



# Membership Site Case Study After 4 Years

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Visionary James Eager has taken his bass guitar membership from proof of concept to a leveraged business model that he enjoys. Hear his story here.



**James Eager**

**James S:** James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness. This is episode 906. And today, we're continuing on in a case study that I've been actually tracking for four years now. So I want to welcome back my special guest, James Eager, great to have you back.

**James E:** Oh, it's great to be back mate, I think this is the third in our series of podcasts.

**James S:** It is. Just for reference, your first appearance was in the beginning of 2018, on Episode 570, and then we had you back in Episode 615. So in 570, we're talking about [setting up a membership business](#). And in 615, you'd actually [doubled your business](#) by that stage. And here we are on episode 906, and this really is a profound example of playing the long game. And that's why I like to check in with people how they're going down the track.

You're a member of SuperFastBusiness community, of course, I love to showcase members and what they're doing. And something that is particularly good about what you're doing is you're in a non-businessy market, you're in the bass guitar learning space. So it gives hope to people who have a passion or interest or expertise that isn't just driving Facebook ads or doing something technical.

But there have been a few learnings along the way. And that's really what I want to hope, I hope we get to cover is, what's changed for you since the last time we caught up? And of course, what lessons are there for you along the way that might be also useful for other people who are perhaps a little bit earlier on in that stage of having a membership business? And, you know, what does the future potentially look like for them if they can glean something from this episode?

So that's what I'd like to cover. I know that we get to interact on a fairly regular basis, because you're in that community there. So I guess, why don't we kick off with me saying thank you? Thank you for being a long-term subscriber to SuperFastBusiness. And thank you for continuing to grow your business and to share with us what that journey looks like.

So how have things been for you in the last couple of years? And what have you been up to with your membership?

## **A community of good people**

**James E:** Well, I think this is probably the moment you've just thanked me, but I should thank you. Because one of the profound things that I realized that I'd been growing this business, and I'm sure we're going to talk about the genesis of the team that I've got behind me, but there have been lots of wonderful kind of contractors and friends and experiences, like the Maldives, Maldives, whatever it's called, that I've had, which of all, can all be traced back to you and the community that you've built with SuperFastBusiness.

For me, SuperFastBusiness has just been this wonderful constant that's ticked along in the background behind everything I do. And there'll be points where I go, I've got a question. This is one for Schramko. He'll know the answer to this one. And I've always got that space to ask it. But also, if I need someone to help me with ads, for instance, like our ads guy, Jeremy, came from SuperFastBusiness.

We were fortunate enough to do some consulting with the wonderful [Will Wang](#) as well. So he's been super, super helpful. All these people that we can trace down, and we're just about to do a project with copywriter Pete Fadeyev, which I know you know, from your car dealership.

**James S:** From Mercedes-Benz, yeah, like I've known Pete since 1997 or so. So it's a long-term association, and he actually sent me a message today. And I didn't know you were going to mention him. He just said, You're an awesome human. My life is better for having you in it. Thanks for everything. Isn't that nice?

Because he, like I, moved from that old industry. We had a lot of stress in that industry. It was a difficult industry. I've talked about it a lot in these episodes on this show. And I'm glad he's in my world. He's a really nice guy, he's a super quality person. He's good at what he does. He has an engineering background, but also, he's good with people. And he came to me and he said, Where do I go in this field, and who do I trust, and what do I learn?

And I've pointed him in the right direction, and I've been able to continue to find good fit clients for him as well. And so I'm thrilled that he gets a mention on this episode. I know he's going to be pretty excited about that. But you're right, we have good people in this community. And we're here over the long haul. And that's what I like, long-term relationships.

I mean, there's a guy I've known for, like, pretty much a quarter of a century. I mean, it's just phenomenal, isn't it?

