



What You Need to Know Before Starting a New Media Podcast

Thinking of starting a podcast? Charley Valher manages people's podcasts for a living, and in this episode discusses what you need to consider.



Edit

Charley Valher

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness. This is episode 903. Making our way through the nine hundreds. Of course, I like to bring back guests over and over and over again. Why? Because you asked for it. You give me great feedback, our show's ranking well, we get a lot of shares and lovely comments. And one of the best featured guests that we have is [Charley Valher](#). Welcome back, Charley.

Charley: Thanks for having me on James. It's always nice. Every time I come on this podcast, someone in your audience reaches out and asks some really good questions, and I always feel like, yeah, someone's listening, and give them some good value out there.

James: Well, thank you. I'd say all my guests come on, they say, Look, I've had lots of people get in touch with me after the podcast, they always say, I heard you on Schramko's podcast. Actually, it makes me think I should probably just rebrand to James Schramko at some point, and I'll be talking about that with you privately.

And maybe we can even air an episode where we think about it out loud, because there are shifts going on in my own business. And that has been interesting to me, that people value me in this particular format over the show. But this is really the heart of what I wanted to talk about today. Because the reason you're a popular guest is you're fair and square right in the thrust of what me and lots of my clients are doing, and that is, we want to be authorities in the market, either personally or our brand wants to be an authority.

To do that, of course, as my friend, [Ron Reich](#) says, in the word authority is author, we need to author, we need to publish, we need to create content. This has been happening since Gary Vee made it a thing way back in the day with his Wine Library TV. I've had a few goes at it as well. I've built several podcasts over time, remember those classics, [ThinkActGet](#), [SalesMarketingProfit](#), [FreedomOcean](#) with Timbo Reid.

Timbo is still powering along with perhaps Australia's most recognized and best, Small Business, Big Marketing podcast. And of course, SuperFastBusiness, which used to be Internet Marketing Speed, and might one day be James Schramko, that's still powering along as well for over 10 years.

So podcasts are a thing. A lot of my clients are saying, like, Should I have a podcast? Or they have a podcast, and then there's, Do I do it as a brand? Do I do it as a person? And then there's, Do I make a YouTube thing out of this? Is it the same content? There's so many questions and strategy.

But what I want to talk about today is the media brand side of it, because I've been carrying a reasonably strong brand myself, but I know a lot of B2B clients in particular have been conducting business under their own brand, and trying to build out a strong brand.

And there's different parts of the brand. You can either be the end consumer, or you can be a powerhouse publisher who brings on different end consumers, who may not have the resource or the desire or the talent to actually create the end show, and they might want to just participate as guests.

So I know as a media company, you've got valhermedia.com, you see this, you produce shows for people, you and I talk as well. I'd love to know what you've got going on, and how do you, the media guy, sit down and plan out your media brands?

Media brand strategy from a pro's perspective

Charley: That's such a good question. The first thing I would add in on that is that I think people just have to be very aware that this is a changing landscape and will continue to be changing. So what I mean by that is like, five years ago, practically just publish something on Apple on iTunes, and it probably would have worked.

Well, you would have got a degree of traction, where if you did that today, that's almost the recipe for failure. Like, I don't see anyone who hasn't got prior brand built doing that type of thing and having any success with it.

So yes, I do spend a huge amount of my time doing research, testing things, trying to really be on the forefront on it, because our clients want that. Like, if someone comes and works with Valher Media, like, they're here to get results, they're not here to follow old recipes that may not work anymore.

James: Hang on a second there. It's such an innocent little sentence there, they're here to get results. Where I've seen you shine is you've had a look at stuff that's being done elsewhere. And you've said, Okay, I can see that you're trying to get results, but you're not looking for the right result there, you're actually answering the wrong question. Or, you've done this several times with me, you've looked at something and then you've said, Hey, well, you know, that's not going to work, or they're not getting the result that, they think they want this result but that's not actually the result they should be even looking for. Can we just speak to that for a second?

Charley: Yeah, Absolutely. One of the things that comes from, I'll say I'm an expert on media, I think I am, I'm pretty well represented here, got a good track record. When I'm in this space, the way I look at things is very different than someone who is like, just doing their own podcast.

