about their well-being and ... yeah, I mean, treat them how you want to be treated, go out of your way to make them know that you appreciate them and all that. And so, I think earlier on I was just a bulldozer of ambition and I've had to temper that and add more of the people element as we went.

Jaime: The drive at the beginning where I was like, "Wow, he's a go-getter." And then, you're like, "Whoa, he's a bulldozer." Right?

Chandler: Yeah. Yeah.

Jaime: And, but knowing that line of learning leadership is really important too, so that way you understand like this is an ebb and flow of what it is, not just a hard and fast –

Chandler: For sure.

Jaime: -- "I get to be a hustler or bulldozer this entire growth period."

Chandler: Yeah.

Jaime: Because, it's personal development –

Chandler: Yeah.

Jaime: -- as you're going through it.

Chandler: Yeah. Yeah.

Jaime: Yeah. So, when you're going through and trying to figure out where your weaknesses are, though, do you like have a – You sound like you're the type of person with like a chart of like your weaknesses. I feel like you know them.

Chandler: Yeah.

Jaime: And so, how do you know –

Chandler: Uh, --ish. Yeah. That's a great question. Man, I'm gonna really have to think about this. I think I am hypercritical. I am my own biggest critic. And, I really think about things. Like, if I get feedback like ... And, that's something actually, yeah. My friends, employees, and my girlfriend would say, like, I am like addicted to feedback.

Jaime: That's awesome.

Chandler: Like, it's one of my favorite things. I'm like, "Hey, you got any feedback? Like, how can I get better?" And so, I think just like always wanting to get better and being hypercritical and then ... But then, how do you sift through that, right? And then, how do you understand, okay, this is truly like one of the biggest bottlenecks in me as a person and my leadership. And so, I think taking the time to reflect. There's probably some different practices like meditation. I also do a thing yearly where it's like a yearly reflection and I'll do ... I mean, I've got like my three goals for the year, my intention, and then I'll do a stop-doing list. So, what are the things I want to stop doing?

I do what are strengths to foster? I do what are wins or milestones from the past year? Like, if I'm reflecting back. And then, I think like things to work on or like stuff like that. And then, I do a top 10, top 25 people in my life and 10, 25 people in my city that I live in and that really helps me filter because going back to the wine spots, right? Like, I have traditionally been very poor at communication outside of work-related things. And so, it's like people will just joke, it's like, "Oh, cool. Text Chandler. You'll get a text back in like three weeks."

And so, then I had to realize like your velocity of communication increases and like all the stuff starts happening when you get

bigger team, bigger influence, bigger business, whatever. And so, then I had to realize like, okay, these are the top 25 people in my life in order and if I get a text from them, like I need to prioritize that. So, help me feel – Because, you start to feel – Or, text, call, email, whatever and I give that to my assistant too where it's like, "Hey, we prioritize these people," because it's crazy like it's in *The ONE Thing*, one of my favorite books of all time. But, it's like fear of chaos is one of the four pillars – Like, not pillars. Barriers. I forget what they call it in the book.

And, I realize I read that and I'm like, "Oh, that's totally me." Because, things like, you know, I've got like 600 unread text messages on my phone right now and emails and like all this stuff. And then, you get that and then you just, as a defense mechanism, you just like either pull back or you stop answering anyone. And so, I realized that's what I was doing. And so, then it's like, "Okay, now I've got to build in something to address that weakness," right? So, it's like kind of a round about answer to your question, but just being super reflective, loving feedback, hypercritical of myself. Healthy/unhealthy characteristics depending on how you look at it.

Jaime: It is really ... You're like a dog with a bone when it comes to self-improvement and feedback, and that is such a gift, I'm sure. Like we were talking about before the call, you want it all done yesterday, though, so, right?

Chandler: Yeah, for sure.

Jaime: Like, but as you move forward and as long as you're really good at prioritizing as you're going, at least it sounds like it, to be able to have that and to look back and go, "Oh, that. Yes, I've come so far from where I have."

Chandler: Mm-hmm.

Jaime: And, predicting forward we don't really know because there's so much other feedback that you're gonna be getting. You can't predict, you know, the differences that are going to be in 10 years.

Chandler: For sure.

Jaime: Which, is awesome. But, you were known in my household, just so you know. Because you used to send gifts all the time and my kids knew you.

Chandler: Yeah.

Jaime: They were like, “He’s the guy who sends random things in the mail.” My kid was like ... you know. So, like your level of reach was really, really big so of course it made sense that you had to sort of pull back because you went, I mean, I think you went crazy, didn’t you? I mean, you went really wide for a really long time. You seemed to know so many people because you were really building that skillset, right?

Chandler: Yeah. Yeah. And, I think I did. But, now it’s like, okay, how can we scale that?