**James E:** Absolutely. I mean, I'm starting to be able to track our relationship back to 2015 and beyond.

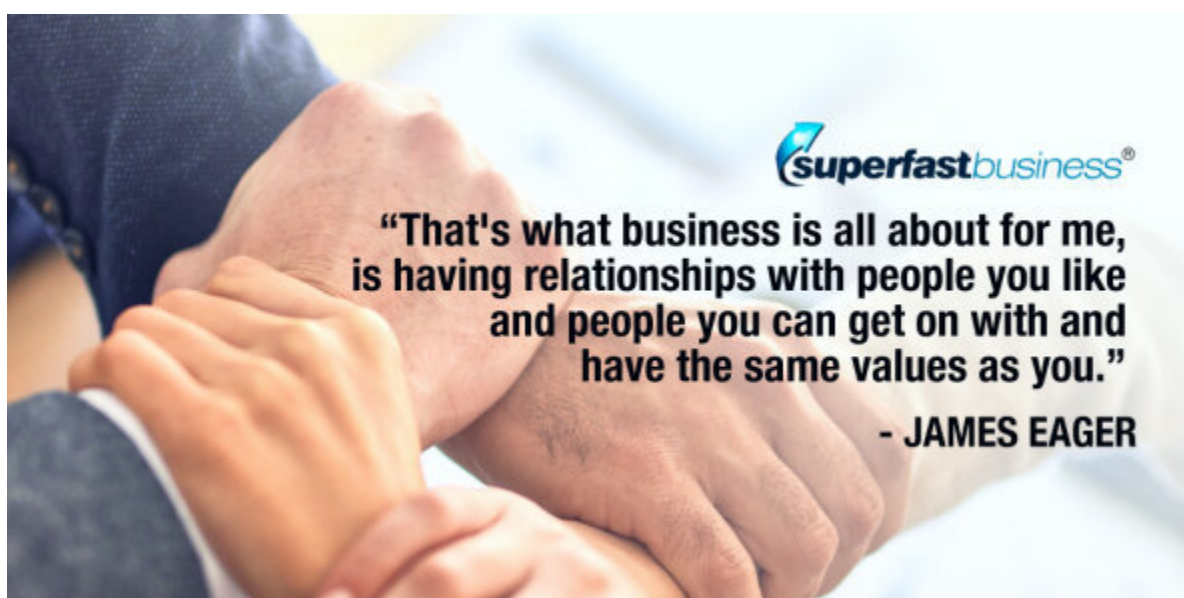
**James S:** Right. Getting up there.

**James E:** Maybe not quite a quarter of a century, but...



**James S:** That was, like, a few houses ago, probably. It was for me. And probably is for you, too.

**James E:** Yeah. And so, it's just all these great people that are in this community. I mean, I can think of [Steve Mastroianni](#), who became a great friend of mine, as well. And I remember, like, Pete and I are just in the early stages of working together, but we sat on a couple of coolers. And he was just able to pull out some of the hilarious stories of the music industry. I mean, which we couldn't possibly repeat on this podcast, I believe it is a family friendly show.



But it was just wonderful to sit with people, and they make you laugh, and you want to be around them. And that's what business is all about for me, is having relationships with people you like and people you can get on with and have the same values as you.

And very much in this sort of BS world of internet marketing and there's so much hype and nonsense, you can come to this corner of the internet where SuperFastBusiness lurks and find these people which are going to behave and work in the same kind of way, which is really cool. And as we speak, we have Storm Eunice.

**James S:** I saw on the news, there's like red warnings or something, saying, you know, stay at home alert. And I thought, wow, this is sort of a moment in time, you've got fence posts flying across the backyard there.

**James E:** Yeah, we are literally in the middle of a red storm, red code, whatever it's called, behind me. And there's just madness going on every now and again, as we record this.

**James S:** Like, if at any time your safety is in jeopardy, make sure you prioritize family over the podcast. You know, we've got to keep things real. But okay, so community is one thing. And I know just from your own journey that at times, especially early on, and it seems to have faded away, I've noticed a change in you.

## **A better relationship with risk-taking**

You used to have a lot of resistance to some of the things that we were talking about early on. And over time, I think your resistance has actually decreased to the point where you've gotten to a point of acceptance that sometimes when we talk about stuff, you just go and do it. Dare I say, you've become a little more friendly, you've got a better relationship with the unknown or a little bit of a better relationship with risk-taking, because you were pretty conservative.

And I could see that friction, I could actually, I could see the cogs in your brain, like starting to lock up a bit, and then have to work through it. And then you get through it. And now when you come and say, Oh, what about this? Or do you have an idea around that? And I say, Well, this or that, and you go, Okay, and then you go off and things happen. What changed?

**James E:** I believe, I think it was you who said to me, when we went to Maldives second time that 95 percent of this game is mindset. And that's something that I've been working on quite considerably. I also suffered a load of burnout throughout that period, which I mean, we can talk about it if you want, but it was one of those, I wouldn't change that for the world because it was an immense learning curve where I learnt so much about myself.



