

PURR Passive Income Power™

12 Steps to Success
Make Money in the Digital Age

Bradley Morgan

<http://www.PurrPassiveIncome.com>

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PURR Power Wheel™

PURR Passive Income™

PURR Passive Income Power™

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DEDICATION

For my wife Vivien. Without her loving support this book would never have been written.

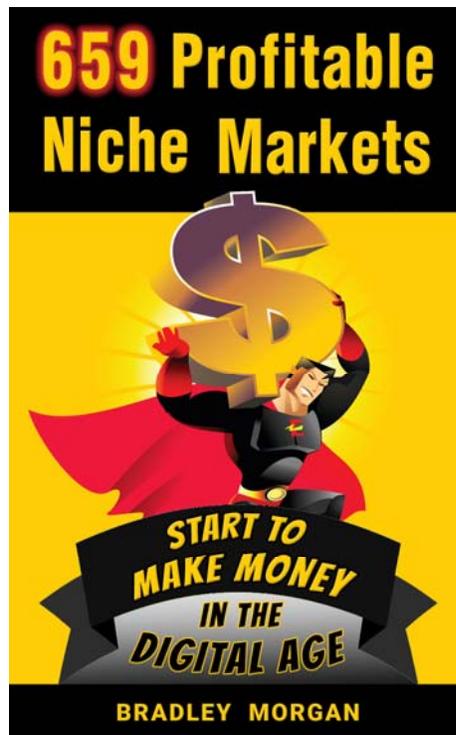
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YOUR FREE GIFT

As a way of thanking you for your purchase, I'm offering a free eBook that's exclusive to my book and blog readers. In **659 Profitable Niche Markets**, you will find the perfect companion to PURR Passive Income Power™:

<http://www.PurrPassiveIncome.com/659free>



I. When Google "Cyber-Fired" Me

"Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear." -
George Addair

When Google cut me off with a terse email, I lost a \$13,000/month income stream.

I had been using their Adwords service to place ads in their search results. The ads were costing me \$5,000/month, while generating \$18,000/month in commissions from products I was promoting on my blogs. They decided what I had been doing wasn't what they were looking for anymore.

Their site, their rules. In the same way that many people today are being forced to deal with devastating job losses, I was forced to reboot and move on.

Luckily, I had other income streams to fall back on. That setback was a stepping stone. Setbacks set the stage for comebacks, and comebacks taste sweet. It was all part of my own personal journey experimenting with multiple Digital Age income streams to learn what works for me. This book will guide you to find what works for you. Real life success stories and examples will activate your mind to see possibilities you never dreamed of. **PURR Passive Income Power™** will guide you every step of the way as you transform those possibilities into reality.

The starting point is to create a spark in your mind that says:

"This is possible for me and I know how to get started."

Generating that spark for you is by far the most important outcome of this book. It is a fundamental paradigm shift that will absolutely change your life. It takes you from the sidelines to the playing field. From watching others make a living doing work they love and fulfilling their life purpose, to transforming your own life in powerful new ways.

For example, take one of the **Success Stories** we will discuss later in this book (Success Story #2). It involves a couple that read a book as they were preparing for their wedding. The book was called the 4 Hour Work Week. I read it myself years ago. That book created a spark for them. It prompted them to look for ideas that would allow them to design their lives on their own terms. They now make over a million dollars in profit per year from a Digital Age venture they started from their own home. In a recent podcast interview they mention the spark in their minds from that book was necessary for them to see that opportunity. (Success Story #2 in this book includes a link to that podcast.)

I want this book to create that kind of spark for you by showing you step-by-step exactly what is working for people in the Digital Age today. You will learn about strategies that have worked well for me, and perhaps equally important, some that didn't work out so well. **PURR Passive Income Power™** also recognizes that the all-important "*spark*" is necessary, but not sufficient. You need to understand and develop skills that are critical for success in the Digital Age economy. The **PURR Power Wheel™** and the **Tools and Techniques** sections of this book do just that. They will unleash your power to prosper in the Digital Age!

Imagine a Super Hero that never used their super powers. Imagine a Superman who never bothered to leap tall buildings in a single bound. Just a guy who wore funny glasses all the time. What a waste. Guess what? *You also have access to an untapped Super Power.* Introducing **PURR Passive Income Power™**. It can transform your life, if you let it.

Let the PURR Passive Income Power™ system guide you. Learn essential money making techniques of the Digital Age.

Techniques that can be applied to any idea from the comfort of your own home. Learn to apply those techniques to your unique situation. Whether you are looking to generate a full time income, or just earn some extra money on the side, you are about to learn some powerful ways to *create multiple streams of passive income*. One smart, simple step at a time.

"You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough." -
Mae West

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

II. Digital Age Basics

"The digital revolution is far more significant than the invention of writing or even of printing." - **Douglas Engelbart**

The Digital Age is the greatest equalizer in the history of the world. Prosperity is now possible for anyone in virtually any circumstance. Circumstances like:

- Losing your job in a one industry town or in a dying industry.
- Graduating from college to find there are no good jobs for you.
- Jobs that don't pay enough, or are a dead end, or make you wish you were dead.

All of these circumstances can and are being overcome by people just like you in the Digital Age. You don't need any formal qualifications or anyone's permission to get started. The gatekeepers of the world have lost their power. Tools now exist for you to revolutionize your life on your own terms. The Digital Age has created a fertile environment for you to follow your heart and make a decent living at the same time.

However, you won't learn how to do these things in college. You need self-learning resources like this book to gain traction in the Digital Age. These are skills that are becoming more necessary every day. With robotic automation and other factors we will discuss later, traditional employment and traditional business are no longer viable alternatives for many.

For example, when income from my traditional IT consulting business slowed down, I turned to Digital Age ventures to bridge the gap. After some ups and downs learning the ropes, I began making far more from my Digital Age income streams than I did from my consulting business. The world around us is changing at an alarming rate. We need to adapt to survive. This book is about changing your mindset and teaching you some skills to not only deal with the new realities, but to thrive.

The Power of Passive Income

Passive income is key to thriving in the Digital Age. With passive income you can generate multiple income streams. Passive income is income that is generated even while you sleep. Even better, it is scalable. This means when your PURR Passive Income Power™ projects work on a small scale, you can scale them up to produce more income than you could ever make working at a traditional job. Your earning potential is no longer tied to the number of hours you can work in a day.

This is possible in the Digital Age as never before in history. That is why you hear people like Bill Clinton on TV advocating broadband Internet access for rural communities. He wants them to have the same opportunities as everyone else in the Digital Age. A recent TV documentary I watched clearly illustrates how people in rural China have gone from subsisting to thriving with online businesses. If they can do it, you can do it. You just need to learn some basic Digital Age skills to get started.

When I first started generating passive income from my Digital Age ventures, the first thing I would do in the mornings was login to my accounts. I couldn't wait to find out how much money I had made while I was asleep. Making more money by 7 a.m. than I could make working all day at a job was extremely motivating. This is different from stock market investments that can be up one day and down the next.

Passive income from a Digital Age venture is based on providing something of value to people. Those people take some kind of action that produces income for you. Once your passive income stream is profitable and sustainable, this money is a net gain every day. PURR Passive Income Power™ is here to help you develop and sustain those passive income streams as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Rinse and Repeat

Once you have one profitable income stream you will take some time to setup whatever processes are needed to keep it going. These processes typically take very little of your personal time once you have them established. Maybe you can automate all or part of your process with some of the many tools, services,

and platforms discussed in this book. There are many ways to automate things in the Digital Age. Maybe you can outsource sustainment activities to virtual assistants around the world. You will learn more about how to do that in the upcoming **Team Build** chapter.

Then you can start spending time generating your next income stream. This isn't as difficult as it may sound. You don't have to come up with a completely new idea every time. This is about choosing a theme for your life and monetizing it in various ways. Rather than finding it difficult to think of potential new income streams, after reading this book you are more likely to feel overwhelmed by all the possibilities. A key point is to find one that makes complete sense for you, and make that one work first. Then focus on one at a time after that. Make each one profitable before moving on to the next one.

In this book we will discuss all kinds of Digital Age ventures. To pick just one of many examples we will explore together, self-publishing a book can in itself generate multiple income streams. Writing a non-fiction book (like this one) is both a tactic and a monetization method of a larger strategy or business model.

In the upcoming **Choose Your Strategy** section, I will outline 8 Digital Age Business Models that are working for people today, complete with the *Main Monetization Methods* for each one. Other sections of the book will fill in the blanks on how to make these strategies work. For example, the **Getting Traffic** chapter outlines 12 different ways to get people to see what it is you have to offer. For now, let's explore the example of self-publishing a book to give you a taste of what is possible.

With self-publishing, the Digital Age has opened up unprecedented opportunities to make a good full-time living writing. Many people are doing just that. You can create your first income stream self-publishing an eBook on Amazon. Then you can use a service like CreateSpace to offer a print-on-demand paperback version, where your books are printed one at a time whenever someone places an order. That is income stream number 2.

Then you can expand to other eBook sellers like Kobo and iBooks. Then you can create an audio book version to sell on

Audible. This allows you to reach a completely new market of people that don't have time to read, but love to listen while they are doing other things. Then you can sell the foreign language rights for various countries, or simply have your books translated and upload them to your Amazon account for distribution to those markets.

If you write a non-fiction book you can create additional income streams from courses or membership sites based on the book. You could become a paid speaker at events. You could create a free podcast that makes money from ads. You can create and monetize blogs based on the book. As I repeatedly refer you to my blog throughout this book, you will learn exactly how I am doing just that. Alternatively, you could start with a blog and turn your daily thoughts into a book later on.

That's over 10 potential income streams already. You may already be losing count of the possibilities. We have only just begun. For example, **Success Story #4** at the end of this book will list 8 completely different income streams that allowed a couple of hobby blog owners to quit their jobs and make a full time living doing work they love. These are just a few of the examples we will explore together in the coming pages.

Don't worry about the details of how to do these things at this point. You will learn much of what you need to know from this book, and there are so many other ways to learn further details on how to implement a particular strategy. Not knowing how is no longer a barrier to success in the Digital Age. Learning how is just part of the process.

Unlike traditional education where you may spend years learning things you will never use, here you will learn to learn only what you need to know for the next step. All learning becomes practical learning with an immediate purpose. This book provides a lot of information. The immediate purpose is to give you an overview of how things are done so you can choose a path that fits you the best from a position of knowledge.

I highly recommend reading the entire book twice before you choose your Digital Age strategy. The points earlier in the book will make more sense the second time around. It will help you to choose something that is right for you. It will help you cultivate the feeling that this is possible for you, if taken one

step at a time.

"Don't be intimidated by what you don't know. That can be your greatest strength and ensure that you do things differently from everyone else." - **Sara Blakely, billionaire founder of Spanx**

Think of this as a treasure map that you will develop in your mind to create something new for yourself and for the world. You don't know exactly what you will encounter at each step on the map, but you will begin to believe in the map and develop confidence you are heading in the right direction. The main thing here and now is to develop confidence in your ability to work things out as you go. Taking control of your own learning to support concrete goals is empowering and motivating. You will dive deeper into each knowledge area when it makes sense to do so for the journey you are on.

"As knowledge is acquired it must be organized and put into use, for a definite purpose, through practical plans. Knowledge has no value except that which can be gained from its application toward some worthy end." - **Napoleon Hill**

Getting back to our self-publishing example, do you think you can't make real money selling small eBooks for a few dollars each? Habit books author Steve (S.J.) Scott makes tens of thousands of dollars every month. Royalty rates offered to self-publishers are much higher than traditional publishing deals. The marketplace for useful information is much larger than most people realize.

The Digital Age brings that marketplace within reach for anyone with an internet connection and an idea. Steve publishes his results on his website. He started writing books in Feb 2012. He had his first five figure month in Dec 2013. In May 2014 he made \$65,643.53 from his book-based business. He will make passive income from these income streams for years to come, on top of whatever he can produce with future income streams. You will learn more about Steve's journey in **Success Story #6** at the end of this book.

Will you or I do that well writing books? Probably not. The thing is Steve publishes a new book almost every month. (His books are quite a bit shorter than the one you are reading now.) He is

a writing and researching machine. He is very good at Digital Age marketing strategies, like the ones we will discuss in this book. So even though we may not do as well as him, his results illustrate self-publishing your own books is a viable way to make a living.

You can hear Steve interviewed if you follow the link to the free podcast in upcoming **Success Story #6**. He is the real deal. At time of writing I can see his books on many of Amazon's category best seller lists. Success Story #6 delves into Steve's origin story, which explains in part why he does so much better selling eBooks on Amazon than most people. As this book is my first foray into the book writing income streams, I thought I would use Steve as a good example. His story inspires me to be better every day. Maybe it will inspire you too!

Stop!

Are you thinking you could never write a book because you aren't an expert in anything? Notice one of the things I said Steve is good at is research. Do you think he was an expert in all of those topics before he began? Research is easier than ever in the Digital Age. The book you are reading now is based a lot on my own background and experiences, but some of it comes from research.

For example, the Success Stories you will find here come from my research of others succeeding in the Digital Age. I believe you as the reader of this book need a wide range of good examples to find something that resonates with you. For that reason I want to present you with examples that go beyond my own experiences. This requires research to bring the examples together into this one book, which is a form of content curation. We will discuss **content curation** in more detail later in the **Choose Your Strategy** section. (There are many ways to use this concept to build Digital Age businesses.)

