

THE **small** BUSINESS BIG **MARKETING**

show

INSANELY EFFECTIVE
MARKETING

Episode #476

A crippling illness hasn't
stopped Surefire Boards
Mick Slattery from
wanting to build a global
surf brand



www.SmallBusinessBigMarketing.com

Mick Slattery Interview Transcription

Tim

So Mick Slattery finally mate. Welcome to the small business big marketing show.

Mick

Awesome. Thanks so much.

Tim

I've just got one question for you mate.

Mick

Yeah.

Tim

What's up? Clever. I have to get that out of the way.

Mick

Get us straight off the bat.

Tim

Promise no dad jokes get that one out of the way we can talk serious business. But before we talk serious business I have a confession to make around stand up paddle boarding.

Mick

Okay.

Tim

I think it's really boring.

Mick

You're not doing it right.

Tim

I did it once right and it was on a flat river down at like Currumbin down on the Gold Coast right. And I was really excited about it and I thought it was unreal I got to do it. I do it once and then I'm going to go buy two for house up here and just you know anyone who comes along can take them out and I just feel like this is the most boring. Not only that I lost my prescription sunglasses. It left a bad taste in my mouth.

Mick

Oh that's no good.

Tim

I think it might be more fun in the surf.

Mick

It's definitely more fun in the surf or where you can see the reef and everything underneath you. When you got good visibility.

Tim

I do that when I should swim every morning. I swam over some stingrays this morning.

Mick

Beautiful.

Tim

And I got whipped by stingrays on my face. Hey buddy I reckon just looking at your business and talking to you before you come on air you are running a business that you absolutely love.

Mick

Love it. Love it. Can't say anything more about it. It's my passion.

Tim

Isn't that good. What were you doing before you started making stand ups?

Mick

Project management.

Tim

Right. Were you bored?

Mick

I didn't mind the work right. But yeah I do get bored.

Tim

Generally speaking.

Mick

I like trying new things. Doing new things. Pushing myself constantly and I do get stale if I'm in something for too long and nothing's really happening.

Tim

So how did you get into the whole sure fire board's business? It's your little kind of baby?

Mick

Yeah. So I'd dabbled in surfboard shaping throughout my schooling and after school hung out with surfboard shapers. Learnt the craft. Everyone said don't go into that. No money in it. So I went out and got a real job. Did all that.

Tim

Dont you hate those people. It's more about them they're scared. They don't want you to change or not want you to go off and do something that they don't know about.

Mick

Hundred percent. But I listened and shape my own surfboards on the side and it wasn't really a business it was just shaping for mates and doing all that. And really loved it. You know when you do things as a kid and you don't even know why you're doing them. So I used to analyse every board I ever picked up even like when I was 6-7 years old I'd pick up a board and I'd study it and look at the curves look at everything about it so that when I started shaping my own I had a really good understanding of why a board did a certain thing and what changes I needed to make. So I had a really good understanding anyway. And then it was back around 2007 2008 we just had a flat spell and there was just no surf. And I really wanted to try stand up paddling so borrowed one try to got out in the surf. It was super hard but they were just big bulky just heavy. They weren't designed for surfing. Most of the paddle boards at the time were from wind surfing companies so they weren't really designed for surfing. So I thought I shape my own and use my surfboard shaping knowledge and then realise man you can surf these things. I made them lighter I made them responsive. You could turn them and then friends are like hey can you make me one.

Tim

Are you still project managing working for the man at this stage?

Mick

No I'm away. I went into it full time in 2014.

Tim

Was that a hard decision? Doesn't sound like it.

Mick

No not at all.

Tim

Sorry mates I'm going to make stand ups.

Mick

Yeah it was a side hustle for a couple of years.

Tim

Tell me about the side hustle. So doing it out of hours? Getting home and working 9:00 to 5:00?

Mick

Yeah. Working I was 7:00 till 3:00.

Tim

Righto. Probably surfing before 7:00?

Mick

Yes surfing before 7:00.

Tim

Getting home at 3:00?

Mick

Yeah. And then I'd just work on it. So I was using other people's shaping bays. I did that for two years and then more and more people were saying I want to get into stand up and then go see Slats. He's the man but I didn't have cheap boards at that time to make them in Australia and all the materials and the labour it's quite expensive. That's why I started looking overseas trying to get production boards made. So we started then getting samples made overseas. Bringing them in. Selling them and just happen organically. I didn't set out to go and make a stand up paddleboard brand and get it into retailers and all that. It just was a very organic.