Jaime: Yeah.

Chandler: And so, I think there’s two things that I’m really thinking about. It’s like, how do I empower to have that level of care and intentionality because I don’t want to lose that. We are sending gifts. We are, you know, we are doing the extra little things. Which, like that actually makes me curious right now because I feel like I/we were supposed to send you something before this interview and I don’t even know if we did that. But, like there’s like little things like that that I want to make sure that we’re doing and I am empowering my team to be able to do. But then, the other piece is just what we were just kinda talking about is like how do we take that level of self-awareness for like, hey, how can I improve?

And, like that’s what I’m working on this month is, how do we create like a talent development machine? And, one of the biggest things is, I’m like trying to distill this. It’s like, okay, what is this thing that I do? It’s like, kinda the questions that you’re asking is, how do we empower people to understand where their knowledge gaps or bottlenecks are and then pair that up with the training necessary to fix it.

Jaime: Yeah.

Chandler: And so, it’s like, how do you teach that as a skillset and then empower the individual and hold accountable the manager to those people developing so that we’re doing – Because, I realize that like, I am developing and the people who report to me usually are developing and I’m like, I’m a very hard person to work for in that sense of like, I’m gonna challenge the crap out of people. And, the

right people love it.

Jaime: Yeah.

Chandler: Other people don't. But, so like how do we systematize that and scale that and then also scale the intentionality, whether it's customer success, like, you know, someone has a family member pass away and we send flowers and a card and whatever, or something like, hey, how do we make sure like if I'm coming on a podcast interview, like we send them a gift before to like really stand out and show like, "Hey, this is our level of care and intentionality we try to operate"? But, I love that you mention that because that's an example of Herculean effort to now how do we do this in a scalable, meaningful way and not lose our true identity?

Jaime: Oh, I love that. And, that core value still rests in you, it's just trying to get it to through osmosis go through the entire culture, and that's what you've been working on so long.

Chandler: Yeah. For sure.

Jaime: So, in regards to that, though, especially with the failing forward and failing fast, you've probably failed a lot. I would love to know like one or two like epic failures because we all care about the failure side, but also how you recoup from those because the fact that your drive is so hardcore, does it really affect you? Do you, you know, shove it off? Do you don't work for a week? Like, how do you really recoup from that, especially if you're failing so much? I'm good with these. That's why I do what I do, Chandler. You're like, "Oh, another one."

Chandler: I know. **[Inaudible]** **[00:46:04]**. You're so frickin' talented. Biggest failures, one of the biggest ones was, showed up to a company offsite, found out from one of my employees my business partner was trying to kick me out of the business. We went through mediation and negotiated a multiple six-figure buyout. Borrowed money from my parents' retirement, my brother, and Hal Elrod, actually, third person there. And so, another person that I owe in perpetuity. He's been one of our biggest supporters at SPS and just amazing person.

And so, that was a big failure in the sense that like, it was the best thing that happened to me looking back, but at the time it's like, I feel like I'm finally about to make some actual money, like just

scrimping by for years, and then right before that it's like, "Uh, nope. Just kidding. Multiple six-figures in debt. You've got to fire half the company." All that. And then, I think the other one is kind of what we eluded to earlier, or what I eluded to earlier, which is, having one of my top performers quit and saying, "Hey, I just don't resonate with your leadership style."

Jaime: Wow.

Chandler: And, that was the first time I had someone I didn't want to quit, quit or leave the company. And so, that was when I had to face, look in the mirror, and I also just read *Extreme Ownership* and it's like, "There's no such thing as bad teams, only bad leaders."

Jaime: Ugh.

Chandler: And, there was a few quotes on principles in there that I just had to look at myself in the mirror and say like, "I am a really horrible leader and I've got to fix this." And so, that was the year of leadership was I think 2017. It's like that was my theme for the year. I read every book that I could get my hands on. Like, that was my focus for the whole year because that was the bottleneck and that was the thing I need to get better at. So, those were a couple of the failures. And then, as far as how I respond to them, I mean, I think it really helps to have a good support system.

Yeah. Like, I had people who, during those tough times applied mediation and stuff like that. They were reaching out daily with like encouragement and like things like that. So, like that really helped me. My mom and a couple of other people just always encouraging me. And, I'm trying to think how else. I mean, I usually try to face it and it can be demoralizing for a bit for sure, whether it's like that kind of, you get paralyzed by it, but then it's like, okay, how can I attack this and how can I learn from this?

And, it's kind of like, you know, the COVID-19 stuff is like one of the first things I said to my team is, I posed the question, or that challenge really, which was like, "Hey, I really believe that we're gonna get better because this happened, not in spite of this happening. So, that's the question I want all you guys to be asking yourself is, how do we use this to get better and because it happened, not in spite of it happening. So, I feel like that kind of, that differentiation in question, it's like, if anything challenging happens it's like, okay, I almost always know that the biggest wins are right beyond that.