Beyond writing books, research is a big part of any Digital Age project. It is easier than ever to do. Right now you have access to all the knowledge in the world, and you don't even have to leave your house! Not only that, the Digital Age allows you to do an end run around the traditional gatekeepers of the world. There is nothing stopping you from exploring the strategies in this book. Find what works best for you. Your mindset is the

main determining factor. Your only task here and now is to understand the possibilities!

Understanding What is Possible

"Everything around you that you call life was made up by people that were no smarter than you. And you can change it, you can influence it, you can build your own things that other people can use. Once you learn that, you'll never be the same again." - **Steve Jobs**

The key to making changes in your life is understanding what is possible, and having some realistic idea about the steps you would need to take to get there. Soon your mind will be brimming with ideas for making money in the Digital Age. Many of the techniques Steve Scott uses to promote and manage his book business are basic Digital Age techniques (done consistently and well) that I and many others have used to generate multiple income streams in other areas. They can be applied to any idea or business model. Steve describes his book business on his website as a *"day-by-day process where you try a bunch of strategies and hope some will work."* That describes the major theme of this book pretty well (**PURR** = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat).

To explore some lessons from book writing a bit further, let's say you would prefer to write fiction. There are many impressive success stories of self-published fiction authors that have gone on to become full time writers. There are even some that have had Hollywood movies made out of their books (e.g. *The Martian* was originally a self-published book, and is now a movie starring Matt Damon). One secret to the success of fiction authors is they will often write books in series. Once people are invested in a series they will typically buy every book in the series (e.g. Game of Thrones).

This is the power of building on themes. Any kind of Digital Age venture can benefit from this approach. Your next income stream should always be something that your existing followers (or customers or fans or tribe) would find attractive. That is how you scale and accelerate your business exponentially.

Physical Products

For example, if your first physical product is a yoga mat that you import from China, your next product should be something like a yoga block, not an office chair! In the Digital Age, sourcing physical products and selling them online has never been easier, or more lucrative. We will discuss a new and exciting way to do just that in upcoming **Success Story #3**. This technique is an alternative to the old drop shipping model. With this new technique you can create your own brand and sell it as a business after you get it up and running, and you never have to handle the physical products yourself (other than inspecting samples). More on that later.

Easier and Cheaper

The Digital Age makes starting all of these types of businesses easier (and much cheaper) than ever before in history. For example, in the self-publishing eBook and print-on-demand era you no longer need to invest in large print runs of thousands of books to get started selling. Individual books are often quite short and therefore relatively quick to write, compared to the large hardcover books of old. Books no longer need to be wide enough so the title can fit on the spine of the book. Most books these days are sold online based on a cover image, not from physical bookstores with shelves lined with books. You can experiment with price points for your books that reflect the book length among other things. As a self-publisher you are in total control of everything. You can get creative and respond to what resonates with your reader's preferences.

Gatekeepers Begone

"The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me." - **Ayn Rand, novelist & philosopher**

A key point worth repeating is that the gatekeepers of the world are disappearing. The tools exist now to go direct to the customer or fan without anyone in between. Many of the best tools are inexpensive or completely free. For example, talented people of all kinds are discovered on Youtube all the time, and build life-long careers from that exposure. Anyone can put up a blog on any topic and drive traffic to it in a variety of ways, many of which we will cover in this book. With incredible free

software like Wordpress, creating a new page on your website is no more difficult than writing an email. Setting up a new blog with your own domain name and Wordpress can be done in minutes. I will link you to the exact steps to setup your first blog in less than 5 minutes in the upcoming **Choose Your Strategy** section. No technical skills are required.

Expanding on our self-publishing example, you no longer need to seek permission or deal with rejection letters trying to convince a publisher to publish a book. Authors no longer have to please anyone but their readers. Just upload your new book to Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) or similar platforms, and it will be for sale to the world. Usually the very next day. Use some of the tactics you will learn in this book to get fans and make sure they know about the new book. Pay day. With the power of passive income, as long as it is a good book, this is a pay day that will repeat itself month after month long after the work of writing the book is done.

Another Example of Making Money in the Digital Age

One of the success stories we will explore later in this book is about a couple that started their own Youtube channel, which is free and easy to do. They turned that into seven figures in revenue in the first year. They turned it into seven figures of profit in the second year. Without any sales pitch whatsoever. Just videos that help people and barely mention the one thing that makes them money. That one thing is just a small part of the story in their videos.

That's over a million dollars. Per year. The subject of their Youtube channel is a basic thing we all deal with every day. You may be surprised to learn how it is possible to make money from such a simple thing, and with simple videos shot in their own home. They say people often ask them how they make a living. People don't realize the enormous income they generate from those videos. They just don't get it. After reading this book, you will.

I will share the complete story with you in the upcoming **Success Stories** section so you can learn exactly how they went about it. That section contains various examples of Digital Age business models that could work for you.

From Inspiration to Learning

The upcoming **Tools and Techniques** section will dive deeper into the details of how to go about making money in the Digital Age. To make the strategies work you will learn how to take advantage of the many platforms and channels that are freely available in the Digital Age. The Tools and Techniques section will cover basic concepts and advanced topics, like the various elements that go into developing your own online platform. This will enable you to become less and less dependent on external platforms and channels to drive your business forward. Hopefully my *"Google cut me off"* story at the beginning of this book illustrates the importance of doing just that.

Don't get overwhelmed when reading through all this material. Whatever path you take you don't need to do or learn it all. Keep in mind this is an overview. The treasure map we just spoke of that will spark ideas for you. You are much better off understanding all of these options at a high level before choosing the path that is right for you. All too many people get into this arena by hearing about and trying to follow a single strategy that may not be the best one for them.

There is nothing worse than doggedly following a single idea when it is the only idea you have. I wasted years doing that. The idea of this book is to help you find your best path as soon as possible, so you don't waste as much time as I did. For that reason, I encourage you to read this entire book before choosing your path. The PURR Passive Income Power™ system will help you choose the best starting point for where you are at. It will help you to develop a clear one-step-at-a-time plan to move forward. Once you are moving forward you will get used to learning the details of what you need to know for the next step when the time comes for that next step. Nobody can or should try to learn all the details all at once!

How Do You Get Paid?

The **Tools and Techniques** section will cover the details of how you get paid for your Digital Age ventures. To summarize it briefly here, getting paid is easy if you take advantage of marketplaces like Amazon, Audible, Udemy, and many others. These marketplaces handle all the details of collecting from customers. They pay you on a regular basis. Getting paid for

promoting other people's products is also very easy with affiliate programs, Google AdSense, and various other advertising platforms. Depending on the program, you may get paid by check, paypal, or direct deposit into your bank account.

If you want to sell direct from your own blog or e-commerce website, there are many services that manage all the complicated aspects of taking online payments on your behalf (e.g. Paypal, Stripe, Gumroad, Selz). The detailed Tools and Techniques section is purposely presented near the end of the book. It is very important to get on a firm footing by understanding your **Vision** and the **PURR Passive Income Power™** system first. Monetization tactics should never drive your strategy. That is the easiest way to lose your way. Before you can choose the right tools for the job, you first need to understand what the job is!

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

III. Awaken Your PURR Power™

"Without change, something sleeps inside us, and seldom awakens. The sleeper must awaken." - **Frank Herbert, writer and journalist**

PURR Passive Income Power™ is a complete system custom designed to help you make money doing work you love, even if you don't know what that is yet. Finding out what it is for you will be covered in the upcoming **Vision** chapter. There you will make powerful new connections in your mind to determine a life path that makes complete sense for you on every level, including the monetary level.

You will learn to generate innovative connection ideas based on your own unique past experiences, both good and bad. After you develop a Vision unique to your situation, you will learn to create a personally compelling execution plan, manage risk, and make key investments in yourself. You may just end up on a life path that makes complete sense for you, that you never considered before!

The Digital Age has ushered in all the tools you need to turn the **Vision** you are about to develop for yourself into an abundant life. The opportunities available to you today make it possible to design your life and livelihood like never before in history. You no longer need to find a traditional job that checks all your boxes. The Digital Age has created powerful new ways for you to take control of your life and livelihood from the comfort of your own home.

The Many Layers of PURR Passive Income Power™

PURR Passive Income Power™ has many layers. It starts with **PURR**, which stands for **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat. These words will come to mean more to you as you progress through the book. You will find them repeated at the end of every chapter. The hope is they will be more meaningful to you each time you encounter them. This is the top layer that is small enough to keep in your mind, like a mantra guiding you forward.

Underlying that layer are the strategies and business models that are working in the Digital Age today. The upcoming Choose

Your Strategy section will reveal **8 Digital Age business models** that you can choose from. Underlying that in the next section are some perspectives to help you generate a **deeper level of inspiration** to overcome obstacles in your path. After that I will introduce you to a unique perspective on different **income stream classes** to consider as you strive to balance your risk and rewards.

The next layer is the complete **12 Step PURR Power Wheel™**. You will see a graphic of the wheel shortly, with more details on it coming up in the **PURR Power Wheel™** section. Then comes the **Tools and Techniques** section with knowledge that everyone must have to prosper in the Digital Age.

After that you will read some powerful **Success Stories**. Each Success Story will include a link that leads to a podcast where you can listen to folks describing their successful Digital Age strategies in their own words. These are people that had so-called "*ordinary*" lives, until they took steps to become "*extraordinary*." These are very specific examples of people that took the kinds of steps that you are about to take. The more you understand how people are making money in the Digital Age, the easier it will be to design a path that makes sense for you.

Then just before what I hope you will find to be an inspiring conclusion to the book, there is one more section titled **Your Hero's Journey**. It will help you create a powerful story for your life that drives you forward every day. The *Hero's Journey* section will give you a fresh perspective on accomplishing great things in your life. The Super Hero image on the cover of this book is there for a reason. By the end of this book, you will be thinking like a Super Hero!

Underlying it all is the key to making money in the Digital Age. As discussed in the last section, that key is generating **multiple streams of passive income**.

Powerful Vision + Powerful System = Abundant Life

The highly respected Gartner research group reports that 70% of projects fail to deliver on expected benefits. The Standish Group reports only 32% of projects are successful. Knowing

how to manage projects is critical to your success when it comes to making money in the Digital Age. Without that, you are just starting a new hobby, not creating a sustainable livelihood. An abundant life results from having a powerful personal Vision **and** a powerful system that will get you there. Success in any project is about doing the right things at the right times. The project of rebooting your life and livelihood deserves nothing less.

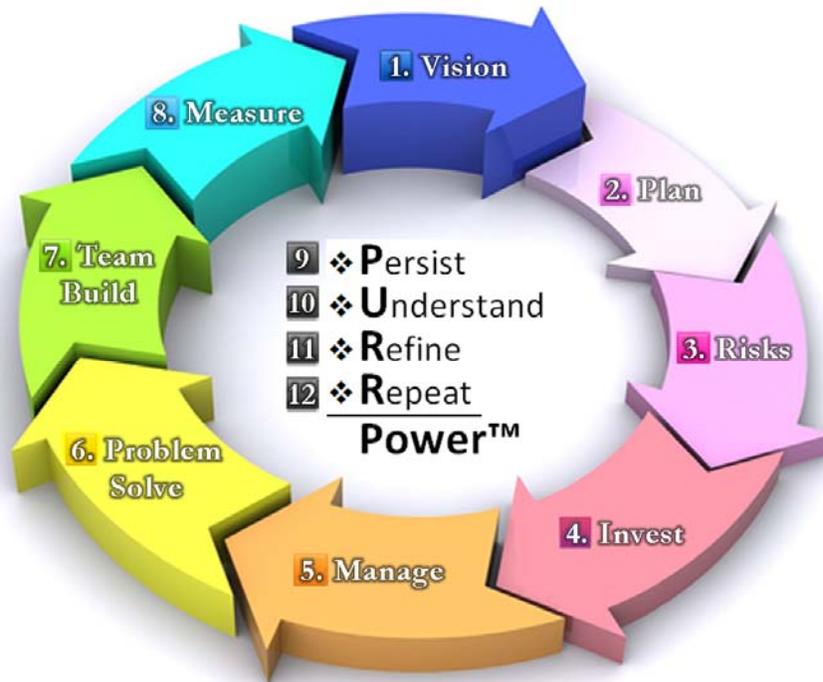
Pay attention to the project management aspects of this book and you will be ahead of 95% of the people making a living online. Then when you get to **Success Story #1** at the end of this book, and learn that the Merry Maker Sisters are adopting a **project focus** to further expand their successful blogging business, you will know exactly how to go about it.

The PURR Power Wheel™

The PURR Power Wheel™ is based on solid project management principles, but has been custom designed with Digital Age ventures in mind. As a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) with many years of experience managing projects for clients and for myself, project management is near and dear to my heart. Done right it keeps you focused on the right things at the right times. It will help you make intelligent course corrections as you discover more about your opportunities, and what works for you.

You will learn to change your life purpose if and when it makes sense to do so, while striking a reasonable balance between focus and flexibility. The PURR Power Wheel™ gives you all the tools and structure you need to manage your life changing projects. There is an entire section describing it in more detail later in the book. It will teach you to solve problems, measure your progress, and refine your strategy so your next move is always better than your last move.

Step up to the wheel and give it a Spin!



The 8 steps shown in the circular arrows on the wheel are:

1. Vision
2. Plan
3. Risks
4. Invest
5. Manage
6. Problem Solve
7. Team Build
8. Measure

The steps inside the wheel that make up the **PURR** acronym are:

9. **P**ersist
10. **U**nderstand
11. **R**efine
12. **R**epeat

Wanna be Great? Iterate!