Tim

2 years into your side hustle Mick you go okay. This is fun. This is what I've been put on this earth to do. And I'm going to make a go at this. Turn it into a business. So you resign. You start sure fire. You start the brand. Where the name come from?

Mick

Funny story actually it started as SFS squared which is exactly right. When you talk about business names that

Tim

Let me just write that down SFS.

Mick

So no one could say it. Like honestly my wife and answer the phone and get SF--. No one could say it. So we ran with that for about a year and then just we've got to change it. There were four mates that it was all our initials. So when we got together we had fun and so I wanted to translate that into a brand and keep that vibe happening.

Tim

Fascinating business names. They fascinate me because really I'm saying to someone the other day you know like Apple was always just a piece of fruit until Steve Jobs came along.

So it's what you put into the name but sometimes you just gotta get the syntax and if you can't pronounce a name then it's not a good name.

Mick

Yeah exactly right.

Tim

So sure fire came along how?

Mick

So sure fire we just through names around took about six months. Yeah we came up with so many different variations but I still wanted to keep the SFS in it. So sure fire surf SFS sorta and sure fire was when I think about what I wanted for the business it was our boards are 100 percent quality our boards are top of the line our boards are ahead of the game so sure fire works every time.

Tim

It's awesome.

Mick

Yeah.

Tim

You love it?

Mick

I love it.

Tim

Okay so you're now working full time for yourself.

Mick

Yeah I do and now I've got another side hustle.

Tim

You do get bored. You're doing something you love and you got another side hustle.

Mick

Yeah so all during winter you don't sell that many. So yeah I do some consulting work and all that on our side.

Tim

So what kind of consulting?

Mick

Business consulting and project management. Stuff like that.

Tim

It's interesting. I would have thought I'd challenge you on that to say that even though you're not selling as many boards isn't that an opportunity to be working on the business to be establishing partnerships relationships that you're setting yourself up for when it is busy.

Mick

It is. But with three kids wife and mortgaged. I've got to pay the bills as well.

Tim

Three kids and a wife.

Mick

Yes.

Tim

How was that transition when you said I'm going to go work for myself? I imagine you took a hit in pay in the early days.

Mick

Massive. My wife's just a champion. She 100 percent behind me.

Tim

What's her name?

Mick

Donna.

Tim

We love Donna.

Mick

We loved Donna very much.

Tim

Good on her. Good on Donna.

Mick

Yes she said look go for it. You know it's your passion. She believed in me.

Tim

Has there been moments when you've looked each other in the eye and gone sorry darling. Tell us about one of those moments.

Mick

There's been two big moments in business. One of them was we were doing quite well and then the influx of cheap boards and when I say influx I mean like every man and his dog. They were like oh there's money in stand up paddling so they would down the road park around the corner they all go email China.

Tim

Go into Allie Barbour.

Mick

So that got to Allie Barbour. They'd get the cheapest boards possible. They didn't design them they don't know anything about them. They just send an email. Get a container of boards and then go oh it's actually harder to sell these than I thought. So they've dropped the price they dropped the price they dropped the price. But when people look online and there's 30 people trying to get their money back they go oh that's how much paddle boards are. In fact today like just 10 minutes ago I got a message that someone wanted to buy a paddle board. I spent about a couple of minutes talking about things with him and then he's like I've got a budget of five hundred fifty dollars. And he goes I want to paddle a bag fins and a board and people just I don't know if they're just uneducated

Tim

Well they're probably. I think that they're uneducated and they're educated. They're uneducated and they don't really know what a good board a quality board is and what it can do for their paddling. And they've been educated by the market.

Mick

Correct.

Tim

There's a shop down the road here in Noosa Junction. I won't mention the brand name but they say on their front window from 499. And you do get the bag and you do get the paddle. And you know for me who was looking at buying one a year ago I've gone oh that's pretty cool entry point five hundred bucks. Not knowing that it's just a China important probably gonna give me a really bad experience.

Mick

Yes. Like there is a market for the entry level. Sure fire has always been about probably a second or third board. We actually looked at it as a business study. Business case and looked at it and said do we want to compete in this market. And we did the figures. And for us there's just no money in it. And it's just a red ocean. There is so many people do on the cheap boards.

Tim

What's a red ocean?