So why is that? Well, in any given month, I get to look behind the scenes of millions of downloads and views across multiple niches and multiple brands, where someone who's just on their own doesn't get that view. I also get access to like, I'm currently in this moment, probably spending a couple of \$100,000 a month on ads, running different things and testing different things.

So when you have experience doing that, and get to be behind the scenes on a lot of those things, you don't get to necessarily, like, just have a narrative built. You get to actually prove it, and try it, where if you don't have that experience, I think it would be pretty hard to match these ones. And I'll give you the most common one.

The one I come up against all the time, and I mean, all the time, is if I just made more content, this would fix the problem. And it's like, if I do one episode a week, I should be doing two, because that would double my downloads or double my views. But more often than not, that just leads to the same people watching more of your content, you won't actually get anyone new to it. So it's a really interesting thing that that's a very, very common one.

Another one is that people struggle with niche, they really struggle to pick how wide or narrow should I be, and then that one often leads to heartbreak, because they build an audience where people will have, maybe a few views, but no real true fans, like no people that would really buy their stuff, which is a huge one.

And I'll do one more, this is the other fallacy. If I just make good content, people will just buy my stuff. Like, they'll work out what next steps to take, I don't need to put a call to action in or a link. I don't need to tell them I've got products or services they could buy, they'll work it out. But yeah, your audience is Jedi mind readers. They know exactly what you want them to do, which is just not true. So it's like, they're common ones I rub up against.

When it's good to stay on narrative

James: You've cautioned me about the niche one before, where I've been tempted to go broader. And in fact, we've discussed privately situations where lately, you know, I wasn't exactly sure why, our podcast downloads have doubled in the last few months. And whilst I'm super grateful for that, and it's awesome, there's a theory that you had that you mentioned that is quite interesting to me.

And perhaps it's indicative actually of what's going on across the board in society. And maybe you can share what your theory was there, without using any trigger words.

Charley: Oh, we'll make it interesting. I will say in recent times, let's say the last couple of years, it's been interesting world circumstances. Now, what I've noticed in podcasters is they have lost their way. Many shows and brands I used to follow are suddenly following the events of the last 12 months, rather than actually helping the core of their audience.

And in your case, James, is like, you've stayed very consistent with, Hey, I'm here to serve business owners. Like, if you keep listening to this show, I'm going to help you build a business super-fast. Hopefully, I said that in the context of the brand. But the idea being is that, you've stayed on narrative.

I can keep tuning into your show when the expectation has been said. In other brands, I'm watching what I refer to as train wrecking. So it's like, suddenly, because they're in a position of influence, they feel this something come on and like, they're suddenly the voice of how you should be handling such and such, or their view on this or that.

And I think they're forgotten what people signed up to them originally from. So I've noticed it hugely in the shows I've listened to. I've seen in some of the shows we work with that these are fall-off points, like they're not getting good traction on these types of content.

James: Right. So you get the data. You're like, hey, they start talking about current affairs and world events, and polarizing their audience. And there's a drop off.

Charley: Hugely so.

James: Because a lot of these influencers, the ones actually I'll see who are most passionate about soapboxing their position or their point of view, they double down. They say, Listen, if you have a platform and you're not picking aside and peeling off the layers of hiding behind it, you should be stepping out, and you should be putting forward your point of view, and you should not worry about all the haters and the people who are going to leave, they weren't your people anyway, right?

I don't know about that. I don't want to halve my audience unnecessarily when I understand the basics of human communication. You know that saying, like, you can't please all of the people all of the time? Like, I'm happy to serve my audience, regardless of their beliefs in many things, right? Or even just other basic stuff, like the color of their skin, or if they're old or young, or male or female, or their medical views on things, I don't mind, because I don't think the business cares about that.

The mechanics of the business haven't fundamentally changed, which is the selling, the marketing, the leadership, the team, the product strategies, and the pricing, the leveraging, you know, the podcast electrons up there in Amazon S3 that get beamed down to a phone, I don't think they care about that either, like, they're colorblind, and they're agnostic to a lot of these subtleties.

So your theory is that perhaps people are niching their media brand into a personal soapbox, and therefore, excluding themselves from potential audience, who are no longer being served, because the founder, or the podcast host, or the expert is getting in their way.

Charley: Hugely so.

James: Fascinating.