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time" - **Thomas Edison**

"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'"
- **Mary Anne Radmacher**

The first thing to notice about the PURR Power Wheel™ is that it is iterative. The last step leads back to the first step so that you can begin your next "Spin" of the wheel. As with life itself, the journey from the start of a project to a successful conclusion is rarely a straight line.

We simply do not have all the information and experience right now to take us to all the places we want to go. It is all too common for people to use that as a reason to not even try, or to aim far too low. PURR Passive Income Power™ says that not knowing how to accomplish your goals should never prevent you from attempting your goals. In the age of Google, Youtube, and the ease of outsourcing work to others, not knowing how is no longer a barrier to success. Taken one step at a time, significant accomplishments are possible if you keep trying until you discover what works for you.

"...the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing." - **Theodore Roosevelt**

Success Requires Experience, Experience Requires Failure

Successful people will often tell you they have failed far more than the average person. How can that be? It is because they have made far more attempts to be successful than the average person. They have built on each failure so that their next attempt is always more successful than their last.

You might even say that success requires experience, and experience requires failure. That's just the way life is. We need to embrace it, and find intelligent ways to deal with it. Of course, we want to keep the failures small and to a minimum,

building on them each time and treating them more as feedback rather than failure. The PURR Passive Income Power™ methods will help with that, especially the preparation steps like Vision, Plan, and Risks. These are the steps which, if done well, will help you to avoid the big failures like wrong direction, poor planning, and foreseeable yet unforeseen problems.

Each Spin you take through the PURR Power Wheel™ will result in some successes and some failures. Not everything will work out the way you expect or hope, but trying things is the only way you can grow, adapt, and transform. The risk of failure goes down with an iterative approach like the PURR Power Wheel™ because of the constant feedback loops that are built in. You will never blindly or stubbornly follow a Plan you developed at a point in time where you knew very little about what was in store for you along the way.

You will also learn how to design your Spins so that each one results in a milestone that provides some incremental value. This means if you have a project where you planned for 6 Spins and only complete 3 of them, you will have produced something worthwhile that you can build on in your next project. This is in stark contrast to the haphazard way that many people approach important life projects.

So we should do our best to be grateful for the feedback we are able to glean from our failures along the way. Step 1 of the PURR Power Wheel™ is **Vision**. Each Spin of the wheel lands you back at step 1 again. You will find that your Vision is much improved over the last time! It will be like you are further up the mountain, and can see farther. You may have encountered some failures in the previous Spin that make it abundantly clear certain things simply don't work the way you thought they would. If that is the case, don't keep chasing those things.

The often repeated Vision step allows you to see which way the streams are flowing. Don't keep paddling upstream! Sometimes you have to step back and go with the flow, do what works, while achieving your own individual success. This is not the same as giving up. The point is to make intelligent course corrections as you go, while continuing to work hard. In project management terms, the PURR Power Wheel™ is an *adaptive* rather than a *predictive* methodology. It is well suited to Digital Age ventures where adapting to circumstances and what is and

isn't working for you is paramount.

Is it Big Enough for You?

Another danger is succeeding at something that is too small for you. This can divert you from achieving things of more significance. We need to be on the lookout for ways to build on our successes, and consider letting go of small things to make room for bigger things in our lives. I once had a fitness website side project that served an extremely small niche. I spent a lot of time adding new features like user forums and creating my own workout tracking software. I got some great feedback from customers that encouraged me to continue. It took a couple years in a row of making only \$2000 per year from memberships to the site to realize it was too small an idea for me. Sure it was an important experience to have. I learned things that led to bigger and better things after that. Still, if I had to do it all over again, I would have moved on much sooner.

In some cases like my Google example at the beginning of this book, the world will conspire to force you to move on in ways that seem harsh at the time. Looking back it was very important both that I had that experience, and that it ended abruptly. If you end up finding this book even remotely helpful, it is in large part due to Google kicking me off "easy street", forcing me to dig deeper and find more meaningful ways to spend my life. So don't shy away from any experience if you feel compelled to go in that direction. Just be on constant lookout to see if in the grand scheme of things it is a stepping stone, rather than the ultimate destination for your life.

"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future ... believing that the dots will connect down the road will give you the confidence to follow your heart, even when it leads you off the well-worn path." - Steve Jobs

Best Practices and Learning From Others

While your Vision and your dream may be unique to you, many of the roads you need to travel are well-worn by others that came before you. You may travel a different combination of

roads than anyone else, but chances are others have preceded you on each and every one of them. You can learn valuable lessons from their experience, while at the same time understanding that not everything that worked for them will necessarily work for you (different time, different place, different person, different niche market...).

The combination of all their successes and failures have evolved into something called "best practices." You will develop your own best practices to achieve your goals over time, and much of that does need to come from your own successes and failures. However, the time can be greatly reduced if you learn from others along the way.

Have you ever met someone that never takes advice, and insists on learning everything the hard way? Don't be that person. Learn as much as possible from those that have gone before you. That is how civilization has been able to evolve into the high tech society we have now. It is how you should be evolving if you want to reach your own greatest potential in the shortest possible time.

With that in mind, a goal of this book is to help you in 2 ways:

1. Give you a system and process framework to intelligently fail or succeed, and move forward to greater personal success through your own experiences.
2. Provide some "best practices" and examples for you to learn from. Learning from others is always faster and cheaper than learning from your own mistakes!

Why You Need to Awaken Your PURR Passive Income Power™

Experimenting with different ways to live and earn a living is becoming more necessary every day. As I am writing this book my local newspaper is ablaze with the bold headline: *"In 10 years, your job probably will not exist."* Another recent story states that researchers at Oxford have concluded almost half of all jobs available today will be lost to automation over the next 20 years. If your financial well-being depends on a single source of income, chances are there is a crisis coming your way. It is more important than ever in today's chaotic world to

develop your ideas and passions into money making ventures, so you don't end up with all your eggs in one vulnerable basket.

The truth is job displacements have already been happening on a large scale. Finding good new jobs to replace lost jobs is becoming more difficult. If you haven't been affected yet consider yourself lucky, but at the same time recognize that depending on just one way of making a living is no longer a viable strategy for most people in today's economy. As Bob Dylan said so eloquently: "**The Times They Are a-Changin.**" That statement has never been more true than now.

Getting Started

Like me, your journey may include the traditional job market. If you are just starting out and currently have a job, you don't have to quit your job to try and make a go of Digital Age ventures. For many people the most stress free and effective way to begin is to simply take on one side project while continuing with the security of a full time job. (The upcoming section on **Income Stream Classes** goes into this in more detail.) You can scale up from there and maybe quit your job later. If your job doesn't leave you with enough time or energy to do anything else, your first project may be to find a new job that does, if that is a viable option in your situation.

Ideally the new job would be in an area that complements the side projects you want to work on. It is easier to work on a side project that is an extension of what you are already doing all day long. Then you can come at your side project from a position of expert knowledge, which isn't necessary but does help. In my case I currently have a day job where I manage projects in a large organization. When combined with my experience in Digital Age ventures, I feel like my current side project (this book) is in complete alignment with everything else I am doing.

However, you may be in a position where the traditional job market is no longer a viable option for you. You may live in a place with an extremely high unemployment rate. Instead of side projects, you may need to get into full reboot mode from day 1. There is a good side to everything. They say necessity is the mother of invention. If you are in this position you will need to accelerate your learning and focus on getting results fast.

This can be a super productive environment in which to make big changes in your life. Some people advocate getting into this position as a way to force yourself to find a way to succeed. Although I personally would not recommend quitting a job to get yourself into this position, some people do it. Risk tolerance is something we will be discussing in more detail later.

Whatever situation you find yourself in today, you are about to learn a complete system for generating and consistently executing on your ideas, until you find the ones that work best for you.

Expand Your Vision

It is important not to limit your Vision to what you think you have time to do yourself. I have outsourced to virtual assistants located in the USA and the Philippines. Outsourcing provides an opportunity for you to become a true project manager, where you don't do the actual work yourself. You are simply the glue that holds things together. I made my living with various kinds of Digital Age ventures for many years while at the same time keeping my professional IT consulting career going. Outsourcing was a great way to accelerate my progress, and was not expensive compared to the income I was generating. The **Team Build** chapter in the **PURR Power Wheel™** section goes into outsourcing in more detail. This is one of the ways you can make progress on your Digital Age ventures while holding down a traditional job at the same time.

Perhaps even more relevant in the Digital Age are the many automation tools you have at your disposal. The most basic automation tool of all is a blog. Your blog can be telling people your story and signing them up for your newsletter, even while you sleep. Some income streams can be placed largely on auto-pilot once they are up and running, freeing you up to expand into additional income streams. Like if you write a popular book, Amazon will show it to shoppers that have read similar books. They do much of your selling for you using their powerful platform. In the early stages it is important to not place limits on your Vision because of what you may think you can't handle. Don't be afraid to think big. You will re-visit your Vision on each Spin of the PURR Power Wheel™. You can revise your Vision based on what you learn along the way.

If you don't have a clear **Vision** for your life yet this book will guide you to develop a powerful Vision for yourself. Something that fits you like a glove. Something that is big enough for you. Big ideas and small ideas often require similar effort levels. The difference is big ideas will inspire you more. They will motivate you to be bold when you need to be. They will give you the momentum you need to overcome obstacles. They will allow you to someday look back on a life well lived. Think big. Be bold. And when it makes sense to do so, outsource and make use of the many tools we will discuss in the upcoming **Tools and Techniques** section to help you along the way.

My Story

My own experience ranges from traditional employment to independent consulting to pure Digital Age ventures. I often wear more than one of those hats at the same time. I have made the bulk of my income from each one of them at different stages of my life. Although you may prefer to focus on just one direction to make a living, that is not the way it works out for many of us. We need to be open to opportunities of all kinds all the time. Some people call this **hustle**.

The upcoming section on **Income Stream Classes** will discuss ways to diversify and leverage different ways to make a living depending on the circumstances you find yourself in. That section goes beyond Digital Age ventures, which is just one of the income stream classes discussed. It puts things into perspective by outlining some of the pros and cons of each income stream class. It introduces the concept of a "balanced portfolio" of income stream classes that limits the risks associated with focusing on just one of them.

As you progress through the book you will learn more about my back story. I will also share with you some of the process I am going through here and now writing this book and launching the business that will go with it. The goal will be to demonstrate a Digital Age venture as a work in progress, rather than as a polished final product. As all projects have many of the same elements, the hope is you will start to get a feeling for how it would feel to launch a Digital Age venture of your own.

I will also share why my recent return to the world of the 9 to 5:30 employee made complete sense for me a few years ago. I

believe there is a time and place for everything. Traditional employment is not dead yet. When possible, finding a job that supports your other ventures in a variety of ways can be an important part of your journey, especially in the beginning. The job I have now supports the writing of this book in ways that go beyond the income it produces.

For one thing, I want to demonstrate from experience that you don't need to quit your job to begin transforming your life and livelihood. I think you deserve to hear this from someone that is *walking the talk*. The project of writing and self-publishing this book is both an example of a side project, and an example of a completely new Digital Age venture that I have never done before.

Just like you and your side projects, I will be learning as I go. I will share my journey with you here and in my newsletter, along with examples from some of my past money-making side projects. Through my own actions and life story I hope to make it abundantly clear that whether or not you are currently working at a job now, the concepts in this book apply to you.

This is all just a small part of the perspective I want to provide you with. My goal will be to motivate you through stories, quotes, examples, and success principles. At the same time, I will provide you with a complete system to follow that recognizes motivation is not enough to succeed when it comes to making money in the Digital Age. Those of you interested in following my journey beyond this book can subscribe to **The PURR Passive Income Power™ Email Newsletter**.

The newsletter is completely free and will provide progress reports on my life projects in real time, my latest thinking related to the PURR Passive Income Power™ system, and numerous free (and some paid) resources to help you on your own PURR Passive Income Power™ journey. You can sign up here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/join

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

IV. Choose Your Strategy

"Your time is limited... have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary." - Steve Jobs

Choosing a Business Model for Your Digital Age Venture

The upcoming chapter on **Income Stream Classes** will go beyond Digital Age ventures to consider a mix of various different ways to generate income in order to manage your overall risk. For now, let's consider various business models for your first Digital Age venture. You may end up combining more than one to fit your situation. We will go into more detail later in the book. Here are **8 basic approaches** to consider:

1. Teacher. Teaching something is an extremely powerful business model in the Digital Age. The easiest way to help people is to solve a problem for them, and teaching is a great way to do that. It feels great to create something of value *from thin air*. You can create digital products with the power of your own mind and a few Digital Age tools. You can make a very good living doing it. While traditional teaching jobs provide a basic salary, the sky is the limit when it comes to the income you can generate when you combine teaching with Digital Age business and marketing savvy.

What you teach can be something very simple. One of the Success Stories we will cover later in the book is about a guy that had his first big success with a short blog post he created. It teaches people how to get their children to tie their own shoe laces. That gave him the confidence to go on and teach other things. His Digital Age ventures now provide enough income that he quit his traditional job and is focusing full time on his Digital Age ventures. See upcoming **Success Story #5** for details on how he did it.

In **Success Story #6** you will learn how Steve (S.J.) Scott has made up to \$65,643.53 in a single month teaching people good habits with his Habits eBook series, which he sells on Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) platform. As with all the success stories in this book, you will be given a link to a podcast where you can hear people like Steve describe their journey in their own words. You will also find a written summary of what I got

out of the podcasts, especially as they relate back to the principles behind PURR Passive Income Power™.