Mick

Just blood.

Tim

Okay so that was that was a first kind of hiccup when you looked on when the iron gone geez this is interesting we're being smashed by all these cheap imports. It's bring the price down it's educating the market in a way we don't want them to be educated. How do you as the business owner who's trying to produce a quality product manage that both mentally and from a commercial point of view?

Mick

Yes so we went up further so we concentrated on custom boards all our marketing and everything was all about the quality of our boards how well they surf. Why they surf so good. We talked about the flex and all the different characteristics in the material we used. So when someone tries a board and goes really like it I want to now get into surfing. They would then look to get a sure fire. And we're finding that a lot. And then once someone gets on our board with 95 percent of the time they stay with us so they'll get two three four boards.

Tim

Is that possible? Can they try before they buy?

Mick

Yes we've got demo models in that.

Tim

But that would be meaning by a local level where you are in New South Wales and coming to your factory and taking one hour but you do a lot of online sales and a lot of retail wholesaling?

Mick

Yes we do. So some shops will have their boards they'll let the customers test it

Tim

Hard isn't it. You've got to have the self belief and the strength of mind to say you know what. Quality is king.

Mick

Hundred percent.

Tim

Has this issue forced you to bring your price down to have an entry level board?

Mick

We do have an entry level board yes.

Tim

You have to obviously.

Mick

We have to it's a fair chunk of the market. We're nowhere near as cheap as everyone else. I mean I can go to a cheap factory I can use cheap foam cheap resin cheap fibreglass but with my name on it there's no way I'm doing that. I don't want returns I don't want people coming back saying it delaminated at these. The fins smashed out. We reinforce all the fins with a high density foam. We reinforce the standing areas. We do a lot of stuff. I know when I sell it that person is going to have the best experience. The worst thing is if someone buys a board and it's not the right board it could be too small for them they can't balance on it they're gonna turn round go this sport is terrible. I don't want to do it. Conversely if someone's board falls to bits they go up I'm over this. That's the last thing we want we want to build the sport up and get more people into it.

Tim

I want to talk about that second moment where you look Donna in the eye but before we touch on that China you mentioned factories. China for you that was a bit of a step into the unknown when you started sure fire.

Mick

Yeah definitely. China is I don't even know how to explain China. China is ridiculous. Basically if you go to Alibaba and you just try order something you're not dealing with a factory. 99 percent of businesses on Alibaba are trading companies which is just like you or me say we make paddle boards. So for instance if you're on Alibaba you could say you may paddle boards you then try to get orders and you come to me and say hey me can you make me a set of paddle boards. So you never really dealing with the factory. Even if you go over and visit the factory that trading company will take you through a really good factory and say it's theirs. Now they all say it's our factory you'll go for a tour of that factory. It's not their factory. It's set up between them.

Tim

Sounds like something you do in North Korea.

Mick

Yeah. And then your order and then they'll go down the road to a cheaper factory because they want more.

Tim

So just explain why you're going to China in the first place because you make all your custom boards here in Australia in your factory. You're getting a set amount made over there over the sure fire brand under your specs.

Mick

Yes. So I've hooked up with a really good factory early on. And the way I did that was I actually went over there and visited a whole bunch of factories and I think I went through the fake factory sort of thing.

Tim

That would've been a classic. Listeners you gotta understand I'm 6'4" I reckon your 6 foot 5.

Mick

Nearly. Yeah.

Tim

Big boy broad shoulders. You've walked into China. Show me some factory boys. They would've seen you coming a mile away.

Mick

Definitely. Some of the first samples we got were terrible. You'd get maybe one or two samples were good so you'd put through. And I never then put through a big order. I'd put through maybe ten pieces and then those ten pieces would be terrible. So I thought I need to get into a good factory so there's an Australian company called AKU which makes a C in C machine specifically for cutting surfboards and paddle board. So I rang them and said can I have a list of every factory in China you've sold it to. So then I had ten factories that have got paid a hundred thousand dollars for it.

Tim

They're serious.

Mick

They're serious because I used to say have you got a shaping machine so I don't want them hand shaped over there. Everyone would say yes but you'd get the same photo back. As if the same photo was circulating.

Tim

Sends the photo of the board the other one we send the other bloke.