Charley: And think of this. For myself, like, I still listen to several podcasts a day, which is the benefits of what I do for a career choice. Often, your podcast is your audience's safe space. This is where they're not watching the news. This is where they're not involved in polarizing.

James: And then you're just bringing it back into their face. It's like there's nowhere to go, no refuge.

Charley: Yeah. In your case, James, if I'm here to scratch my business itch, I want to know the latest in business, and I'm no longer getting that from you, what's going to be the tendency? To go elsewhere.

James: I was just having a little infrared sauna before watching the World Surfing League competition. And I was just on another planet, I was really just on another planet. I was just absorbed into the waves of the North Shore of Hawaii, as my body was bathed in infrared beams, and I didn't want to get politically charged or wound up with tragic news and daily death counts and all the crap.

So, okay. You know, the reason I brought this up is super relevant, because I'm constantly thinking, how do I navigate my podcast to serve my audience and me and sustain it? If there's one thing that I've proven I'm good at, it's sustainability. I can last. And I do that through R&D and paying attention. That's why you're on this show, Charley.

An example of effective niching

So back to media brand. And I want to pick on one of the things you mentioned there. And that's the niche, because I noticed something. I saw in my feed the other day, my friend Charley, and Charley's there with another friend of mine, Grant. I know both these guys. And, it's you Charley, by the way, in case anyone listening to this or watching this is wondering, which Charley?

It's this Charley. And he's there on a different show. He's got a new podcast out there. I think it's called Asset Blocks. Is that right?

Charley: That's the one.

James: And I was listening to some of the snippets, which is something you've taught me to do as well, is to put little video snippets of your podcast in your social feed. And it works, because I saw your thing. And I heard you talking about wealth creation for Australian businesses. And I thought, gee, that's actually pretty specific. Like, my reservation, of course, is I would definitely not want to restrict myself to just two percent of the market. Like that, anything in Australia is tiny. Anything in the US is massive.

So that was my immediate thing that came to mind. And I'd love you to speak to your selection process and your strategy around this, your hypothesis at this stage, I suppose, because I don't know how far down the track you are with it. But it was fascinating to me. Tell me all about it.

Charley: Yeah, so one of the things with having a media company and like, I love podcasting, clearly, like, obsessed. I'm just going to say it definitely, it's something I enjoy. And not a week or sometimes even a day goes by that I don't have an idea for a podcast or a podcast I would love to do.

So this year, particularly, I've decided to take that on and the first show we've launched as our own brand is Asset Blocks, which you graciously gave a plug for, and I've even seen some of our things getting pushed, I'll give anyone a link who wants to check it out.

Now to your point about niche here and what's gone into it, we've been incredibly specific. So, wealth creation for Australian business owners, and we've even put a little tag on it as well, which is because it's a very, very different thing to build wealth in Australia, if you are a business owner versus if you are someone who's employed.

James: Why is that? Let's just hit that one on the head, why is it different? And I've got my own theories on it because when I was learning about wealth creation, I was reading homegrown stuff like Noel Whittaker, Golden Rules of Wealth, and then I was reading overseas stuff like Rich Dad, Poor Dad, and I fairly quickly found out that the taxation laws on property and the way that they treat capital gains, and and so forth, are quite different, and that you do have to adapt. Is it something like that, or is it different?

Charley: That's it, that's a huge part of it. Australia's rules are very different to the US, particularly on tax, as a big one. So if you're comparing Australian business owners versus US ones, those mechanics are just not the same. Our markets are also quite different in property itself or in shares, as well.

So I think there's interesting dynamics not covered in other markets. And then also, the obvious one, in my mind, is that someone who has a PAYG, again, just different set of rules, where as a business owner, like, you're going to make payroll, you've still got bills to pay. Your industry can change very, very quickly. So unique risk characteristics as well.

And for myself, this is a journey I've been on, like, I am this market. So I started to see some success in business personally, and then was looking around and going, well, I have to work out the other side of things, which I know you've spoken about on this podcast with people like [Salena](#) as well, who do an excellent job at that.

Now, when I went on this journey, the hunger for information was huge for me, but I couldn't find any. So there was this gap, this really big gap where I felt there was an underserving of a market. And this is the first point, tying it back into the media side of things is, I spotted this gap, I had seen there was no one doing it well. And then I'm also very fortunate that we actually look after a number of the big wealth creation shows or podcasts in Australia who do, like, the general market, all of Australia.