"Copyrights protect expression and patents protect inventions, and neither protect ideas." - ipwatchdog.com

Ipwatchdog.com has been recognized as one of the top 100 legal blogs by the American Bar Association (ABA) for 5 years in a row. They also show up in the ABA Journal's 2015 Blawg 100 Hall of Fame (abajournal.com).

A question that often comes up with this business model relates to intellectual property (IP). Although I am not a lawyer, I believe the above quote from ipwatchdog.com makes it very clear. Not being able to copyright an idea means you can take any idea and come up with your own way to express it in order to teach something. *Adding your own twist to worthwhile ideas will spread those ideas to a wider audience and help more people.*

"Those who do not want to imitate anything, produce nothing."
- **Salvador Dali**

Depending on what you thought in the past, this could be a key mindset change for you. It can be expressed as follows:

Don't let anyone accuse you of "stealing" an idea. Copyright law and the progress of humanity are on your side. If you couldn't take ideas and build on them we would all still be freezing in the dark wishing we would have been the first one to think of fire as a means to keep warm at night!

You don't necessarily need to be an expert in what you teach, although it helps if you have some experience and interest in the subject area. It has been said the best way to learn something is to teach it. Complete the upcoming **Vision Exercises** to find something that makes sense for you. Research it to come up with ways to express it in a way that helps others understand it too. Even better would be to combine ideas in a unique way that takes understanding to a new level. The upcoming Curator business model describes this in more detail.

Teacher Main Monetization Method(s): ad revenue from blogs, affiliate commissions from blogs and email newsletters, book writing, video courses, information products of any kind (e.g. PDF reports).

A recurring theme with Digital Age success stories is they all tend to revolve around a website/blog, even when they involve more advanced strategies that go beyond blogging. All of the success stories at the end of this book involve blogs as part of the overall strategy. A blog is the hub from which folks learn more about what you have to offer, and the place where they sign up for your email newsletter. A blog is also the easiest way for you to get started with Digital Age ventures. The most sure way to change your own thinking is to see some evidence with your own eyes. Even modest success with your first blog may be all you need to give you the confidence to take your Digital Age ventures to the next level.

You can start your first blog in 5 minutes or less. Follow this link to learn how:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/start

2. Coach. Similar to teaching, this one involves individual clients that you help in person or using an online service like Skype. One on one coaching can work well as a higher value service you offer to your students if your main focus is teaching. Some people really enjoy coaching. For them teaching initiatives like blogging or writing eBooks are primarily done to get coaching clients. Others just offer coaching as a way to make ends meet while their other ventures are ramping up. Some people don't feel comfortable in a coaching role at all, and prefer to hold on to a traditional job to make ends meet as they are ramping up their Digital Age ventures. However, coaching can be a viable alternative during the hustle phase as you try different things to find what works best for you (**PURR** = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat).

Coach Main Monetization Method(s): Your coaching clients pay you hourly, monthly, or based on pre-defined packages. Information products also do well in this space.

3. Freelancer. Rather than teaching or coaching, freelancing is about actually doing things for people. Not everyone wants to learn or be coached, they just want things to get done. You provide services to do those things for them. You may have heard the saying: *"give someone a fish and feed them for a day, teach them how to fish and you feed them for a lifetime."* Well guess what? Some people just want the damn fish! Give it to them. Examples of this business model are website developers or social media managers. Anything that people want done but don't have the time, skill, or desire to learn.

You can find your own clients through your own contacts, or offer your services on some of the excellent online platforms for freelancers. You will find some of the more popular online freelancer sites here: **PurrPassiveIncome.com/freelance**. Keep in mind that even if you never offer freelance services yourself, chances are you will hire freelancers and/or virtual assistants to help you out with your online business at some point. Either to get things going that you don't have time to learn how to do yourself, or as a means to scale up what is working for you. Important considerations for finding and working with good freelancers and virtual assistants will be covered in the upcoming **Team Build** section.

Freelancer Main Monetization Method(s): Individual clients pay you per hour or per project. You can also productize very specific and well-defined services to sell at a fixed price. For example, you may create a "productized service" where you setup blogs for others at a fixed cost.

4. Curator. Just like the curator at a museum, you will curate (bring together) related products, information, or ideas. The sheer amount of what is now available in the Digital Age is so staggering that you can add value simply by aggregating things into one place. This can make it much easier for people interested in something to find what they are looking for, compared to spending hours on search engines. This book includes numerous examples of curation. Like the quotes at the beginning of the chapters and the Success Stories at the end of the book.

The list of Digital Age business models you are reading now is

an example of curating ideas. I say curating ideas because the actual content you are reading is original content that I have written myself, but many of the ideas are not new. However, the way I am organizing the ideas and how I am writing about them is new. If you are still reading up to this point in the book then it may be safe to assume that curating ideas is of some use to people. It is always good to mix in some original ideas as well, although some would argue there are no new ideas, just connections between old ideas that take things to another level. Nevertheless, my goal is to introduce some new ideas in this book, in addition to curating existing ideas in a way that I hope will resonate with you.

Curating information is slightly different than curating ideas, because you are using content created by others to amplify your message in a way that does not contravene copyright laws. In this case you are bringing together existing information and presenting it in some unique way. The Drudge Report is an example of an extremely popular site that curates links to other websites, and makes money from advertising. Another approach would be to grab one or more excerpts from existing articles to create your own article that compares and contrasts opposing viewpoints, or builds a case for a viewpoint that you are promoting. In this case you would paste the excerpt(s) into your article in quotes and attribute the source of each excerpt. Then add your own commentary around it. This is often referred to as "content curation."

If you don't know what to write about on your blog this can be a great way to get started. Just find what others are writing about and use that as the starting point for a blog post. If your blog is tightly focused on a particular niche, then people interested in that niche may come to visit your blog on a regular basis to find what is new from around the web all in one place, your blog. You can curate all kinds of things, like movie reviews from different sources, or everything new that comes out about a certain topic or person or worldview.

For example, you could create a blog that caters to "*expensive toys*" that wealthy men would like. Brand the site in a way that would resonate with your audience, which in this example is wealthy men. Rather than source the products yourself, a simple way to do this would be to create a blog post about each product that you choose to include. Then add your affiliate link

to the end of the blog post so readers can click through to a merchant site like Amazon to buy the product, resulting in a commission for you. The success of the blog would hinge on your ability to curate products that your target audience would like. **Success Story #7** is about an ex-dentist who now makes over 5 figures per month in Amazon Associate commissions with her unique way of curating products around keywords that she targets on her blogs.

Another example of content curation would be to embed Youtube videos on your blog and provide your own commentary around the video. Just view a Youtube video from your computer, click on Share, then click on Embed to get the embed code to add the video to your blog. (That is the current process on Youtube at time of writing.) Very easy to do, and the attribution to use the video is built right in to the embed code. The practice is encouraged and enabled by Youtube itself.

You can also create mashup videos that pull together video content from different sources. For example, one of the guys behind upcoming **Success Story #4** featured new Youtube videos related to his niche on his own "weekly roundup" style Youtube channel. Although he didn't create all that content himself, he was providing value to his Youtube subscribers by summarizing what's new in an area of interest to them. He was also giving credit to the contributing video providers in his mashups, so they got more visitors to their sites. It was a win-win for everyone. Digital Age ventures are not always about competing with others. Sometimes cooperating with others in your niche community can take you further faster.

You can also curate images to include in your blog posts. You are a few pages away from viewing an image I downloaded to use in this book, complete with the attribution required that allows me to use it for free. As I downloaded it from the Wikimedia site I was provided with the exact text I needed to include below the image in order to properly attribute the image. Sites like Wikimedia and Flickr have a staggering number of images you can use for free with attribution. It is worth getting to know how to use these sites as a means to find quality images for your blog posts at no cost to you, while at the same time giving credit to the many excellent photographers out there. Another win-win scenario.

Of course you can always purchase images from stock photography sites like Shutterstock. However, that is not content curation, it is spending money to get what you need. This also makes sense in some cases. For example, I purchased the circular arrows for the PURR Power Wheel™ from a stock photography site for a few dollars, and added my own text on top of it. If the image is a key part of your brand you won't want to have attribution beneath it. You will want to own the rights to use the image.

Yet another example of curation would be an e-commerce site that only sells lamps and lamp shades (product curation). If somebody is looking for a lamp they are more likely to shop where they have hundreds of different lamps to choose from, rather than a large retailer that may only have few. Sites like this aggregate products from many different suppliers all in one place. My wife spent hours on one of these sites before buying a new lamp, so I can attest to the fact that people find them useful! (Note: This example would fit just as well in the **E-commerce Master** section below.)

Curator Main Monetization Method(s): Affiliate commissions, ad revenue (e.g. Google AdSense), sell related products that you create or source.

Note: Free videos you offer on Youtube, like the mashup video idea described above, can provide direct income to you. Youtube will pay you to place their ads on your videos. Just create a new Youtube channel, click "Enable Monetization", and follow the steps provided. The more people that view your videos the more money you make. Even better is that Youtube videos are a good way to get people back to your blog or website to view your main offers. This is one of many ways we will be discussing in the Tools and Techniques section to "get traffic" to your offers and sign up for your newsletter. **Success Story #2** at the end of this book is a great example of generating over a million dollars profit per year with Youtube.

5. E-commerce Master. This one goes beyond selling your own products online. It is about sourcing many physical products and offering them all in one place on your own website. Think of a big health supplement website that has its own shopping cart and sells many brands of supplements from

many different suppliers. Or think of importing products from China to sell online. Upcoming **Success Story #3** is all about a couple of guys making \$1,000,000 in revenue per month doing exactly that. They do it in a way that allows them to create their own brands and take a hands-off approach to the tedious aspects of the business by taking advantage of some exciting new Digital Age sites and services. Success Story #3 provides all the details as well as a link to a podcast where you can listen to them describe their process in their own words.

You can create your own e-commerce site using tools like Shopify, or sell via large e-commerce sites like Amazon. I once partnered with some others in an e-commerce site that included sourcing and selling thousands of mainstream audio books from mainstream publishers. It went pretty well to start with, but ultimately we could not compete with the likes of iTunes and Audible.

From that experience I would say the e-commerce business model may be better approached in combination with the Curator business model. Like the lamp e-commerce store mentioned above in the Curator section. It is very difficult to compete in extremely large generic markets like mainstream audio books, because your competitors have very deep pockets and can build powerful brands. Consider instead setting up a niche e-commerce site that curates products for a particular audience (e.g. lamps).

E-commerce Main Monetization Method(s): Revenue from selling many different products from an e-commerce site that you own or partner with (e.g. Amazon).

6. Creator. This business model is about creating new things and profiting from them using Digital Age tools and techniques. It could be works of art if you are an artist. It could be new software tools if you are a programmer. It could be any kind of physical product if you are an inventor or product developer. It could be any kind of digital information product if you are a teacher or coach (e.g. pdf reports, eBooks, video courses, membership sites). The upcoming **Success Stories** offer up some great examples.

Creator Main Monetization Method(s): Income from selling your own products, either directly from your own blog, via large online marketplaces like Amazon, or by various distribution channels to get your products on physical store shelves.

7. Media Mogul. Create a website with lots of fresh daily content of general interest that people will want to visit everyday as they are drinking their morning coffee. Unlike content curation, which (typically) brings things together for a relatively small niche, a media mogul site is of broad appeal to attract lots of visitors. Monetization is generally from ad revenue that requires many daily visitors to be profitable. Examples are Arianna Huffington at the Huffington Post, BuzzFeed (social news and entertainment), TMZ (celebrity gossip).

Keep in mind generating the large amounts of website traffic needed to make this strategy profitable is no easy task. I actually tried this once and found that out the hard way. Therefore, this should be considered part of an advanced strategy that includes a viable traffic plan to support the site. Paying for traffic through some of the ad platforms we will discuss later in the book is not likely to be profitable for a general content strategy like this. A more likely tactic may be if you knew some heavy hitters in social media that were willing to promote the site for you to get the word out. Other free traffic methods like Search Engine Optimization (SEO) are unlikely to be of much use in getting a strategy like this off the ground.

One paid traffic tactic you may want to consider here is **traffic generation tactic #8 in the upcoming Getting Traffic chapter** (Content Recommendation Platforms). These "ads" show up at the bottom of articles on other high traffic media mogul sites under headings like: *Also on the Web*. Since the target audience of those sites are already in the mode of reading general interest newsy articles each day, they may be a good audience to target for *your* media mogul site. I tried this traffic generation tactic and found it generated some good traffic. It is like turning on a *traffic tap*. However, in my case I wasn't generating enough good content or perhaps not the right content for the site to catch on, and once I learned the amount of traffic needed for this type of strategy to pay off, I moved on to other things.

That doesn't mean it couldn't work for you as part of a good overall strategy and traffic generation plan. In the upcoming **Deepen Your Inspiration** section we will discuss this in some detail with some great examples of how a strategy or tactic that works well for one person will not necessarily work well for another person, and vice versa. The key always is to try things that you think make sense for you and your situation to learn what works for you (**PURR** = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat).

Content Recommendation Platform ads are actually quite **inexpensive** compared to other forms of advertising, so they can be considered for any business model or strategy. They are cheaper in part because the traffic is by definition not highly targeted traffic like it would be on keyword-based ad platforms like Google Adwords, or demographic-based ad platforms like Facebook. They are also not very well known compared to ad platforms like Google or Facebook, and therefore have less advertisers competing for the ad space. The upcoming **Getting Traffic** section will go into more detail on this traffic tactic and the Content Recommendation Platform that I used, including a discussion of rules surrounding it that you should make yourself aware of.