I take the subject of burnout very seriously, I think it's a huge thing in this world, and never to be kind of minimized. But you've got to learn how to deal with this. And we're dealing with a long game in this business. And when I started realizing that there was a long game going on here, that's when I could start working on it.

I also learned, I think, to be less hard on myself. I mean, I'm very much gentler on myself, and I accept there are times when things aren't going to go to plan. And part of our journey, was it you who said, like expect the unexpected, expect the unknown, it's going to happen.

**James S:** Yeah, for sure. And as a performer, you perform music in front of live audiences, you probably didn't have the luxury of taking your time about things, like you're on show and it was critical. But when you can slow down a bit, like you said, I think it takes a huge amount of pressure off that the timeframe for things, it doesn't have to be perfect. It doesn't have to be instant to play the long game. You just have to keep showing up and playing the long game.

And over time, you can make that change. And that's really what we're case studying, the difference between Episode 570 to 615 to 906, we're going to show there's been incremental changes, but let's just flag a couple.

One is I think you've worked the network really well. You've got the key player contacts in your network. And even if you watch Undercover Billionaire, you'll see that the first thing they do is build network. The first thing, when they start from scratch, they build network, after food and shelter. But hopefully, most of us have food and shelter. So they go for network.

SuperFastBusiness is a great network, if you're listening to this, and you're not a member. That's why I keep seeing members on this show. I couldn't actually do these episodes if we didn't have successful students like you, James, I'm very grateful for that. We got plenty of them.

The second thing is, over time, you've adjusted your way of thinking to be more accepting about the unknown and unexpected, and just rolling through knowing that we'll usually find a way forward, even if we can't predict everything, you can't have the next 27 steps. It just doesn't work that way.





That's one of the problems with the online marketing world. There's a lot of people selling step-by-step, but I don't think step-by-step works in the general scope of the online business. You've got to just try the next best step and see how that goes and then go from there. But having someone guide you through and give you your best guess at the next step or show you what other steps people have taken can certainly help.

## **The big change that is team**

But one of the biggest changes between the last time we chatted and now is you've started going deeper in team, and that is a huge step. I remember when it was a big step for me getting that team going up. But can you just describe what changes have happened there and how that happened?

**James E:** We were fortunate enough to do some work with [Will Wang](#) last year. And one of the things he got me to do, he's a fantastic human being. And I know you know that because you're a partner of his, too. But it's like, he started getting me to hire. He said, You need some help, you need an executive assistant, you need to take more off your plate.

And that was one of those moments where Will said that to me and it was like, Right, let's hire. And so we did that. And kind of that hire produced a really great team member, but wasn't actually quite right for the role. And that was one of those things that took a few months to come out.

But as he said, I can't remember who said it, it's the idea that leads to the idea, which is what you alluded to earlier, that at that point, one of my other team members stepped up and said, like, I want to take this role on, I want to become your project manager. And it was kind of one of those blinding flashes of the obvious at the point, because the simple lady in question, which incidentally came via your wife's company as well...

**James S:** We'll have to give that plug, [VisionFind.com](#).

**James E:** Yeah. So just to show how the network keeps perpetuating, she said, I want to do it. And she is a beast of a brain. She's so talented, and she's just wonderful. Got my back the whole time. And I've got hers. And it's a great relationship from that perspective. And then our last hire came at the beginning of this year. And it was just like, the team came to me and said, like, we need more capacity. We need more.

And so we added in another team member at that point. So I think we're at this moment. And so we're still small and conservative, but we're up to three and a half guys at this moment in time. And it's really cool. And I've just noticed that that's the point the team start taking on a life of their own, they become this own entity. And they'll come and say to me, Oh, we put some targets in place, for instance, we want to get Instagram to this by this point here.

And I'm just like, Fantastic. Do it. And there's all sorts of things where I'll discover that something's going on without me even knowing it and having to get involved. Like with [Slack](#) these days, the team tool, it has these little telephones on there where you can see if people are talking to each other. And I suddenly noticed all of the team with that icon by them and it's like, there's something going on here. I don't know what it is.

**James S:** They're huddling.

**James E:** They're huddling, yeah. And then they're fixing up some technical thing going on that's causing them some grief or something like that, that can be refined. But I don't need to get involved in the minutiae of what's going on with the tech, because I found that my role now to be more visionary. So I could be looking three, six months ahead and scheming plans and going, I know what I really fancy doing now, I think, I know it's time for a competition, for instance. This is cool.