So I've got a very good dataset of knowing how big this market is. And I decided that the slice of the pie of business owners was actually big enough to warrant a podcast, like I probably wouldn't have done it if it was an audience of a couple of 100. But it was very apparent to me that this is big enough to justify a media brand.

It's also underserved, like very, very underserved. And then the other component of it is also a very high-value market. So if I wasn't able to form a successful media brand here is that there was companies and organizations that would be willing to sponsor us or have an offering or an affiliate thing we could put together to make it kind of worth it. I didn't need the mass appeal of millions.

James: So when you say media brand, like I think one of the most popular podcasts in the United States is a guy who gives financial advice, right? But he brands it around himself, I think. And in Australia, I think there's also a personal sort of a brand that's got a stylistic sort of thing, like The Barefoot Investor, that's Scott Pape, but he's mainly talking to moms and dads, and like, employees, for the most part.

How qualified do you have to be?

So you said, Okay, we're going to do business. And we're going to do Australia. And then you said, you're going to do a media brand. You're not making this about Charley, the business investment guru or coach, you're doing it more as a brand that you have a monetization plan for, is that right?

Charley: Yeah, I'd almost go on the record here saying people should definitely not let me pick the investments for them.

James: I wanted to ask you about that, because this is a huge, like, this is around the topic of how qualified would you have to be to publish a podcast in a thing. Like, you and your co-host, at least on the snippet that I saw, both talked about, up until recently, it wasn't really on your radar or a huge thing.

So like, I drew a conclusion that, whilst you might be, well, I know for a fact in your case, because of your life situation and the fact that you have got some very strong financial acumen in the family, and that you have been investing and stuff, I know you've got some personal experience, but in terms of helping other businesses or being any kind of advisor or whatever, that's definitely not what appears there.

So how do you build an audience? Or how do you even front up to the mic and feel like you're not faking it till you make it? What's that messaging that makes it okay?

Charley: Yeah, so something that I think is the worst thing to do is pretending you know what you're doing.

James: I hate that. Yeah, like, fake it till you make it is the worst expression ever. That's like, aka fraud. I say basically, you know, learn as you go and document by all means, but be open about that. There's plenty of people who, even Tim Ferriss, I think, he says, Look, I'm just a human tester. I just try these things and document my journey. And that's been wildly popular, right? And he never said, I'm the expert. He goes and finds the experts. Sounds like more like what your model will be.



Charley: Yeah, so if you're not an expert, please don't claim to be, we'll put that on the record here as well. Like hugely so, Charley's top tip of the episode.

James: It's like, someone visited my garage yesterday. He's like, Are you a pro surfer? I said, I'm not, I'm not good enough to be a pro, I just really like it. And he goes, Okay. But you know, I was not claiming to be something I'm not.

Charley: But the second side of this is that you can take the expert position in the show or in a podcast, but you can also be the learner, or the student. So what I aim to do with this show is just be super transparent. So the idea being is, while I am not an expert, I certainly have achieved some things personally that I'm happy to share.

So I'm happy to go through, Hey, these are my investments. This is where I've been able to get to by doing this. This is what worked for me, and this is what didn't, with a very clear messaging, I hope you look at this, and it inspires you to start your journey, and that you will hire experts or have those types of conversations.

So what we're actually advocating for is expressing what the results could look like, who are the people that might be right to help you, and really educating you so you can have good conversations with people in this space, because this was one of the challenges. I would go speak to a financial advisor, and it was like they were speaking French, it was just another language.

James: Or, like, they speak snake.

Charley: Also very, very dangerous. And it's so, so surprising when you do the research, how many financial scams and people have lost a fortune. And I'm like, this is again, part of the reason why we felt very compelled to do this, is that going on this journey myself and seeing what's going on, is that I felt an obligation for all the business owners out there to not get screwed by that, because so many of them do.

James: Yeah, and I've seen it all, and I've talked about this in my other podcast episodes with Salena, but I've had the sharky guy who was into schemy things that got shut down, I've had the conservative guy, you know, the cardigan-wearing, Toyota Camry driver who was so safe that I'm just going to lose money by keeping it in the bank, by doing nothing with it.