Media Mogul Main Monetization Method(s): Advertising revenue.

8. Offliner to Onliner. Taking traditional offline "brick and mortar" businesses online. Like a local flower shop that creates a website to take orders directly from online customers. Or a real estate agent that uses online advertising and other online traffic generation techniques to promote their real estate business.

Offliner to Onliner Main Monetization Method(s): Enhance the revenue of an existing offline business.

There are different levels to each of these business models. Don't worry about the details of how to do them yet. We will get there. For now, just think about what kind of business model would suit you. Later on you can consider the best starting point for your situation. Here is an example of the kinds of things to consider if you are just starting out:

Advanced teachers and coaches will often setup a membership website. They charge clients a recurring monthly fee to gain access to a password protected site. This is a great extension to the teacher or coach business model because you don't have to constantly find new customers. Keeping your existing customers happy produces a relatively stable and predictable income for you.

However, is a membership site a good place for a beginner to start? Probably not. It takes a lot of work to setup a site like that. If you have never sold a single thing then spending a lot of time or money setting it up probably doesn't make much sense. If you want to keep your members for any length of time you will need to provide them with something worthwhile every month. There are many ways to do that. However, it is very difficult to go from never having produced or sold anything to creating something that subscribers would find useful month after month.

So where do you start? A common place to start for virtually any business model is to setup a simple blog. Use that as your platform to build up to more advanced money making strategies like the ones we will discuss later in this book. One step at a time. Start by taking a few hours off from watching television to write something that the world can see on your blog.

That can be scary for some people. You might have to be courageous and take a position that not everyone will agree with. If you are *middle of the road* on everything nobody will be interested. People like to read things that are a little bit provocative from people that are willing to take a stand. **So you may have to learn to dance with fear.** It may be the first time you have really put yourself out there to publicly voice your opinion and stand for something.

On the other hand, instead of feeling fear you may find out that blogging is the most exhilarating thing you have done in years. As people start leaving comments on your blog posts you may find you have the ability to generate conversations that impact a community and change people's minds. People may even start promoting your ideas to others so that they will live on long after you are gone. You may be able to make a

difference in the world in ways you never imagined. It may develop into something that has you jumping out of bed in the mornings to get down your latest ideas, and to see where a conversation you started has been going while you were asleep. You may learn to write in ways that can influence the world and lead to a life of greater significance doing something you love, and eventually make your living from it as well.

You may develop a community of fans that will support you and give you feedback, even if they don't agree with you all the time. When they don't agree with you they may end up changing your mind about a few things too. This can lead to personal and professional growth far beyond what you would experience if you just went around thinking the same thoughts everyday, and never putting them out there to a wider audience.

If you can't think of anything to blog about now, that may be the best reason of all to try this. Get yourself setup in front of an empty blog post page and start typing to see what comes out. You may just surprise yourself! Experiment and don't feel your first blog needs to have a strong overall theme. You can specialize later as you get a feeling for the kinds of topics that energize you the most. Starting a website/blog is the first baby step to creating a viable audience-based business.

If all that sounds better than watching television in your spare time, consider this. **You can start your first website/blog in 5 minutes or less.** Follow this link to learn how:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/start

That link points to a page on my blog. I set that blog up using steps described on that page. You will choose a domain name for your blog as part of the process. Personally I like to combine a related keyword with something unique to my blog to come up with the domain name. For example, **PurrPassiveIncome.com**. If you are anything like me, if you come up with a good idea for a domain name, you will want to do this sooner rather than later so nobody beats you to it. This becomes a domain name that you own and control. You will pay a small fee each year for as long as you want to retain it. This is critically important for your Digital Age venture. It gives you full control over your website, and it is an asset that you can

sell for a profit later.

A website or blog is virtual real estate. Some people do nothing but buy and sell websites / blogs for profit. This is similar to buying, renovating, and flipping physical real estate. The difference is with virtual real estate you can buy in for a few dollars and turn it into a "mansion" with the power of your own brain! If you don't have any compelling ideas for your domain name now, you can choose whatever you like for your first blog just to get some experience. If you plan on building a personal brand or just want to represent yourself in a unique way to the world it could be your name (e.g. tigerwoods.com). It doesn't have to be reasonable or make any sense at all. I mean, who would have thought domain names like Google or Yahoo or Twitter would ever amount to anything before they became household names!

Follow the **PurrPassiveIncome.com/start** link to access the simple step-by-step instructions. You will take advantage of a one-click install of the free and very popular Wordpress blogging software to use on your new domain. It has been reported that 18.9% of the entire internet is powered by Wordpress. As a Content Management System (CMS), you can use it for much more than just blogging. You can choose from the many pre-built Wordpress themes out there to make your blog look however you like.

Many Wordpress themes are free, like the one you get automatically after following the steps at **PurrPassiveIncome.com/start**. Later on you have the option to install other free themes or purchase premium themes. Premium themes are typically a bit nicer and make it easier to configure things as you like. Themes can be installed with a couple of clicks. Once your blog is setup, creating a blog post is no more difficult than writing an email. Just type your thoughts and click **Post**. With the current versions of Wordpress you can even work on blog posts from your smart phone (Wordpress is *mobile responsive*).

As you build up your site there are many free Wordpress plugins to help you out every step of the way. Similar to themes, these are extensions to Wordpress that you can install with a couple of clicks. Themes control how your blog looks, plugins control what it can do. For example, for the Success

Stories post on my PurrPassiveIncome.com blog I needed a small audio player that would allow you to play all those podcasts directly from that one blog post. (More on that blog post in the upcoming Success Stories section of this book.)

A quick search in Google on "*audio player wordpress plugin*" returned a wordpress.org page that listed all the free players, complete with a 5 star rating system, user reviews, and the number of active installs so I could see how popular each one is. Installing my plugin of choice took less than a minute. I read their brief documentation and 10 minutes later I was playing the podcasts from my blog post! With Wordpress you have a huge community of fellow users that have already solved your problems before you knew you had a problem. They package the solutions up in nice tidy plugins that you can install on your blog with a couple of clicks!

Start blogging about whatever interests you, just to get the hang of it. Later on you can branch out into a blog or blogs about specific topics. There is power in taking small actions to start the wheels turning on a new venture. Starting your own blog is a great way to dip your toe into the water and get started on a new life path that includes your own Digital Age ventures. Blogs are the one thing that make sense as a key part of any business model you ultimately choose.

Every one of the success stories at the end of this book involve a blog in one way or another. Even billionaires like Mark Cuban that really don't need a blog have a blog (along with over 4 million subscribers to the email newsletter he promotes from his blog). Blogs can be the authentic voice behind any business that give customers or fans a way to connect with you on a more personal level. Perhaps more important when you are just starting out, blogs provide a platform from which you can make money and build up to more advanced strategies.

To summarize, blogging can be a way for you to get some confidence that you can go from being a consumer to a producer in the Digital Age. It can be a way for you to experiment and develop a larger plan that makes sense for you. Upcoming **Success Story #5** is about a guy whose first blog wasn't very successful financially, but it led him down a path where he eventually quit his day job to make a full time living working on his Digital Age business. He would not have

achieved it without the lessons he learned from his first blog. The key is to get started, and build up as you learn more about what works for you. **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

Here is that link again to get started:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/start

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

"If you plan on being anything less than you are capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life." - Abraham Maslow

This section covers some important things to consider when choosing a strategy that is right for you. Let's consider your basic human needs as defined by Maslow, and how that will influence your choices.

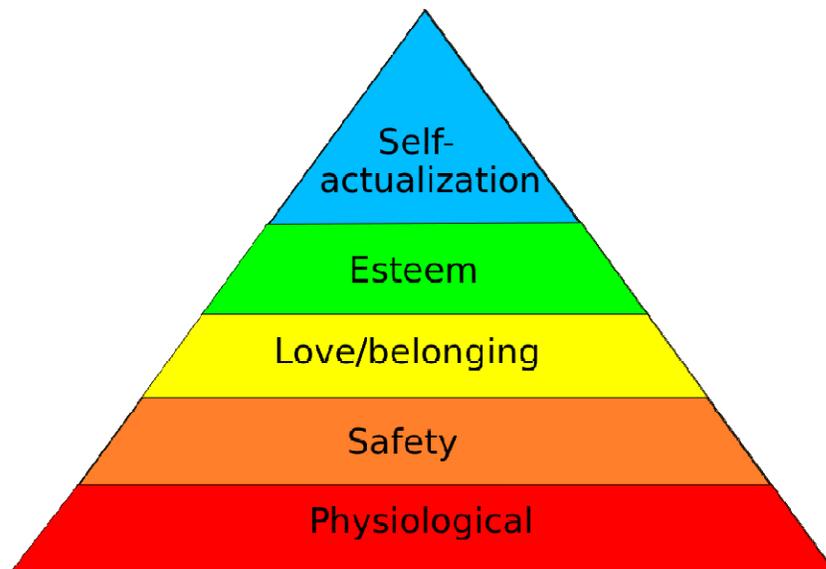


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To paraphrase another of Maslow's quotes: "*What a person can be, they must be. This need we call self-actualization.*"

However, in looking at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, we can see there are a lot of needs to take care of before you get to **Self-actualization**. They are:

1. **Physiological** - what you need for survival: air, water, food.
2. **Safety** - living in a safe environment, includes job or income security.
3. **Love/belonging** -friendship, intimacy, family.
4. **Esteem** - having the respect of others.

Why do I bring this up now? Because we are all at different stages in the hierarchy at different stages in our lives. Where you are at now will influence how you interpret much of what comes next in this book. **PURR Passive Income Power™** encourages you to take the high road to self-actualization. However, if you are currently struggling with physiological or safety needs, you may see this as *pie in the sky*. Not something you have time for right now. You may be reading this book looking for quick wins, and self-actualization be damned.

I completely understand. I have been there myself. I worked from home for many years where I needed the income from my Digital Age ventures to make ends meet. My IT consulting business was on and off. Rather than find more clients I chose to try my hand at Digital Age ventures. I spent a lot of time looking for shortcuts and loopholes. I traveled my share of *low roads*. My monthly income was like a roller coaster ride. Up one month, down the next.

This perpetuated the cycle of looking for shortcuts and quick wins. Although interesting and exciting in the beginning, it became a stressful cycle after awhile. I needed income every month and had lots of things I wanted to try. I never felt I had the time to focus too long on any one strategy. No time to take the high road. Taking more than a year to write a book with no immediate income from that effort never even crossed my mind. I was on the hunt for big wins in as short a time as

possible. I was more focused on things like the mechanics of getting traffic from Google than on coming up with a compelling value proposition for others. My results rode the waves of change as the mechanics of how things worked online changed over time.

That's why with this book I want to encourage you not to fall into the trap of looking for quick wins and loopholes to somehow beat the system. It is very important to think beyond what will make you the most money in the fastest possible time. There are a lot of courses out there teaching those types of things. I bought and paid for a lot of them. They can seem very convincing. They feed on people that are struggling and looking for quick wins.

The truth is that long term success with Digital Age ventures is about coming up with a strategy that truly resonates with others. If you can't imagine a real person actually recommending you or your product or service or blog to someone else, then chances are your strategy doesn't *have legs*. Once you find a strategy that does have legs, your efforts become much more focused. It becomes about trying different tactics and channels to get the word out for the one thing you believe will really resonate with a certain group of people.

As you will soon learn, some tactics are essentially free to try and others cost something. If one doesn't work you try another. Each attempt brings you closer to the tipping point where your strategy begins to take off. Each attempt teaches you something that may prompt you to modify your strategy in a disciplined way. This is all very different from jumping around always chasing the next shiny new object that promises quick wins.

Depending on your starting point, maybe it makes sense for you to try some of the *low road strategies* to learn a few things. However, consider that heading straight for higher ground may save you years spent on an *income roller coaster ride*. The upcoming **Vision Exercises** are designed to help you find something that makes complete sense for you. The remaining steps on the **PURR Power Wheel™** will guide you to achieve that Vision. Those chapters will provide a strong foundation to manage your Digital Age projects effectively. The **Tools and Techniques** section that comes after that will open your eyes

to exactly how you can drive a strategy forward in the Digital Age.

Your ultimate strategy may just be about giving people something that solves a small problem. If it works for them maybe they would be willing to tell their friends about it. Then you will have the kind of Digital Age strategy that has legs. Coming up with a solution like that takes effort. Finding the best ways to get the word out for that particular solutions takes effort. The people that are succeeding in the Digital Age worked hard to get there. They worked smart and did the right things, but they weren't trying to beat the system. They were looking for the best ways to use the system to provide something of value to others. They came up with a message and approach that they really believed in and found ways to make it work. Ultimately that mindset took them farther faster than constantly looking for shortcuts. The success stories included at the end of this book are some great real life examples that I believe will drive these points home for you.

In my case, it was only after I went back to work at a traditional job that I felt like I had the time to write this book. This is the opposite direction to what most people are looking for in the Digital Age. Many people either want to quit their jobs or are forced out of them. In my case it was the security of a traditional job that made me feel like I could take my time to write a book on the side. In Maslow's terms I had satisfied my need for safety, and therefore could take my time to focus on my higher level needs.