And so, I think I kind of get pumped up thinking about like, oh, cool. This is where most people quit. So, if I can just keep going, like that's where I'm gonna separate. Because, you separate in the hard times, you don't separate in the easy times. It's like I talked about with my leadership team a few weeks back. It's like, "Hey, guys, this is where we earn our paychecks." Anybody can lead when things are going well, when it's up and to the right, when the economy's great. But, that's not when you earn your paycheck and that's not when you separate.

And so, I think learning that way back ... I used to run a – One of my first businesses was an exterior house painting company and I had like half my team quit in the middle of the summer and I like hit rock bottom. But, then I pulled out and I realized that like the whole year my goal was to be No. 1 in the company, No. 1 in the country, for like the whole company. And, I realized that I was behind all year and in the last two months of the summer, because we would paint in the summer, was where I went ahead. I think I did \$102,000.00 that summer. The next closest person did like \$86,000.00 and it was all at the end.

And, so I had all the [audio cuts out] [00:50:13] if you win manager of the year, you just have all the new people for the next five years calling you asking you how you did it. And, that was my advice for them. It was like, "Hey, anybody can do well coming out of training in the first couple of months, but where the winners are separated is when it gets really, really hard. And, in that home stretch, dog days of the summer, your shoes are melting on roofs." Like, that kinda whole thing. But, that's where you win.

Jaime: Such appropriate advice, especially for right now. And, especially when you self-identified as hypercritical and how you sort of transmute it into action or at least knowing that you can come out on top for that last stretch. That last stretch I feel like, I was joking with one of my clients the other day. It's like, everybody can do 90, 95%, but it's that extra. It's the extra little bit that really makes all the difference in the long run. So, it's really cool to hear you say that same thing. So, I know we have to stop wrapping up because I apparently could talk to you forever. I was like, "Wow, what time is it?" So, what is one action listeners can take this week to help move them forward towards their goal of \$1 million?

Chandler: Yeah. Well, I mean, I think the early piece is the sales and marketing stuff that we talked about. But, I'd love for people to ask

that question of, “What about my leadership has led to this result?” And, if you don’t like something in your business right now, if you don’t like the people in your business right now, there’s one common denominator. It’s you. And, I think you can, as **Tim Collins** would say, confront the brutal facts, right? And so, asking that question, what about my leadership led to this result? And, I think this was the big thing for me is like, when I didn’t have a business partner anymore there was no one else to blame.

And so, it was actually really freeing because it was like, oh, if this fails or succeeds, it’s on me. And so, just that, taking the extreme ownership mentality and asking, what about my leadership has led to this result or what about my leadership needs to change for us to get to seven figures or whatever that next goal is.

Jaime: And, being okay with being uncomfortable with the answer to that question because it will be, just so we’re all clear.

Chandler: Yes. Yes.

Jaime: That’s awesome, Chandler.

Chandler: You make me very uncomfortable.

Jaime: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for coming on the show. It’s a delight. Where can we find more about where you are online because I know you have some cool stuff, but also Self Publishing School and all the stuff that you’ve got.

Chandler: Yes. I’m pretty old school. From the social media perspective, the only thing I’m on is Facebook. But, outside of that, so Self Publishing School. We’ve got the Self Publishing School podcast. If you’re thinking about writing a book, we’ve got the book outline template generator. This is like really cool. Like, press a couple of buttons, it’ll spit out a 25-page Google Doc that you can just type into. That and My Book Published are probably like the two most legit free things that we have on our website.

And then, I’ve got the Seven Figure Principles podcast and YouTube channel, which there’s nothing to sell there. That’s mostly something I use to develop my team and help other entrepreneurs. So, if you want to check that out, that’s cool too.

Jaime: Yeah. Everyone should check that out because I watched some of your videos on Facebook for that and I was like, I love hearing

your stories, especially when you're like, "Okay, I sucked at this. I learned this just so ..." It was really good.

Chandler: Cool.

Jaime: It was really, really good.

Chandler: Cool.

Jaime: So, everyone should check that out. Thank you so much for coming on the show today, Chandler. I appreciate it.

Chandler: Jaime, thank you so much for having me. Amazing questions. I know I've already said this, but you are very, very, very good at what you do. I know that you know that and you don't need me to tell you that.

Jaime: I love it. I love it.

Chandler: But, you are very frickin' talented. Thank you for having me.

Jaime: Thank you, sir. Thank you. Thank you. Have an amazing day.

[End of Audio]

Duration: 54 minutes