Mick

Exactly right. And then I visited all those factories and a lot of those around by Westerners. So I hooked up with a Hawaiian guy in this factory. He was a shaper glasser. We had a really good rapport and I've been working with him ever since. So I know he's a shaper. He checks a quality to everything's

Tim

I hear some horror stories about people business owners going to China to get things made and then boxes will get delivered and they feel as though they're fairly weighty and your

products in there and then you open them up and there's bricks or something's just giving it a bit of weight and weighing it down. So yeah you've kind of stepped into the great unknown.

Mick

Yes.

Tim

You come out and you reckon you've nailed it now.

Mick

Yeah well I fly over like once or twice a year. Check on production as well. But I get photos all through the process as well from the blanks shaping.

Tim

I don't imagine the Chinese are big on stand up paddle boarding or surfing.

Mick

They are starting to. The last two years they've actually got some camps running and they're starting to. I've seen the whole the whole change it's quite amazing.

Tim

That's interesting. But also with the China thing is is another funny story. I was actually sitting in the office with this Hawaiian guy and we're just chatting and I get an email and I get probably 10 emails a week of hey we make boards get your boards done through us all of them trading companies pretty much. So anyway it says oh we do this brand this brand this brand. And sure fire boards. What's going on here. And there's photos of the factory there's photos of the guy's car and there's photos of my board sure fire boards and I said well what's going on here mate. And he goes who sent that. And he looks at it he goes no way that's the guy that delivers the watercooler. He goes last week he came in and he goes I've never been around your factory I've been delivering water here for years. You mind if I have a quick look. He ran around took photos and then emailed all these businesses.

Tim

It's just a side hustle for him.

Mick

But he emailed info at sure fire boards and says we do sure fire boards

Tim

Smart on one ends. Not so smart on the other.

Mick

Correct.

Tim

We're chatting to Mick Slattery who is the founder and head honcho at sure fire boards. Make stand up paddle boards sells a few accessories bit of merch. Got the cap got the T-shirt. Mick the other time you look Donna in the eye when things weren't going so well is when you discovered you had an autoimmune disease. How does that go?

Mick

Not well I'd been suffering for about four to five years. Didn't know what was going on. Just knew I was tired. Couldn't think just not myself. A lot of anxiety depression just going downhill. Every doctor I went to said cause you're tired you're getting older you got three kids and you're on your own business.

Tim

Thanks doc.

Mick

Thanks doc. Yeah. So it wasn't until I went to Indonesia two years ago on a surfing trip and I didn't even want to go. I had no passion left in anything. And I said to Donna I don't want to go on this trip. She's like come on Mick. So anyway second day there body just shut down went into convulsions whole body went numb thought I was having a heart attack. Were 80 nautical miles off the coast of Sumatra. Nothing around. On a boat in the middle of nowhere. So I woke one of the boys up said can you look after me. Write Donna and the kids basically a farewell letter. Anyway when we come home got tested and had autoimmune.

Tim

You wrote your family a farewell letter. You still got that?

Mick

Yeah.

Tim

Wow.

Mick

Yeah it's still pretty fresh. But I was adamant. Okay I know what it is. What do I need to do. So I went to so many different specialists. Researched everything diet meditation acupuncture like I researched everything. Did everything possible. On a lot of medication to block certain things and do other things. But in the last probably six months I've really come good. So I'm surfing like if I surf for five minutes I just sleep for 18 hours like I used to. Now I can surf all day.

Tim

You look as fit as a fiddle.

Mick

I'm good. I'm back and I'm clear. I'm focussed like two years ago I couldn't make a decision I'd walk around my factory and just look at things and go I need to do this this this and this and then I go. It's time to go home I've done nothing. Honestly I was buckled but now yeah crystal clear focussed.

Tim

So what was the cure?

Mick

There is no one cure. Every doctor I went to almost gave me a piece of a jigsaw puzzle and I put the jigsaw puzzle together myself and listen to my body and go ok that didn't help. That really helped. I'm going to try to implement that. Does that help exclude that food. Do this. So there's not much I can really eat still but what I can eat, I eat a lot of.

Tim

What is it?

Mick

That's classic it's hard to go out to a restaurant. I can't have gluten dairy sugar eggs. Most nuts. Ginger tomatoes yeast like the list goes on.

Tim

What can you eat?

Mick

Yes. But basically meat and vegetables.

Tim

That's not a bad thing. So that's like a keto or paleo.

Mick

Yes there's food I'm intolerant too and stuff.