Everyone's situation is different. For you a traditional job may not be in the cards. Digital Age ventures may be your way to satisfy your need for safety. However, it is important to look at all of the options you have in front of you. Consider long term and short term goals together. Like the blog strategy described above that allows you to experiment and create some income in the short term, while at the same time building assets like email lists to support future expansion. The upcoming **Income Stream Classes** section provides more alternatives for making ends meet as you ramp up your Digital Age ventures.

There are many ways of getting your needs met at different times in your life. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is one way to evaluate the pros and cons of different opportunities available

to you. The extent to which you are able to get your needs met will be affected by your choices. Esteem can improve or get worse with a job depending on the job environment. In my case it improved and gave me more confidence to write this book.

The same can be said for Digital Age ventures. If you do something you are proud of esteem can improve. The Love/Belonging need can also be affected by your choices. For example, if your Digital Age venture gives you more time to spend with your family, it can get better. If you start ignoring your family to work on your ventures 24/7, it could get worse. Finding the right balance can be tricky. Thinking about your choices in terms of how they would satisfy your basic human needs as depicted in Maslow's hierarchy can be a useful perspective for evaluating your options.

Aside: PURR Passive Income Power™ has something in common with Maslow's Hierarchy. See if you can spot it as you read through the book. Later on I will explain it in the Tools and Techniques section (The Promised Technique). It is a little known but highly effective way to distinguish yourself and add value for people. It could very well spark your imagination to create something great in your own area of interest. For now, just think of the Maslow hierarchy as an important consideration when **choosing your strategy**.

Strategy vs. Tactics

You will wear many hats in your new Digital Age business. It helps to understand the differences. Here is one perspective based on the job titles you would find in a large corporation:

Executives focus on Vision and strategy

Functional Managers focus on tactics

Operations focus on execution of tasks

When starting out you will do all of these things for your Digital Age business. It is important to understand the different roles and perspective you need to bring to the table when working on each of them.

A strategy can be comprised of many tactics. In the software development world we would call this a one-to-many relationship. When you are starting out it is important to stay focused on strategy. The high level business models described at the beginning of this section will make up part of your strategy. You will consider various tactics to make each one work later on, after you have clarified your overall Vision. (There is an entire chapter on **Vision** in the upcoming **PURR Power Wheel™** section. It includes some unique **Vision Exercises** that will help you to clarify this all important first step in creating your strategy.)

The terms strategy and tactics are often used interchangeably and are easy to mix up. I may mix them up occasionally in this book. However, the distinction is worth considering when working on your Digital Age ventures. A key way to distinguish them is to understand that a good strategy doesn't die when a particular tactic for implementing it stops working. You can simply swap in new tactics and keep moving forward with your strategy.

Tactics vs Value Example

My "*Google cut me off*" experience described at the beginning of this book was an example of focusing too much on tactics at the expense of a strategy with a strong value proposition. When the tactics died the business died. The downside is I wasted a lot of time on tactics that only worked for a while. The upside is I gained experience with tactics that can be applied to better strategies.

For example, the Google Adwords tactic for getting traffic isn't necessarily bad. Applied to the right idea and to a business model that Google approves of it can work like gangbusters. People spend billions of dollars a year on these ads for a reason. Paying to show up in the Google search results for thousands of relevant search terms can accelerate your progress tremendously. You need to make sure the lifetime value of your customer is worth more than you are spending on the ads. You need to analyze which search terms and which ads and which landing pages are profitable. (See the upcoming **Problem Solving Techniques** chapter to learn about **A/B split testing**.) This can be a fun and rewarding process once you get the hang of it.

Imagine if you could develop an ad channel like Google Adwords or Facebook Ads to a point where you can generate \$2 for every dollar you spend. Then you can start to scale up your business very quickly. However, it is easier said than done. It can be very time consuming learning how to use these ad platforms and testing out your offers. You need to understand the rules for each ad channel. It can be a costly detour if it turns out your business is not profitable enough to pay for the ads. For some strategies other tactics may work better, especially in the beginning when you don't even know what the lifetime value of your customer is. The upcoming **Getting Traffic** chapter in **Tools and Techniques** section offers 12 alternatives for you to consider.

Again, the key is to focus on strategy first and tactics second. Don't think a lot about monetization tactics at the Vision stage. Start by finding something that fits you and your unique background. Something you are good at or could become good at and could develop a passion for. Something your future tribe can become passionate about. Then learn The PURR Passive Income Power™ System to manage your project effectively.

Monetization tactics will play a role in your direction after you are on a firm footing with the rest of it. That is why they are discussed in more detail near the end of the book. It is also why the PURR Power Wheel™ is iterative. With every Spin of the Wheel you will re-evaluate your strategy as you learn more about what works and what doesn't. As you will soon learn, the PURR Passive Income Power™ system has plenty of checks and balances built in to help you **Refine** your strategy and tactics to evolve in a way that makes complete sense for you and your future tribe (**PURR** = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!)

Brand Building

A good Digital Age strategy will typically include building up a tribe of enthusiastic followers that you can communicate with in various ways. You need to be very clear about what your brand is before you engage in tactics to promote it to the world. You need to be clear about who you are and what you represent.

"I'm not a businessman - I'm a business, man." - Jay-Z

Whether you love him or hate him, chances are you know who Jay-Z is. According to Wikipedia: *"He [Jay-Z] is one of the most financially successful hip hop artists and entrepreneurs in America. In 2014, Forbes estimated Jay Z's net worth at nearly \$520 million."* He knows a thing or two about building a brand. Although not all Digital Age ventures revolve around building a personal brand, the same concepts apply to building a brand around a product or service or blog. You need to understand what it is that makes it unique and find the right tactics to promote it to the world.

You also need to be clear about who your ideal customer is and what they care about. You need to have a clear value proposition that will resonate with your tribe. Then and only then can you determine which tactics would work best for building your brand and monetizing it.

Make Sure it Matters to You Personally

To do this well with your own Digital Age venture, it helps if the thing you are working on is compelling to you personally. Becoming successful in any area requires that you are interested enough to think deeply about it every day. Try to find things that make complete sense for you based on your own unique background and experience. Base your strategy on that. For many people figuring this out is not a trivial matter. It wasn't for me. It took many years.

That's why the **Vision Exercises** in the upcoming **PURR Power Wheel™** section are emphasized in this book. They can help you fast track your way to higher ground. They will help you to avoid time-consuming and costly detours chasing things that don't really make sense for your situation. We are talking about the difference between **doing something** to make money, and **being something** that leads to an abundant life.

At first glance creating a **Vision** that involves significant changes to your life path may seem too difficult or time consuming. However, it is only when you attach meaning to your work that it ceases to seem like work. When you attach meaning and purpose to your projects, daily progress toward those goals generates that often elusive feeling called happiness. The joy comes from the process, not from achieving

the end goal. Once you achieve a goal you will want to find another goal. That is why there are so many rich successful people out there still doing things, when they already have enough money to last 10 lifetimes!

"Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort." - **Franklin D. Roosevelt**

Lasting happiness comes from making daily progress towards inspiring goals. Don't cheat yourself out of that by constantly looking for quick wins, like *get rich quick schemes*. Or settling long term for an uninspiring job. Find something inspiring to work on, and enjoy the time it takes to achieve it. Daily achievements contribute to daily happiness, but past achievements do not. When I wake up in the morning my past achievements rarely even cross my mind, much less contribute any happiness to the day. It is the prospect of making progress on inspiring projects like writing this book that gets me out of bed in the early morning, and sets the tone for my day.

Why not you?

This may be the most important question you will ever ask yourself. If other people can achieve great things in their lives, why not you? For children this question is hardly necessary, they just assume they can do whatever they want when they grow up. When I was a kid my friends and I would argue over which professional sports team we would play for. It never occurred to us that we wouldn't be able to do it. The sad thing is that most of us lose that kind of self-confidence as we get older, the precise time when we need it the most. The precise time when we begin to have the tools to do something about it.

Your thoughts lead to actions, and your actions lead to results. What you plant in your mind today will grow into your future. This has been demonstrated in both the positive and the negative over and over since the beginning of time. Plant weeds and you will get weeds. Plant the seeds of abundance and you will get abundance. Before you can convince anyone else you can do it, you must first convince yourself by planting positive seeds in your own mind! The **Vision Exercises** in this book will help you do that in a way that fits you and your unique situation.

Try answering the "*why not you*" question without using any of the common stories people often tell themselves. Too busy? Not healthy enough? Not experienced enough? Not educated enough? Can't afford it? A look at what others in similar situations to yours have accomplished in life will tell you that these stories are probably limiting beliefs that can be overcome.

How Big are Your Challenges?

"Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose." - **Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning**

Viktor Frankl survived a concentration camp because he found meaning in that struggle. He refused to let his captors take away his *last ultimate freedom*. The freedom to choose his own response to his circumstances. As tough as your current circumstances may seem, chances are they pale in comparison to surviving a concentration camp. Victor Frankl used that experience to go on and inspire the world with his story.

How will you overcome your challenges? The next section discusses challenges in more detail, and provides ideas that I hope will **deepen your inspiration** to overcome them.

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

V. Deepen Your Inspiration

"You're going to go through tough times - that's life. But I say, 'Nothing happens to you, it happens for you.' See the positive in negative events.... Turn your mess into your message" - Joel Osteen

"Don't wish it were easier. Wish you were better." - Jim Rohn

This section covers some important concepts. I hope that understanding them will lead you to a deeper level of inspiration. Just like any career path, succeeding in the Digital Age takes effort. This is not a get rich quick scheme. Know these things in advance and go into it with your eyes wide open. Time to develop the kind of deep inspiration that will propel you over obstacles!

Failure and Luck

Some things you try will work out well, and others won't. Sometimes there is a window of opportunity where things work well for a while, and then they stop working. More frustrating still is no matter how hard you work at something, whether or not you succeed is often out of your control. That's why it is so important to adopt a system where you try lots of things to find what works for you. In my *"Google cut me off"* example at the beginning of this book I worked hard, played within the rules, and promoted good products. Then the rules changed. Time to move on.

The truth is many of the things we try are likely to fail or fall short of our expectations. Most success stories include some element of luck. Right place, right time, right person, right environment. These things are not easily reproducible. There may be subtle reasons why the odds are not in your favor for a particular opportunity.

In Malcolm Gladwell's book **Outliers**, he explains why so many of the best Canadian ice hockey players were born in January or February. This birth date meant they were up to a year older than other kids in their age class when they were growing up. They got picked by the best teams, worked with the best coaches, and received the most training time and access to

practice facilities. Sure they worked hard, but being born in January clearly gave them a huge advantage over other kids. When it came to the *hockey opportunity*, the odds were stacked in their favor. If you were born in December, the odds were against you. Gladwell goes on with example after example of how environmental factors that were completely out of the control of many famously successful people contributed to their success. They were born in the right place, at the right time, with access to the right knowledge, tools, and facilities.

When you hear a guy like Jay Leno say the one thing he would never give up is telling jokes, because the jokes pay for everything else, it is clear this is true for him. He has made millions working as a late night talk show host. That doesn't mean the rest of us should go out and start telling more jokes as a means to make more money!

Even Warren Buffet, one of the most financially successful people of all time, attributes much of his success to "lucky genes", along with when and where he was born. A particular investment strategy that worked a year ago may not work today. The markets change over time. The same thing applies to business opportunities. Taking the same steps a successful person took may not lead to success for us. That is why so many people end up disappointed with self-help books based on a single strategy that worked for the author. Strategies of any kind may be successful one day for one person, and a complete bust on another day for another person.

That's not to say that modeling yourself after certain habits or strategies of successful people is bad. As Anthony Robbins says: "*Success leaves clues.*"

I believe the key word there is "clues." You can't expect to follow an exact blueprint laid out for you by someone else, and expect to have the same success they had, or any success at all. While it is important to learn from others, you need to discover what works for you, **by doing**.

"We learn by doing." - **Aristotle**

There is no shortage of things to do. You can start by following strategies or tactics others teach. You can learn a lot from them. Just keep in mind the conditions may not be right for you

to achieve the same success in the same way. Regardless of what works for others, you will need to adapt the strategies to your own circumstances.

Intelligently Explore Opportunities

"Option A is not available, so let's kick the shit out of option B."
- **Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook**

What we need then is a system that guides us to try doing new things, then adapt as we learn more about what works for us. We can't rely on other people to give us an exact blueprint for success. Instead, we need to do things, learn from our experience, make adjustments, and keep moving forward until we succeed. In short, we need to PURR (**P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat). Like a lion!

It is inevitable that with consistent effort a certain percentage of the things we try will succeed. Let's say our success rate is on the low side, say 5%. That means we may need to try 20 things before we succeed at something of significance to us. We can't rely on luck or inspiration finding us, we need to go out and find our own luck by doing things.

A lot of people think they need to come up with a really great revolutionary idea. Many poor people walk around thinking that. What generally happens is they never come up with that great idea, or if they do they haven't developed any skills to do anything about it. Contrast that with successful people. They are trying things all the time and improving their skills all the time. For the most part they aren't focusing on revolutionary ideas. They are solving simple problems for people. In the Digital Age you can scale that as never before. Instead of solving that problem for 1 person, you can solve it for 100 people, then 1000 people, then 10,000 people, maybe even a million people.

Start with the ideas you generate for yourself as you go through this book. By constantly refining your approach you can make sure the next thing you try is always more closely aligned with what actually works for you. Where you end up will take into account your own unique background, abilities, and the current state of the world you find yourself in. The time has come for you to get better at managing your dreams and

personal projects. Time to begin following a system where you learn from your experiences, and adapt as quickly and efficiently as possible!