And then your standard sort of thing is, you get pitched by a financial planner from the bank, whoever you've got your money with, and then you end up in there. And often, there's someone just there, and I look across the desk, I think, well hang on, this person is fairly mature. They're in their little suit and tie. And they're pitching me wealth creation. But like, gosh, there's no way I want to be in my 60s suiting up and heading into the office.

It's like my grandfather always said, like, you've got to pay attention to who you're getting advice from. And this sort of leads me to an interesting question here. You talk about niching, you talk about specializing, and you've got this dedicated brand. But earlier on in this podcast, you told me you're a media expert, and you're experienced with that.

Do you risk confusing your audience?

So what I want to know, and this is really relevant to me, because I really like surfing. I've got a [surfing website](#), I could quite easily get podcasts with surfing shapers or surfing superstars, and I have, I've had [Layne Beachley](#) on my show. And I've also spoken to [performance coaches](#) who have trained world champs, like, I think I could put content on my surf show.

But how do I do that without confusing the crap out of my audience or people who know me? Because that might be the situation you're in now where, Who is Charley? Is he Asset Blocks's wealth guy, or is he a media agency guy?

Charley: Why can't he be both?

James: You can, I suppose. Look, where it comes up for me is [my personal Instagram](#) probably more than anywhere. I mostly just want to make GoPro videos and film surfing. And I don't put all my corporate quotes and snippets on my personal channel at the moment. But if I rebrand to my personal name, then I would actually have to - I think I would switch off some of my personal friends and surfing community and then they would churn, probably. And then I'm now going to take advantage more of my personal brand to leverage it for business. So I do feel like there is a crossroad there.

Charley: I'll give a better answer, then we'll go deeper into that. You will absolutely create some audience confusion in the beginning, but people will work out the difference. So I think most people are concerned about really a short-term consequence. So in the first couple of months, once two podcasts exist in your example, James, will they be confused of, you know, what's James getting up to?

Yes, you know what? It actually may cause them to pay more attention because they're curious how this plays out like, what's he getting up to, what he's doing?

James: On that, yeah. Like my friend, [Brian G. Johnson](#), the YouTuber, I've had him on this show heaps, and he took up photography. And he takes these incredible wildlife photos of eagles flying over his house and farm or wherever he lives. And he went from basically zero beginner to incredible talent.

He's got all the greatest gear, the biggest, longest lenses, and he takes the best shots. And I love following his stuff, I totally accept that he's a wildlife photographer, and a YouTuber. Same with my kind of unusual friend, Tim Castleman, who was an online marketer, but then he started taking pictures of rockstars when they visit town, like, country and the Western scene, and he fell into that.

So when I think about it, I know, like I've always known you for cycling, I've known you're really into cycling, bicycles, eating lots of carbs in chocolate format. And you know, you put me on to great innovations, like an air fryer, and so forth. So I do associate the interests of the people outside of their business brand, I suppose, when I think about it, and I think you'd be hard pressed to find any one of my true fans who wouldn't know that I'm quite absorbed with surfing.

Charley: Do you think any of them would be surprised if you did a surfing podcast?

James: Nobody would be surprised. But they probably wouldn't listen to it. But they wouldn't be the audience for that. So I don't think they'd penalize me for that at all.

Charley: Yeah. So that's where I think it leads to, is like, what they're really looking to understand is, Hey, James, in your case, you're doing something new. Is this for me as well? Or is this just for the people that are into surfing? So I think we, as people in media and doing podcast, just need to be better at communicating.