And then, as you said, the network thing earlier, it's like, okay, I can spend a bit more time building up the network in the industry, because we're now getting critical mass where people want to send me stuff to review and that kind of thing for YouTube. So there's all sorts of interesting things that can start happening once you've got the space, which the team gives you.

And that's just been a one wild ride for me, experiencing that. I kind of wish I'd done it earlier now, but it's great. And so many guys like you've said, like, team is critical. You've got to do this. And let's face it, it's the reason why you can surf twice a day, isn't it?

**James S:** It is. I mean, yeah, we've got seven people in SuperFastBusiness. We're a seven-figure profit business, we have a team of seven, we have really healthy margins because we don't have stock, we don't have physical premises, they're all working from home, they have a great life. Like you said, they come together and they enjoy the togetherness. We're doing something together.

And like our average retention now is 10 years in our business. So that's something people obviously enjoy. And I feel it's very special. It's really special working with a group and being part of a cause. So when we publish these episodes, when we send out the emails to help members, we're doing something positive, and we're helping other humans.

And I know they're proud of working in this business. And it's great having other people collaborate and help solve the problems in the tech stuff. Goodness, I don't want to be anything anywhere near the tech stuff. I was emailing one of them today about DMARC records for an SPF, or email deliverability and stuff, I don't understand it. But I know that it's important. So I just say, Look, are we all over this? And they say, Yep, we're absolutely on top of it, etc., etc.

So it's great to have someone on your team who is dedicated to growing your business. The one word that comes to mind is leverage. And this is really the big thing, between a six- and a seven-figure business, is team. Without team, unless you've got a very special business, unless you write a hit song or something, and you're very lucky, then you're not going to get to the seven-figure mark without team to get the things going.

## The magic of a thriving membership

Now, one of the things that's happened also in the transition period from where we're at last time is your membership is really thriving. Can you just talk about that? Because a lot of membership owners listen to this podcast. It's clearly the core of my business, is that membership, in my case, the membership that you're in, the first iteration of that was born in 2009.

So I'm a long way down the track with it. I feel actually there's a vibrant community in SuperFastBusiness now, especially in the intensive level that I've been incubating lately has been red hot, but you're experiencing great membership community, as well. Let's hear about it.

**James E:** Yeah. So we are now five or six years into this. And I think you say it's like having a child.

**James S:** It is, it's like raising a child. Is it out of nappies now and it can talk?

**James E:** Yeah, yeah, I think it's somewhere in the adolescent phase compared to yours.

**James S:** What's the name of your membership, too?

**James E:** The Bass Lab Plus over [ebassguitar.com](http://ebassguitar.com). And that is a membership now that certainly over the last year, 18 months, has really started to, I mean, grow momentum from, I guess, a size perspective, I kind of think, but also the way the members interact, the community. And that's why that child analogy is so good, because you are growing a community of people.

And since having the team for instance, one of the things that I wanted to put into the business was this thing called Bass Lab Legends, which is to celebrate a member who's done great things. And I was interviewing two of them yesterday, and it's the classic thing that you say, is that they come for the content, stay for the community. And it's so true.



And I was interviewing one of the guys yesterday, Mel in Canada. And he was just saying, Oh, yeah, now I can do this. But there's another member who can do that. And so we now help each other out on this kind of stuff. And I'm now connected with Kevin in the UK, and we chat a lot. And I wanted to know something completely unrelated to bass, so I asked Alan, because he's medical, that kind of thing.

And it's sort of, it's crazy the way these people really start to forge bonds with each other. And so since we started growing, my attention now has been very much into rather than, we're still obviously trying to sell and grow the whole time, but it's like, how do I nurture these folks? How do we give them more of what they want? Because they found a little corner of the internet where they resonate with me and what I do and the values that I bring to the table, that kind of stuff?

So it's like, how do we give them more of what they want?

**James S:** Yeah, and what do you spend most of your time on in a week, these days? Obviously there's a bit of interaction with your team on Slack, you've got a bit of interaction with your existing members. And you're interacting with a couple of suppliers for marketing activities, sounds like agency, etc. Is that about it?

**James E:** Yep. Yeah, that's how I spend my time these days, reaching out to other people, forging contacts, as we said earlier, and developing new products, that kind of thing, like, looking at where the future of the business is going, which is a much more exciting place. I mean, my big challenge, which going back to Pete Fadeyev earlier, is I know that I've needed to get copy off my plate.