PURR Passive Income Power™ will help you come to Understand exactly what it is that makes you unique, and how to translate that into a powerful Vision and Plan of action. If you want to live up to your potential, and attain the happiness that comes with it, a bias for action is absolutely necessary. Don't fall into the trap of thinking you need a perfect Plan in place before you do anything. There is no such thing as a perfect plan. Any Plan that moves you forward even a single step is moving you in the direction of your ideal life.

"No Plan survives first contact with the enemy." - **Helmuth von Molke the Elder**

What Really Makes People Happy

It is worth repeating that *happiness comes from growing and making progress toward worthwhile goals, even if the daily progress is small.* Many projects do not require you to make sudden, radical changes in your life. A common misconception is that you need to create a large chunk of time to make big changes, such as quitting your job to start something new. The truth is small amounts of laser focused effort every day can add up much sooner than you think, especially with all of the amazing tools and opportunities that are available in the Digital Age.

The PURR Passive Income Power™ lifestyle focuses more on process and systems than on goals. We do our best to begin each "Spin" of the PURR Power Wheel™ with the best possible Vision and goals that we can come up with at the time, but the process that comes next is what makes all the difference. It is about making small progress every day and making adjustments in a disciplined way when appropriate. The world is a complicated, messy, and ever changing place. We need to remain flexible with our Vision and goals. We don't want to spend years blindly striving for a goal that may no longer make sense for us or for the world once we achieve it.

We May Not Get to Where We are Headed, But ...

"It doesn't matter how many times you almost get it right. No one is going to know or care about your failures, and neither should you. All you have to do is learn from them and those around you because all that matters in business is that you get it right once. Then everyone can tell you how lucky you are." - **Mark Cuban, "Shark Tank" billionaire venture capitalist**

We need to embrace the philosophy that we may not always get to where we are headed, but through persistent and focused action we will get to where we need to be. We want to focus on goals, but not so much that we filter out everything else along the way. The things that happen to us along the way may contain the seeds of an even greater Vision for us, something we were not able to see when we began. Always be open to modifying your Vision and goals in a disciplined way that builds on experience gained in the process. The upcoming Manage chapter in the PURR Power Wheel™ section will clearly define that discipline.

For example, let's say your Vision is to literally reach for the stars by becoming an astronaut. The kinds of things you would need to learn and accomplish to have a chance of reaching that goal are in and of themselves impressive. Chances are they would open up windows on the world that were hidden to you at the beginning of your journey. At the same time you may become aware that NASA is hiring less astronauts than before, and getting record numbers of applications for the astronaut program.

PURR Passive Income Power™ doesn't say that you should give up on your dream of becoming an astronaut. Instead, it advocates following a system with feedback loops built in. This will allow you to regularly re-evaluate your options, and make course corrections as needed. Shooting for the stars and falling short can still land you in some pretty great places.

On the other hand, you may come to realize your original goal was far too modest, and even greater things are possible for you. Like Elon Musk of SpaceX fame, you may decide you don't need NASA because you can build your own space exploration company and send your own rockets into space, which he did and does. From his spacex.com website: *"SpaceX designs,*

manufactures and launches advanced rockets and spacecraft."

Become Passionate About the Process

"People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing - that's why we recommend it daily." - Zig Ziglar

Becoming passionate about a daily process that produces results gives you the motivation to replace old habits, and propels you to become something more than you were. As you start to see progress you will find energy you never thought you had. It leads you to places you could never have imagined at the outset. You can open up exciting new doors for yourself if you are able to understand and adapt to changing circumstances (**P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, and **R**epeat).

Ordinary people have the seeds within them to do extraordinary things. Develop a powerful Vision unique to you, then follow this powerful system to see where it takes you. The techniques described in this book may be seen as a complete paradigm shift to some of you. They could be an important turning point in your life if you let them. If you follow along and complete the exercises as you go, you will end up with your very own *opportunity plan*. You will design a series of tasks or "puzzles" for yourself that you will solve one at a time as you move forward.

We all tend to put off doing things we aren't sure how to do. The PURR Passive Income Power™ system includes breaking larger goals down into manageable tasks, and using techniques that make working on those tasks fun and engaging. For example, using Flow concepts (to be explained in more detail later), you will turn things you don't know how to do yet into something you look forward to working on every day. Like puzzles that you design for yourself to match your current skill level, so they are not too easy and not overwhelming (flow activities).

This will help you to develop passion for the process and accelerate your progress. The idea is to make changing your life for the better as engaging as a video game. The things you don't know how to do yet become like the higher levels of a video game that you haven't achieved yet, but are looking forward to trying. And just like a video game, it may take a few

tries before you get it right.

Learning the Right Way is Worth the Effort

There are right ways and wrong ways to go about these things. A goal of this book is to help you skip some of the wrong ways and go straight to what works. This will include pointing out some strategies that people starting out often try that go nowhere. It should be a fun ride. Making money online is no longer a fringe activity. It is a completely viable way to make a living for corporations and individuals alike. Learning this stuff is worth the effort!

Digital Age Learning vs. Traditional Education

"After years of looking at the data, Google has found that things like college GPAs and transcripts are almost worthless in hiring. Following these revelations, the company is hiring more and more people who never even went to college." - BusinessInsider.com

If you are a younger person trying to map out your life, consider this. The traditional education system does not teach you how to thrive in the Digital Age. Just like living on a farm in the Agricultural Age did nothing to prepare people for the Industrial Age. More and more college graduates are unemployed or under-employed. Many end up working in low paying service industry jobs. Many of them feel misled. Advice they got to go to college simply didn't work out for them financially. On the contrary, student loans devastated their finances. Some of them turned to Digital Age ventures to work their way out of it. They asked themselves why they went to university in the first place. (See upcoming **Success Story #2** for a real life example of this.)

Many famously successful people don't have a college degree. Steve Jobs and Bill Gates both dropped out of college. So did Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg. So did film director Steven Spielberg. Henry Ford never graduated from high school. That is not to say there is no place for traditional education. There certainly is. For many life paths it is absolutely necessary. You can't be a doctor or lawyer or engineer without a traditional education. I have an engineering degree myself and it has opened some doors for me. The point is that it isn't necessary

or even desirable for everyone in today's world.

When I graduated from university I got a great starting job as an engineer in the oil industry. As I write these words that industry is seeing massive layoffs. What was possible for me then is far less likely for people graduating now. You may argue that this is a cyclical industry and it will get better again later, as it has in the past. Maybe it will, although the price of oil is completely unpredictable, and one never knows. In any case, having additional income streams from Digital Age ventures can go a long ways to bridging the gap in the down cycles. In many sectors things *will* get progressively worse as automation and other factors like global outsourcing take their toll on the traditional job market. At the same time there are more alternatives to thrive without a traditional education than ever before in history. For example, I didn't need anyone's permission or a degree of any kind to write and self-publish this book. I can simply put it out there and let the market decide.

A key point is what worked for your parents may not work for you. It worked for them and they want the best for you. They may want you to follow in their footsteps. It may work out for you. It may not. We live in a different world now. Higher education is big business. There are so many graduates that having a degree doesn't distinguish you or lead to jobs in the same way that it did in the past. Understand that doing things your own way gives you a 4 year head start and costs far less than going to college or university. Take a good look around and think about your alternatives. Understand that there are alternatives. This book presents some of them. For your consideration.

Digital Age Ventures vs. Traditional Jobs vs. Digital Age Jobs

Although traditional jobs are still a viable stepping stone in this process for some, we know that they are disappearing at an alarming rate. New technology and global outsourcing by corporations will continue to limit options for decent traditional jobs in the future. The jobs that remain are often not well-paid or fulfilling. They may still help you get to where you are going, but they can no longer be depended on as a sole source of income.

As a result, millions of people are being forced to re-evaluate how they fit into the world. Even people who don't like change of any kind are being forced into it more and more as the world around us continues to change at lightning speed. Although re-training or coming up with creative ways to find new jobs works well for some, more and more people are pursuing their own independent ventures. They are leveraging the powerful tools available in the Digital Age to bootstrap their way into a new and more fulfilling life.

At the same time, there are new and different jobs springing up as the world changes. Digital Age jobs that you could be re-trained for. Jobs where your experience with Digital Age ventures may do more for you in landing those jobs than a traditional education would. Think about it. Are companies that are looking for social media managers more likely to hire a university graduate, or someone that has spent time in the trenches using all the latest social media platforms and related tools to build up their own successful Digital Age venture?

In the upcoming section on **Income Stream Classes**, you will learn more about why you would want to consider all of these alternatives and more when designing your life and livelihood.

Remove Impediments to Progress

Don't let fear, procrastination, or lack of a clear Vision or Plan get in the way of realizing your potential. Don't be afraid to think big or go outside of your comfort zone to achieve truly significant change in your life. Something you can be proud of and be hungry to wake up to every day. The time to break free of whatever is holding you back is now.

*"Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Almost everything--all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure--these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart. No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet, death is the destination we all share..." - **Steve Jobs, founder of Apple Computer***

PURR Passive Income Power™ will help you develop a clear Vision and a focused Plan that aligns with your unique circumstances and past experiences. Nobody else in the world has gone through exactly the same good and bad experiences that you have. This gives you a unique perspective on the world, and uniquely positions you to contribute in ways nobody else can. Steve Jobs took a single calligraphy class in college that inspired him to create the first computer with fancy fonts. From that starting point he went on to change all of our lives by creating all sorts of new categories of things that never existed before, from smart phones to tablet computers. What we are talking about here is nothing short of finding the meaning of your life. It doesn't have to be a revolutionary new idea like the first ever smart phone. But it needs to be something. The sooner you figure out what it is, the more time you will have on this earth to make it count.

Drivers of New Opportunities in the Digital Age

Let's take a quick look at some drivers of these new opportunities. Contrary to how doing business in the Digital Age is sometimes portrayed, it is important to understand that the incentives are there for everyone involved to win. Of course there are scammers and spammers out there trying to take advantage of people, just like in the real world we have been dealing with pickpockets for hundreds of years. However, at its core the new Digital Age business opportunities make sense for everyone involved, when done correctly.

For example, the affiliate marketing model alluded to at the start of this book is now a mainstream way of doing business. Big and small brands far and wide now have affiliate programs to help them sell their products. If they don't, chances are their products are for sale on Amazon, and Amazon does have an affiliate program you can earn commissions from (called the Amazon Associates program).

Affiliate programs are a great deal for business owners because they get a large independent sales force that only gets paid if they produce results. Sales are tracked via special "affiliate links", which will be discussed in more detail in the **Tools and Techniques** section. The business owner pays the affiliate marketer a commission on what gets sold. Unlike a traditional

sales force or marketing strategy, every dollar they pay out is guaranteed to result in more profit for them, because it is only paid out as a percentage of an actual product sale. It is no wonder it has been adopted in such a big way.

It also gives businesses more reach in the marketplace with very little effort. For example, let's say your business sells exercise equipment. Of course you would love for your banner ads to show up on every fitness blog out there. Finding, contacting, and negotiating with every fitness blog owner would be an overwhelming task that may never lead to a profit. However, with an affiliate program the blog owners willingly seek out and include those types of ads on their blogs. From the blog owner point of view there is also very little effort involved. At the most basic level, they simply sign up for the affiliate programs and place those ads on their blog near the content that their blog visitors are interested in. The blog visitors get to see ads that are curated to match their interests. It is a win win situation all around.

That is just one very basic example of doing business in the new digital economy. In this example you could be either the blog owner or the business owner with your own affiliate program. These things are not terribly difficult to do. If you want your own affiliate program there are many services that will take care of the details for a small fee. They do all the heavy lifting when it comes to tracking and reporting on affiliate sales, paying your affiliates and so on. The upcoming **Tools and Techniques** section will show you how to get these things up and running for your Digital Age venture. The world is already setup to take care of the technical details for you, so you can focus on the things you are good at and enjoy doing.

What's Next?

The upcoming **Vision Exercises** in the **PURR Power Wheel™** section will help you find ways to use your own past experiences, both good and bad, to infuse your life with greater meaning and greater monetary rewards. The next section on **Income Stream Classes** explores various ways to hustle and make ends meet while your ultimate Digital Age strategy is taking shape!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

VI. Income Stream Classes

This section extends the earlier discussion on Digital Age Business Models. It considers all kinds of different ways to generate income. There are many people like myself that only get a portion of their income from Digital Age ventures. It comes down to hustling and finding different ways to survive in the world. PURR Passive Income Power™ recognizes this reality. That is what this section is about.

Although quitting your job to focus on Digital Age ventures is the ultimate goal for many, the truth is it may be years before you get there. This section presents some alternatives to avoid placing all of your eggs into one vulnerable basket. It is about creating a life plan that can withstand hits to any one income stream. It is about firming up the safety level in Maslow's Hierarchy. It is about helping you to create enough space for yourself to work on the things you love the most.

In traditional investing they talk about spreading your investments out over multiple *asset classes*. This is referred to as *asset allocation*. It means you should spread your investments over different asset classes such as stocks, bonds, and real estate. This type of diversification protects your investment portfolio from sudden changes in the value of a particular asset class.

In the same way, you can consider spreading your income streams over more than one *income stream class*. As far as I know nobody else talks about income stream classes. At time of writing I can't find any hits on it in the search engines. So I believe this is a new idea I am making up here for the purposes of this discussion. PURR Passive Income Power™ says you should consider a "balanced portfolio" of income stream classes. Even though the income stream classes listed here are not all about making passive income directly, they may be strategies you need to consider as part of your overall plan when starting out, and perhaps long term as well. The point is there are many different ways to generate income. It is worthwhile considering them all, and looking for ways to combine more than one of them at the same time to create a relatively stable situation for yourself.