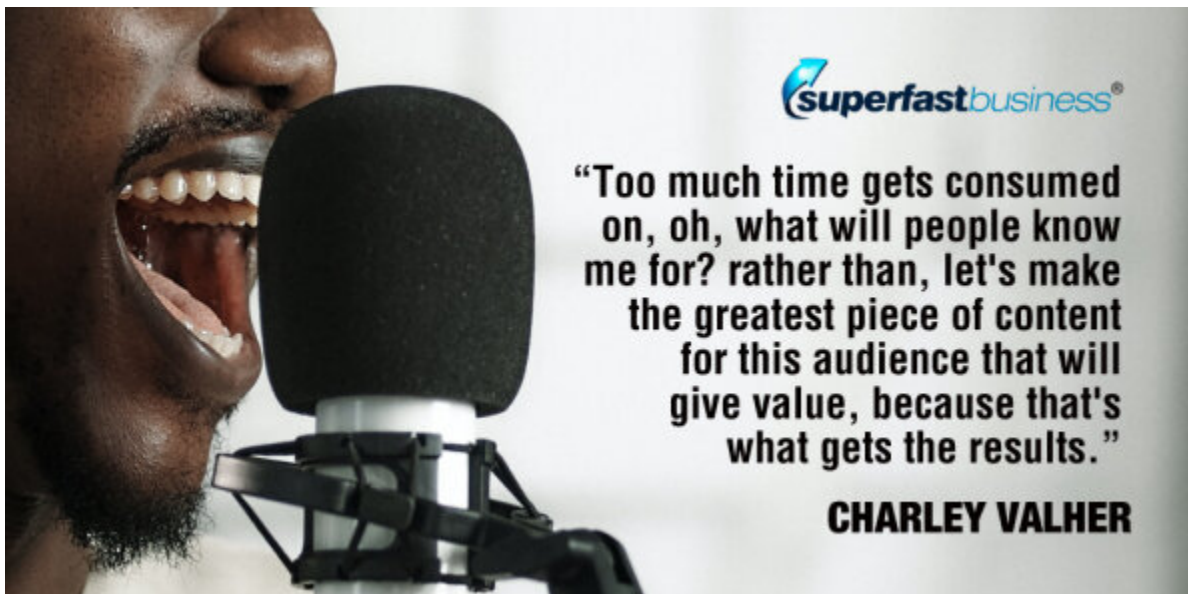
So I would look at that and go, if you did a podcast episode talking about the new podcast and who it's for and what it is, and go, If you want to check it out, go here, we kind of eliminate that confusion. I think this is something that, to your point, if you look deeply is like, we all reveal things, we're all multifaceted. You're not just a business guy, you surf.

James: And where it really came up for me is when I interviewed Layne Beachley, I was really thinking, gosh, you know, I really want to interview her as a surfer. But I'm interviewing her for my business podcast. So I need to make that relevant for my business audience. So I still had to put my hat on. And I probably could repurpose some of that content on both shows.

But that's really what I felt, I had one leg on each side of the thing, because it was kind of like a very special thing for me to have happen. And it sort of made me feel like, gosh, I think I could do a lot more of this. And I've become really good friends with a lot of the shapers, obviously, I'm a good customer for some of them. But I just love representing them.

I love sharing their pictures, I want to give them social exposure. I give them lots of feedback, and the good ones, they really appreciate it. I tell them what fins work best in their boards and how the shape of their boards, and the rails on the board, and the width of them, and the volume, and I tell them what consumers are looking for, because we get all the data from my own website.

Do you know I get more search traffic to my surfing website than all of SuperFastBusiness? It's my little side hobby, but I think it could be a thing in the future. That's one of the reasons I've always reserved my personal brand, because I didn't know what I want to be when I grow up. But you're saying that I could be both things and not worry about it.



Charley: I think too much time gets consumed on like, oh, what will people know me for, rather than, like, let's make the greatest piece of content for this audience that will give value, because that's what gets the results.

The business model to go with the brand

James: So what is your business model with this new brand? You've sat down, the media guy with all the data said, Okay, gap, check. I've got some personal connection or affinity or interest with this that can keep me motivated through the inevitable hurdles, which will always come for every business owner.

So you've got your gap, you get in there. You've thought, okay, there's enough people interested in it. But there's also enough suppliers that you could actually create something that's valuable for the market. Obviously, there's money going to be connected to that at some point. Tell me about that bit.

Charley: Yeah, so this is something we actually have in common with your surf brand and then my, what I'll call wealth brand here is, in this niche, something I identified really well is that a lot of the people that are in this niche are technically excellent, but they're not good marketers, and they're not good podcasters, and they don't have that inclination.

So as I went on my own journey through here, I'm talking to advisors who are awesome, absolutely awesome. But if they tried to do a podcast online, they just don't know how to communicate well, or maybe don't have the skills or just don't want to do it.

So I saw a really interesting opportunity here that wouldn't be as common if I did one, let's say on being a YouTuber, where there are a lot of people that are that way inclined, that people would pay to reach this audience, that the sponsorship opportunities on this audience are actually very high value, because if you are going to go on that path, like a lot of the advisors and products in wealth creation are quite expensive, and they often pay well in affiliate comms.