Tim

So you just threw a process of elimination and a doctor's advice put the jigsaw together yourself. Do you ever have relapses?

Mick

If I push myself too hard but I'm pushing myself pretty hard. And my goal was always to paddle the Molokai race which is 52 KS between Hawaiian Islands. It's a really hard race. And my goal was always to do that and then when I got sick there's no way I can do that. So now next year my goal is to do that.

Tim

What did that do to the business when you had that autoimmune disease?

Mick

Pretty much crippled it. Simple things like I've got to ring this retailer and do this and put this order in and a week later I'm like I still haven't put that order.

Tim

You have income disability insurance?

Mick

Yes. But I didn't implement that.

Tim

Why?

Mick

I don't know.

Tim

Not cheap income disability insurance probably a good thing to use if you do get crook.

Mick

I didn't even think about that goodness.

Tim

Maybe go back. Might be retrospective. I don't know. Who knows. Not to be discussed here because I have no idea. But it nearly crippled the business. But it didn't you're here to tell the story. When you say crippled how low do we go?

Mick

We went really low. We were borderline going under.

Tim

Money nothing coming in.

Mick

Yeah.

Tim

And the relationship Donna seems pretty awesome?

Mick

She's amazing.

Tim

She work?

Mick

Yes she works three days a week.

Tim

Three kids. Wow. Yeah. Good story mate. So now you're back. Sure fire is firing along and it's not a big business yet. What are your dreams for it? You wanted to be a big business?

Mick

I want it to be an international business. The goal is to be the most recognized stand up paddle board brand in the world. And I've got a plan to implement to do that. We don't have to be the biggest turnover but I want to be the most recognized.

Tim

How you measure it and how you know when you're there?

Mick

When someone in another country when someone says I want to learn paddle boarding they say go check out sure fire boards YouTube channel or Facebook or Instagram.

Tim

Who's doing that? Who owns that spot now?

Mick

You know what. There's not one person each person has their own little thing going on. And I've analyzed everything and it's mine for the taking.

Tim

One of the really good guys doing that you're not?

Mick

They have big budgets. No one's really showing behind the scenes which is where I can come in. My knowledge of board design construction factories overseas. How you make paddles. How to surf on them. I've got a list of about 150 videos that we're we're going to do.

Tim

That's interesting. I looked at your YouTube. You've got a few videos up there. Sort of rats and mice. With respect I say that but there's videos of you out there doing something and another one and there's a couple of how tos. And I noticed the two how tos had the most engagement which is no surprise because they had to search on YouTube is the most popular search. Sounds like you're going down the path of what I would call helpful marketing. Where you are going to have what some kind of knowledge centre on your website where people can find if they have any questions about stand up. You're the guy or

the brand to answer it. I always say someone has to be the most helpful in each industry it might as well be you.

Mick

Correct. Yeah I really believe to make the brand bigger it's about giving value. So we don't buy this use this board whatever. We will show the benefits but we won't do the sales pitch at the end. So we just want to bring value. And then when we do ask eventually for the sale then people have already know you. They're already comfortable.

Tim

It's interesting. I like that. The problem with it potentially is that you're not building emotion like rip kills all about the search. And that's so emotional for any surfer. The search is all about finding the perfect wave. And I guess all big brands focus on emotion. And in your industry in the surf industry generally, it's about being cool right. That be fair to say?

Mick

Yeah yeah.

Tim

So your strategy although I like it cause someone has to be the most helpful it may as well be you. It's not very cool.

Mick

I disagree. I think you know paddle boarding inherently isn't seen as cool but I don't understand why it can't be. Like for me I surf on whatever crafts gonna give me the most fun.

Tim

Yes.

Mick

So if it's a little close out shore I'll be body surfing or I'll grab a body board and pull into the barrel. You know if it's big and barrelling I want to be on my short board. If it's really tiny I can grab a massive paddle board pop the fins out and do spinners. I don't care. Honestly to me it's it's getting out there and having fun.

Tim

I'm picking up what you're putting down brother. I didn't understand a thing you said in the last minute but it sounds very cool to me

Mick

To me it's just an extension of getting you out there and putting a smile on your face I still remember when I was first shaping them I went down to Cronulla and it was tiny. And this guy comes up and goes you're a gondola ride. I look at ya. I said. Because it was really small and I said I what are you doing now. He goes out I'm going home. There's nothing out there.