And I know from experience that's often one of the hardest things for business owners, if they have a talent for writing copy, is to pass on to the next best person. But I know that my time is not best spent copywriting when there's specialists doing it. And so that has been the challenge for this year.

## Leverage and lifestyle change

The other thing that I've been working on now is getting more coaches involved. So I'm not the only one delivering the coaching. So I now have a selection of coaches that work for me on certain projects. So we can give a real value to our members with different perspectives, that kind of thing. So, yeah.

**James S:** Well that's great. So you've got leverage in new capacity, you're actually able to scale the solution, because you've got other players. That is a huge aspect, is building capacity to deliver. How does life look for you? I know during the last few years, you moved, I recall.

**James E:** Yep.

**James S:** Like, at what point did you say, Okay, well, I'm safe enough in this business that I can move further away from the city and not worry that I'll have to go back to play in the studio or something? Like, basically, did you just tear up your plan B, is that what happened?

**James E:** I think we realized that the business had gotten to a point, and I've come from a fairly shaky place before that and other businesses that hadn't worked. And we got to a point where mortgage companies started taking it seriously, or taking me seriously, again. And which kind of took me by surprise, I thought it'd be a lot longer.

But the numbers were starting to look really quite firm. And it put us in a position where we could move house and do lots of clever stuff with the numbers, which meant we can live a really nice lifestyle where we are now. And so, we're actually looking at moving house again at this moment in time, because we've hit another sort of, I guess, revenue bracket, again, so we'll see if that's possible. The housing market's a bit nuts where we are at this moment in time, but it's just very fortunate that we could be in that position to look at doing that.

**James S:** We'll see after the storms, there might be some renovator's dreams available.

**James E:** Well, indeed, indeed. There hasn't been too much madness in the past 10 minutes. But yeah, so there's lots of options on the table. I work fairly conservatively for about, I don't know, four days a week, that kind of thing at this moment in time. I have lots of flexibility to spend with my son, being two hours away from my parents, that kind of thing.

It's now very straightforward. I could take Friday off, and go up and see them for the weekend, if I would. I have that flexibility to do that, which is what I always wanted from this business, was to be able to run my own schedule and have that freedom of choice to do my own thing. And I am living that life at this moment in time. And I feel very fortunate in doing that.

**James S:** I tell you what, as a parent, the number one thing that your kid wants is time with the parent. And, I mean, for me, that would actually be the highlight of your journey today. I remember when you were having a baby, and certainly, I think in the very, very early stages, having a baby, money was definitely a critical concern and a risk.

And, you know, you just went through, you're actually bloody persistent, and you pushed through a lot of the difficult phase. In the beginning, it's so hard in the beginning of an online business, proving your offer, learning all these new skills. I mean, you're not an internet marketer category, you're a musician. Like, you played gigs, you recorded in studios, so your market, like all this other stuff, such a hassle.

But it's great, it's just proof of concept. And I remember early on, I've sort of helped you with a relationship with another guy in a similar space. And at the time, that would have seemed like outer space, what those guys are doing. But you're slowly bridging that gap where you've got your own piece of the world, and you're growing it your own way.

## Advice for those in the early stages

And you're stepping out into the sunlight away from the shadows and being your own entity. And I think that's brilliant. I wonder, what sort of advice would you have to someone who's in those first few years of a membership, questioning if it's all worth it versus perhaps the better income they could potentially make from short-term plays? What would you say to them?



**James E:** I think if you've got a belief that this is worth it, that you want to run your own show, and you want to be in control of your own life, you've got to go for it. I always had that belief. And there were times which were staggeringly hard in the beginning. It seems so on the edge at times. But I knew I had to push through that to get to what I want.

And really, with the whole of the pandemic, this is where it kind of came into fruition, where I literally watched the rest of my industry close down overnight. And I mean, really shocking stuff that happened there. All these dear friends who lost their sense of purpose and had to start reinventing themselves over that period. And needless to say, so many of them in the early days became online teachers, that kind of thing.



**James S:** Of course. I mean, that's the only place they can actually do their thing. And I guess you had a monumental slingshot advantage on the whole rest of the world, in that case.

**James E:** Yeah, kind of four years.

**James S:** Four-year run-up. Like all my clients, it's not a coincidence that my clients in general, and my business really prospered as soon as that pandemic hit, because we're all online. And we'd all been doing it for a number of years. And we were ready. In fact, a lot of things I teach is disaster preparation, I teach redundancy, I teach [OwnTheRacecourse](#), and control and backups, you know, like, two is one and one is none.