So the business model we run across our media brands is the idea that we do sponsorships, and affiliate stuff. So not too far away from internet marketing world in, I suppose, ideation or business model, but at the same time, just doing it for a really high-value specific audience.

James: Big, big market. It's a massive amount of money floating around that. You know, true story, when I was the general manager in the Mercedes dealership, we were looking for other revenue streams. And we financed vehicles, of course, but we were able to finance anything. And most people didn't realize, we could finance forklifts or caravans or earthmoving equipment, and a lot of my clients had businesses.

So I set up a finance company, I actually set up a finance company, I think it was, ironically, this blows me away now, it was called Quad Fin. And the logo had like four squares, so it was like quad finance, and quad fin now, obviously, it's a surfing term referring to a board that has four fins. So I preempted. And I'm talking, this was quite some time ago, this would have been about 2004 or 2005, so a long time ago now.

But yeah, I set up a finance business back then. And immediately, someone wanted us to finance an oil tanker. And it was like, tens of millions or hundreds of millions of dollars. And so that was like, I immediately landed this whale of a client out of the gate that, you know, I could never have expected. It was a far cry from financing a C180 for \$46,000.

So yeah, there's always opportunities. I think you said it before, as an entrepreneur, you get ideas pretty much every day. It's the selection criteria, and the sticktuitiveness that are going to make the difference between if this is a big brand or not.

You know what, just one more example of an entrepreneur friend of mine who was from the online world who went outside the space who I've passionately followed. And that is [Dan Norris](#). Dan Norris, I think his Black Hops Brewery is now valued at \$65 million. So he went out and started a beer company. And I've actually got his beer in my fridge. I don't even drink beer, because I don't do gluten, but I serve it to my guests. I've got one of the first bottles of his brewery, this eggnog stout that he brewed, he actually hand-delivered it to me in Manly.

And I've watched his trajectory. The same principles apply to him, you know, building that strong brand, and going for the long haul. And I'm so pleased for him of what he's been able to do. And what a success story that is. But you're right. I accept him as a beer lover. And he's also an extremely clever marketer.

At one point, this is the other one, he actually quit the online sort of thing and stopped his community and whatever. But then he started re-engaging a little bit. I think he missed it. And now I'm seeing people bail out and go off into the NFT land in the blockchain world. And I think some of them will come back too, just my prediction.

Charley: Yeah, I mean, I think it's a very valid point. And you're likely so here, but I'll share some more into these because I think people would love some insight. Before I actually took this on, I did actually go and reach out to some potential sponsors and say, Hey, this is what I'm thinking of doing. This is my track record at Valher Media, I'm confident I can build this type of brand. Would you be interested in sponsoring it? Like, are you interested in becoming a sponsor, and potentially an affiliate as well?

So we do a bit of a hybrid model with our sponsors. And to my surprise, we got three out of the gate, like, when can we start? So I think that was another really good sign for me of people wanting access to this audience and just really highlighting with, now, this niche. So that was a really, really positive sign. I still can't believe it. We were profitable before our first episode came out.

James: Just on that, I don't believe anyone needs to start an online business without being in profit before they start. I don't think anyone needs venture capital money. I started my business self-funded, I've never taken anyone's money, never had equity partners or loans or whatever. It's actually been in profit from day zero. And that is a great test.

By the way, that's how I quit my job. I went to two people and said, I'm doing online marketing as a service, would you like to join? And they said, When can you start? They didn't even ask how much it was. In fact, I've not taken sponsors on this show. And you're already making sponsorships for your brand new show. So there's a bit of a wakeup call for me, isn't it?

Charley: It's certainly an opportunity for you, James.

Looking beyond the current play

James: Although I'm happy to bring on my partners over and over and over again, because I want them to be successful. And that's how my show works. Where do you go beyond sponsorships and affiliation? Is there another potential? Like, do you want to sell it for a lot of money one day or something else?

Charley: Look, there is that potential. And that's where I think if you build yourself into a corner with a personal brand, that's much harder to undo. So always I'm thinking with the end in mind. But I'll talk you through some of this in real works, is, let's say we bring on a sponsor. The way I frame it up is there's a sponsorship component, which is a monthly fee. So we get paid monthly, which contributes, we can invest that money in the show.