And I said well I'm about to go out and paddleboard and I'll be laughing and careening on and so. Who's the dickhead now. And he actually looked down and went yeah you're right. Yeah you know I've had a lot of fun on my paddle board in the surf.

Tim

I like that thinking does that mean therefore that sure fire boards becomes more than stand up and becomes a brand that basically. No matter what's going on out in the ocean you can have fun.

Mick

Definitely I've got 13 different surfboard models. We do foiling so if we got foil surfboards foil paddle boards we actually have got foils the actual hydra foils. We've been doing prototypes for two years. We haven't brought that to market yet because I'm not 100 percent on them and I won't bring something to market unless it's 100 percent passed my tests. So yeah we're expanding into a whole bunch of other areas.

Tim

That's awesome. I remember the email you sent me. You said you were doing it. You're doing everything. In fact did I write it down. Here we go. I pretty much run the entire operation of designing shaving boards sales marketing social media Website building and maintenance. The overseas factories. Quality control shipping a chaotic cash reserves. No wonder you had autoimmune disease mate.

Mick

Tell me about it.

Tim

But I mean that can't continue. Something's going to break. So there's that decision you need to make is at what point do you start to employ and scale and maintain everything you've built yourself

Mick

Yes so we're in talks with a couple of investors at the moment. We've got interest from Hawaii Taiwan Japan Italy so I'm chasing those leads at the moment and I'm basically talking to a business development strategist as well.

Tim

Interesting. So are you going to give away a slice of the company for some dough and that dough you're going to put into what?

Mick

Well it's not all about the money. If someone said here's the money but I've got no skills I'm not interested. Someone has to have the skills I don't have. That's more important to me than the money. So if someone's really good at building a business really good at going internationally and they've got that whole business side and accounting down and I can

stick with the artists side of things and doing what I'm doing. Then then where a good match.

Tim

You want to maintain that creatives. What you love about your business is the creative side. You're going back to when you're a kid and looking at boards and figuring out how they were shaped. That'll be interesting because I often see and I get a tinge of sadness when I see business owners who have been on the tools and they've built a great business and then it gets the point where they have to scale and that means they have to get off the tools and employ others to be creative and be on the tools and they're off doing business stuff. And some are made for it but others I look at them and say you're not really enjoying that you're enjoying the fact that you've generated a whole lot of money. So your challenge will be to somehow be in the back room and continue to shape and design and put all the love and care into these boards while someone else worries about the business side of things.

Mick

Yeah I do like the business side of things but not to the level. I'm better at the artistic side of things so I've also built my personal brand alongside it. So Mick Slattery is different from sure fire were together but we don't have to be. So I've actually designed a range of boards for two other brands and just got a royalty off.

Tim

Like white labelling it. Here's the board put your own brand on it.

Mick

Yeah. Hundred per cent because they know that my designs are good for surfing and all that. So I see options everywhere.

Tim

It would be a challenge not to lose focus. You bit of a bright shiny object kind of guy are you?

Mick

Yeah

Tim

I don't want a bright shiny object. Mick Tell me about the marketing currently of your business. Don't imagine you have a huge marketing budget.

Mick

No. We dabbled in ads. Google ads Facebook ads didn't really have much response for them. So what I've done is analyzed each that the engagement you get through each different outlet. We used to post the same content on everything and it didn't work. So Facebook seems to be more I get out from a surf I just get the camera out do a bit of a thin I rode this board today the conditions were this I changed the fins up went like this that type of stuff

huge engagement with that if I put that on YouTube don't get many viewers. If I put a long form sort of video on YouTube and it goes well like the how tos and I put that on Facebook. Not the best. So it seems like people's attention spans are different for each different.

Tim

Well I think what's happening I'm no social media guru that's for sure. As a father of three teenagers I hate social media. I've been on record saying that I'm happy to put it out there. But as a small business marketing I think it's amazing and I think what you've identified there. And Gary Vaynerchuk talks about this in a book he is a social media guru who wrote a book called Jab Jab Jab Right Hook. What you've identified is what he's theory is which is each social media platform is different. So Facebook is a party. You talk about where you are who you are with what you're doing what brands you're enjoying it's just party conversation. So that coming out of the surf doing a selfie video and guy I've just ridden this board swells awesome. I'm down to Cronulla. That's Facebook. Facebook loves that stuff. You know the people on Facebook love it. Whereas YouTube had to be much more of an educational space. Often YouTube educational end or entertainment and then like Instagram is more Gary talks about it being more where glamour stuff where you put your beautiful photos. She got a couple of lovely photos on the front page of your website. Surefireboards.com.au check that photo out. And then yes it goes like that. LinkedIn is a networking event so you have a business conversation on LinkedIn you wouldn't put yourself coming out of the surf on LinkedIn. So yeah that's what you've identified. And that's working for you.