I teach having multiple team members, cross training, all this stuff, it all came into effect. It's like, when we needed it, it was there. So in fact, in the beginning of the pandemic, you know, I had to deal with feelings of, you know, I didn't want to say too much about how well things are going because you feel like, while other people are suffering, you might feel guilt. You might feel that you shouldn't be having a good time when everyone's suffering, or whatever.

But the fact is, I knew from studying financial markets that enormous wealth gains are made in down markets every time, every single time. It's just a matter of positioning and preparing for that. And you had a support mechanism through that whole time. But the bottom line is this, and this what I say, like, I love having great guests on this show who have done particularly well.

And as much as I'd like to take some of the credit, and maybe some of it's due, but the bulk of it is the difference between guys like you and people who give up is you. You are the differentiator, like you did this. And you got through it, you've got a young family, you had setbacks, you pushed through it.

And you've got yourself in a great position now, because you're no doubt getting paid by many different people in your membership, you've probably got them separately, you've got them all in different places around the world. So you got geographic protection, you've got a bunch of other little products here and there. You've got a network and connections who can move you into the next iteration of whatever it is that's coming down the pipeline for you, which I think we'll finish on.

## Some things to look forward to

So you're in a good spot. So well done. And what's next, what's next for Mr. James Eager?

**James E:** What's next? This moment in time, I still have a lot of targets that I want to in this business. For me, getting this business to a certain point, there's sort of a genesis of like, I feel really good that it's got to this point. Credibility and integrity is something that's really important to me, as I know it is for you, too, which I think is why we resonate.

And so for me, there's still stuff that I need to achieve to go, I've ticked this off. And so eBassGuitar, for this moment in time, is going to remain my focus. But I definitely want to hit the world of consulting and masterminds. For instance, I have my own little mastermind, four or five of the members are all SuperFastBusiness guys, that's how we connected. And that's wonderful to have that network.

And I've realized that's something that, and storm Eunice is really hammering me right now.

**James S:** We're almost there, buddy. Hang in there.

**James E:** Yeah, nothing like having your distraction taken by a code red storm. Right. And so I know that that's potentially a road that I want to go down, helping other business owners do what I do. I do get approached to do that now. But I've always put it to one side, because I want to keep my focus down that road. But it's definitely something that will happen in due course.

And then the other one is that I know that I know I want to go back and play the bass guitar. And I want to be out there attacking new areas of the industry that I never did in my career before. So I want to actually go back and do what I do know. I've got the security of this wonderful online entity behind me, which can then give me the headspace to go and play great music again, and be part of that world. So yeah, that's what I believe the future looks like.

**James S:** I love it. I mean, I love that you're going to do the thing you love. For me, I can really relate to that. I feel like that's my surfing phase still yet to come, you know, where I go deeper into that with my skills. But I'm just waiting.

**James E:** Didn't you hit a barrel or something recently? Didn't you have a momentous achievement?

**James S:** First of January 2022. Got my first barrel after eight years of trying, and I've actually still got a broken finger to remind me of it. But it was absolutely incredible. And so yeah, and since I actually changed my environment to where I am now, and my surfing has improved in quantum leaps. And of course, I've got a friend Rick who's a surf instructor who we also have on a show, so he was on episode 901. And I told the whole story of that in there.

So if you haven't heard the story by now, go back to 901, have a listen. It was truly like, I just think for me, at the age of 50, to be as excited as a teenager kid about life is just the most incredible thing. I mean, how lucky are we?

And you're doing great stuff. I'd love to get you back in a little while down the track, you know, a few more 100 episodes and we'll see what you're up to. But I have a feeling you've got plenty more chapters left and lots of good times on your way, buddy.

**James E:** Well, thank you very much, and thank you for your help. I dearly want to come and spend another week with you in the Maldives if that ever happens again, and to kind of build the next chapter of what I'm doing. And obviously hang out with the rest of the SuperFast community in person.

**James S:** Love it. Well, you know, things will open up again eventually for all of us. Thank you.

**James E:** Absolutely, man. Thanks for having me back.

**James S:** See you there. So we'll put this up on episode 906 at SuperFastBusiness.com. That was James Eager, my eBassGuitar specialist membership case study legend doing great stuff.





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your business  
journey

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