And then also, we want to do an affiliate model where if we produce a sale for that brand, then we get a commission on it. Now, I like doing both, because I think that sets up the intentions for everyone. I think a lot of media brands out there take huge sponsorship fees, but then their interests don't align with the content doing well itself. And I think that's a shame.

People won't buy in. And if you're good at what you do, you should give them buy-in, which is something I definitely learned from you, James, that was a big lesson.

James: You can't do [revenue share deals](#) if you're actually no good. That's one thing you'll quickly find out.

Charley: It turns out that's very, very important.

James: Very important. It's so easy to get the deal, but it doesn't work unless you can make it work.

Charley: The second side of that is I'm bringing some of my know-how from media land. So when we take a sponsor on, like, I want to have them on the podcast, I don't just want a rolling ad. Like, I want them to come on, talk about topics they can do. And like, one of my skills is like, I would like to think I'm a very reasonable podcast host. Okay? I have some experience here.

So I create episodes where they shine, it's really good. Well, I like to think it's good, I'm obviously biased. But I create a special piece of content with them every quarter. And then my team will cut it up into clips and give them assets they can use in their own marketing or publishing, which, again, is not something they can easily get elsewhere.

So I built this very unique offering for people that want to reach the wealth community in Australia of business owners where, Hey, I'm going to make you shine, you're going to get a unique product, we're invested in your success, where suddenly this becomes more attractive. And then down the road to the point here, and this is the envisionment of why we've done it as a brand as well, is we want to do more shows.

So potentially, like, there's the Asset Blocks business owner edition, who knows, the next one might be Asset Blocks millennial edition or surfer edition or wherever we go.

James: Super Fast Asset Blocks.

Charley: Yeah, we'll nail these ones out where we can work into these other dynamics. And that's quite an exciting proposition where some bigger brands we've taken note of in the States, like BiggerPockets, where they've got several sub outs of their brand, which is a really cool way to do it.

If you listen to this show, hopefully....

James: What would you like to have happen as a result of someone listening to this show?

Charley: Well, number one, if they're an Australian business owner, I highly encourage they come and check out the show and let me know what they think, because I think this is for this audience. I think it will help them a lot.

And then number two, maybe you're not in that niche, but you're thinking about, hey, how do I build out a more direct brand or media brand to support my business? Pay attention to what we're doing. This is the stuff that is working well in the marketplace right now. It might give you a different view or opinion on how you can potentially run your own podcast or think about the business model around it.

James: Are you still doing those podcast show audits?

Charley: Yeah, absolutely. We're definitely doing them. I must admit, I had to slow them down a little bit because I've been in demand.

James: I know you've had a lot of customers keeping you busy, which is, like, great. But how do people get in? Do they just go to the website, do they send you an email, what works best?

Charley: Yeah, so I'll make sure they can email me, but if anyone heads to valhermedia.com, you'll see a big yellow button that says our podcast audit, they're welcome to come through and do that. And I'll go through all your show, and I'll share what I think is probably the best approach for you to be successful in your podcast.

And then second, we've got assetblocks.com.au, where people can come and check out the new media brand.

James: Love it. Thanks, Charley. Well, I'm sure we'll have some ongoing things. I mean, clearly, when we get together, I'm asking you some questions that really relate to my own situation, but I have a suspicion that it's also going to be relevant for our audience. So, appreciate it.

You are a wealth of knowledge. I've done so many things as a result of the help - you give me help for everything, from lighting through to video recording quality, to snippets, to publishing natively, like all these things I would attribute straight back into your court.

Thank you for making SuperFastBusiness better and continual improvement. And I wish you the very best with your brand new podcast, Asset Blocks, for Australian business owners who are interested in becoming wealthy.

Charley: Thanks, James. Thanks for having me.

James: So yeah, this will be episode 903 with a full transcription available at SuperFastBusiness.com. If you enjoyed this show, please share it with somebody who you think is going through sort of a media brand, personal brand podcasting flux. If you know someone who needs a podcast audit, get in touch with Charley, valhermedia.com.

And I don't get many comments or whatever reviews on my show on the platform. So if you're feeling in the mood for a bit of comment love, go ahead, leave a comment. I think we're close to 100 or something, which is really not many, for sure, over 10 years, but I'm still going to publish anyway. I don't care. Thank you so much. See you on the next episode.



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