Mick

Yeah it's definitely working for us. And we're just continuing to choose the right content for different platforms. I compete at the state level sometimes a national level in stand up paddle surfing. So I know basically all the big guys in Australia and we get the chat. I've been involved with starting three clubs in Sydney. Paddleboard Clubs ones are downwind club. The other was a mixture of racing and surfing and then we've just got a new surfing one.

Tim

So you started those clubs?

Mick

Yeah I've been involved in starting them

Tim

That's interesting.

Mick

It's been over the last 10 years. We're just trying to foster that whole community aspect of it as well so it's not any one thing that's been you know I can't put my finger and just go definitely use this or is definitely that.

Tim

What do you make the majority of your dough? And where did where does the majority your inquiry come from in your sales?

Mick

Through Facebook and Instagram. But I find that if someone watches a YouTube video they go in search you out on either of those platforms. And it's generally through I'll put up videos of one of our models after a few times then people start going I like the way that surfs and I want that one. And all that most of our custom orders don't come through the website and they'll come through social media.

Tim

You know who you remind me a bit and I can't think of the bloke's name right now but the guy who started Patagonia. You read that story? He's written a book called Let my people surf which is basically if the surf's up his staff are surfing. And past guest Jen Geale who owns mountain bikes direct. That's an eight figure online mountain biking business. She also has that view. She only employs mountain bikers. Again you know if the guys want to go mountain biking then they can but the Patagonia guy is interesting because he's all about quality. In fact he has this kind of view that please don't buy my T-shirts or clothes because you don't need another T-shirt or another jacket. But if you do buy mine and if it breaks even after 10 years he's got stores all over America you can go and get zipper fixed. So it's a bit of you and him not a bad thing it's a billion dollar plus brand.

Mick

I wouldn't mind to

Tim

So five years time what's sur fire boards look like?

Mick

Sure fire boards will be a multinational company. Well have distributors in a number of companies and countries and I'll definitely have a business partner.

Tim

How many staff?

Mick

About five to six staff.

Tim

That's nice and small.

Mick

Yeah I don't think you need to be massive. That's enough to encompass everything that needs to happen.

Tim

Give Donna what she needs because she's a nice chick that's enough to keep her in whatever she needs to be kept in. Three kids. Any kids stand up surfing?

Mick

Yeah.

Tim

That's great.

Tim

My daughter loves it.

Tim

That's awesome buddy. Hey well listen Mick. Awesome story. So glad you're over your auto immune. Thank you for sharing that. Anyone who has it. What would you suggest? Is there a won't go back over cures or anything cause you've done that. I was gonna say is there a number to call but there's not a lot.

Mick

There's not. TJust quickly I joined a couple of Facebook groups. All that but most people were very negative on there and you've got to be positive. You need to have a positive outlook and you need to be willing to fight it. Do whatever's possible.

Tim

You got that Buddy and I will direct everyone to surefireboards.com.au for all your stand up surfing needs. A bit of merch.

Mick

That's it. Can I just say that we've just been nominated for stand up paddle board brand of the year.

Tim

You have to. How remiss of me not to mention that. That's a big get. That's a really big get.

Mick

Massive.

Tim

Nominated by who?

Mick

So it's a big American stand up paddle board magazine. One of the biggest and there's 30 brands represented.

Tim

And you're running third at the moment.

Mick

We're running third so we're up against the biggest multinational companies like multi multi-million dollar companies and little old me's running third.

Tim

Whens that competition finish?

Mick

Should finish very soon so can you please go and vote.

Tim

This goes out in two weeks time. But that's awesome. In terms of I asked you earlier how are you gonna measure when you kind of get to that point where you want to be. That's pretty good that recognition is mighty. And even coming third not a bad outcome against multinationals.

Mick

Definitely.

Tim

Some good publicity in that for you I reckon.

Mick

I'll be grabbing onto that.

Tim

Mick Slattery surefireboards.com.au where you'll find him. Thanks buddy I wish you all the best.

Mick

No worries thank you.