Many people satisfy some of the basic human needs Maslow

talks about from traditional jobs and in other ways. Passive income streams may just be part of a mix that works for you. That has been the reality in my life and for many others based on my research. For that reason, consider the pros and cons of the income stream classes described below.

The advantages and disadvantages listed for each are not intended to be a complete list. They are just some points for you to consider when thinking about each income stream class. People often get so polarized and so focused on just one way to make a living. This is a reality check for you to keep in mind. You can lower your risk by choosing more than one income stream class. They are also quite often complementary and can work well together. For example, a traditional job can lead you to and improve the performance of a Digital Age venture, and vice versa. The advantages of one income stream class can balance out the disadvantages of another one. If you have a balanced portfolio of income stream classes, you can enjoy all of the advantages and minimize the risks of the disadvantages. If you decide to focus on just one, then be aware of the risks you are taking on.

1. Digital Age Ventures

If you can do it in your pajamas sitting at home in front of your computer, or fully clothed from a cafe in the south of France, it is probably a purely digital age venture. With Digital Age ventures you are paid from multiple sources, rather than from a single entity like an employer. At the most basic level, this is about finding ways to add value to people's lives and making money online.

Advantages: You can establish passive income streams from a variety of diversified sources. The passive income can continue on long after you have finished working on a particular project. Typically very low up-front costs to get started when compared to traditional businesses. You can develop systems to scale up your income beyond what you could make from a traditional job. You can pick and choose themes and activities for your life that have deep meaning for you. You can choose your own schedule to work at times that are convenient for you. You can build up a team of people and online services to automate processes so you can move on to develop additional income streams.

Disadvantages: They can take years to develop to a point where you can make a reliable living. At the end of each day you may not have made any money for your efforts, especially in the beginning. There can be setbacks like the one I experienced with Google, described at the beginning of this book. You need to stay on top of trends and adapt when necessary. You need to take care of your own "benefits program" like medical and disability insurance and pension. You don't get paid for sick days or vacations or statutory holidays, until you have created enough profitable passive income streams to cover it.

2. Traditional Jobs (full and part time)

If you are going to work in the same place every day for just one employer, you have a job for the purposes of this discussion. This includes jobs where you are able to telecommute from home much or even all of the time. It also includes jobs that only exist because of the Digital Age, like social media manager for a company. The point here is you are paid for your time by a single employer that limits your income to a pre-determined salary or the number of hours you can work in a day.

A job is not passive income in and of itself, but a job can lead to passive income in the following ways:

1. It can provide a stable income to finance your Digital Age side ventures.
2. If it includes a good pension plan it can lead to a lifetime of passive income after you retire.
3. Jobs can provide you with the experience you need to create your own passive income streams from Digital Age ventures.

The advantages and disadvantages can vary widely between employers, but here are a few basic points to consider.

Advantages: At the end of every day you have always made some money for the time you put in. It is a reliable source of income for as long as the job lasts. There is often some sort of benefits package to take care of basic needs like medical and

disability insurance. You may get paid for vacation time and sick time and for statutory holidays. There may be a half decent retirement plan. You may be able to find a job that you love or that provides you with the time and space to pursue Digital Age ventures on the side. Having coworkers to interact with in person everyday can satisfy some of your basic human needs like belonging and esteem, as described when we covered Maslow earlier.

Disadvantages: Many jobs are disappearing and can't be relied on long term. The amount of money you can make is not scalable, it is tied to the number of hours you can work in a day. Global competition is lowering wages compared to the cost of living in many sectors. Private sector pension plans are a shadow of their former selves, when they exist at all. You are dependent on a single source of income that can be disrupted by any number of trends outside of your control (e.g. self-driving cars and other forms of robotic automation). Everything you do is in your employers best interest, not necessarily your own. There may be aspects to a job that you dread or do not enjoy. If you land in a toxic work environment, it can detract from your basic human needs as described by Maslow.

Digital Age jobs, like that of a social media manager for a company, are in the jobs category for the purposes of this discussion. However, they differ from **traditional jobs** in some important ways. For example, they are more likely to complement your Digital Age ventures, and your Digital Age venture experience can help you land those jobs. If you are a person that prefers having a job to go to everyday, but can't find a good job, then your own Digital Age ventures can be a stepping stone to fitting back into the job market.

3. Traditional Businesses

These are businesses that you cannot operate dressed in your pajamas in front of a computer. This is entrepreneurship in the traditional sense. For example, you may own and operate your own restaurant. These are typically businesses with real world store fronts or offices that you can see when you go outside for a walk.

Advantages: You get paid for results, not for your time, so your ultimate earning potential is much greater. You are in control of the operation and can branch out in whatever direction you like. You can create multiple income streams from within a single business. You can leverage your business resources to support Digital Age ventures on the side. Some of the lessons you learn from your Digital Age side ventures can be applied back to support your main business, like the things you will learn in the upcoming **Getting Traffic** chapter of this book. For example, the techniques you learn there would help you to get more visitors to the website of your traditional business which would improve your bottom line.

Disadvantages: Usually requires a large up-front investment to get started. A high percentage of new traditional businesses fail. The product or service you are offering may be disrupted by newer technology (think Blockbuster video stores being replaced by digital streaming services like Netflix). You typically need to own or rent physical "brick and mortar" premises to house your business. You must deal with issues related to having your own employees (in contrast to Digital Age ventures where you can more easily use short term freelance help as needed and virtual assistants that can live anywhere).

4. Consulting or Contract Work (freelancing)

This is where you do work directly for a person or company (a client), usually on an hourly or piece work payment basis. It does not include the usual benefits or restrictions of an employee/employer relationship, and is often a short term project. This includes and is similar to the Digital Age freelance business model discussed earlier. However, it is a somewhat larger category as it includes more traditional short term work like trades (e.g. electricians). It can also include working with temp agencies to find temporary part time work at a traditional workplace in your city (e.g. short term secretarial work).

Advantages: You can have more than one client and therefore more than one income stream at the same time. You may have more control over when and where you do the work. Can be easier to find time for Digital Age ventures on the side. Can be a good strategy to generate short term income when the other income stream classes are still growing, or experience setbacks. You can use your own professional or industry

contacts to find work, or services like the ones mentioned at **PurrPassiveIncome.com/freelance**.

Disadvantages: Your income is limited by the time you have to put into it. Unless you can position yourself as a unique or very experienced expert, the rates you can command are governed by a very competitive global marketplace. This is less of a problem if you are in a local marketplace with a skills shortage, such as the home renovation trades in many cities. You typically need to find new clients on a regular basis, although I have one client from my IT consulting business that has given me work on and off for almost 20 years!

5. The Sharing Economy

With technology comes the emergence of peer-to-peer marketplaces where you can generate income by sharing what you own with others. For example, with the Uber car service you can apply to be an Uber driver and share both your car and your time with others. Their app connects people that need a ride with folks that are willing to give them a ride for a fee.

Airbnb is another example where technology allows you to share all or part of your home with others on a temporary basis according to your schedule. There may be certain months of the year where you want Airbnb guests and other months where you don't. This is completely in your control. Or you could open up your home as a homestay for one or more international students. There are websites that specialize in setting up homestay arrangements for students. This can be a great experience as well as a good source of income. Or you could consider the more traditional approach of simply creating a suite in your home to rent out long term via classified ads in your local newspaper. Depending on your situation these could all be good income streams to consider as part of your overall income stream portfolio.

Keep in mind though that the sharing economy has most of the same drawbacks that were listed above for Digital Age Ventures. Like the fact that there are no benefits beyond what you make on each individual transaction. No sick days or paid vacation or medical insurance. That is why some people see these kinds of shifts in the economy as a negative. However, if you treat them as just one of many income streams they can

definitely have a place in your overall income stream portfolio.

The world is changing whether we like it or not, and we have to change with it. Consider all the income streams available to you and take advantage of the ones that make sense for you. If you don't like the idea of sharing your home it may still be something you can do for awhile to bridge the gap until your other income streams have a chance to take off or recover from a setback.

Another consideration with the sharing economy is that it can reduce your expenses so that you need less income to get by. For example, the costs of owning your own car are extremely high when you consider the cost of the vehicle and insurance and gasoline and maintenance. There are many car share services where you can pick up a car virtually anywhere in your city to drive yourself (unlike Uber). You rent it by the hour not by the day.

Once you join the service this is all arranged completely by technology. You don't talk to anyone when you pick up and drop off the car. You are given a fob that unlocks the car if you have arranged to use it from the car service app or website. The cars are just sitting in parking lots all around the city and shared by all members of the service. Depending on how often you actually need a car this can be far less expensive than owning a car. You may find as your Digital Age Ventures ramp up that you work from home most of the time and don't need a car very often. While I personally still own my own car, I belong to one of these car share services through my current employer. I have used it as part of my job to travel to client locations throughout the city during business hours. The service is very convenient and extremely easy to use.

6. Passive Income Investing

Although this book is not about traditional passive income investing, it is certainly worth mentioning here as an income stream class. Once you make some money with the other income stream classes, you must decide what to do with it. Re-investing it in your own business is arguably the best strategy (investing in yourself). Even then you may have money left over or want to diversify further. In this case passive income investing is worth considering. Two ways to do this are

investment real estate and dividend generating stocks of companies with a good track record of consistently paying out dividends no matter what the economy is doing. There are other ways like annuities, of which there are many options and things to consider. You may want to read Anthony Robbins book **Money: Master the Game** to give yourself a crash course in what your investment options are. I read all 600 pages and it certainly opened my eyes in a few areas.

Fair warning: It may make you angry when you learn how fees are eating up your profits with many traditional investment products, among other things you will learn from **Money: Master the Game**. These are things your financial adviser may not have the time or motivation to tell you about. Visit PurrPassiveIncome.com/money for more details.

Managing Your Income Stream Classes

What does all this mean? For one thing, if you hate your current job, that doesn't necessarily mean you should quit the traditional job market to focus exclusively on Digital Age ventures. Starting a Digital Age venture on the side may be a good option for you. Finding a different job that allows you more time and energy to pursue your side projects is worth considering. A new job that is more complementary to the direction of your side projects is also worth considering, even if it pays a bit less. This will help you maintain some income stream diversification and improve your daily focus on the things you are passionate about.

The job I have now allows me to work on and manage a variety of interesting projects. For example, I recently managed a project that modernized the systems used by a community center's meal services operation to feed the homeless in my city. My employer has provided me with formal project management training and certification opportunities, as well as the opportunity to work with other excellent project managers and team members. The job is completely complementary to what I am teaching in this book in terms of managing projects to improve your life and livelihood. Good project management methods can be applied to any project.

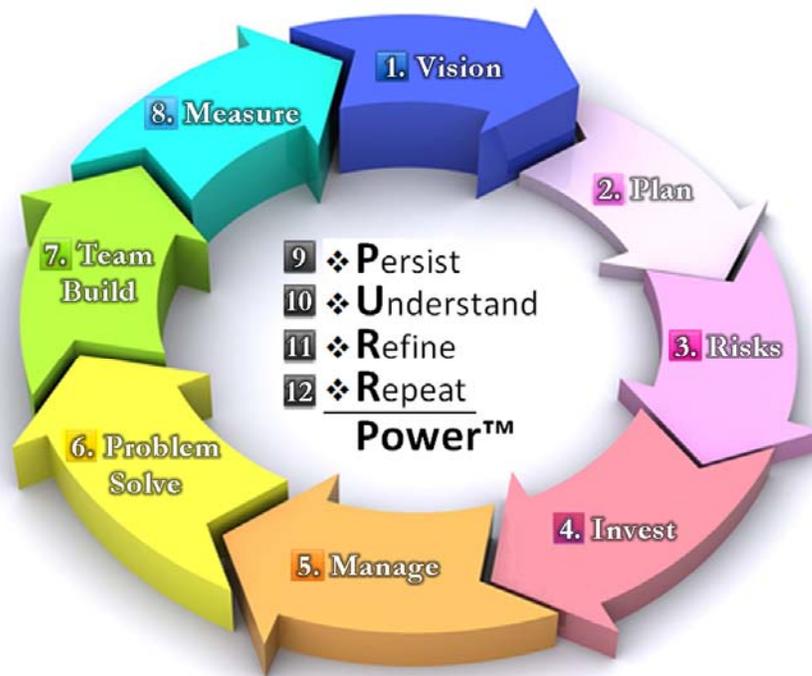
That's why I believe traditional jobs can still be relevant in the

new Digital Age of opportunity, as long as they are a viable option in your situation. PURR Passive Income Power™ recognizes that traditional jobs can provide stability to your life, relieving some of the time pressure for making your Digital Age ventures successful. Traditional jobs can also allow you to be part of larger teams doing things that you would never get a chance to do on your own. They can provide their own unique level of satisfaction and accomplishment.

On the other hand, some people think the traditional job market is the only reliable way to make a living, despite overwhelming evidence that this is no longer the case in today's economy. Other people learn about the potential of Digital Age ventures and decide they want to quit their jobs as soon as possible to focus 100% of their time on it. This section is here to point out it is possible to strike a balance and benefit from more than one income stream class at the same time. I have been doing it for years. In the past few months alone I have worked on this book, worked at a traditional job during the week, and worked for an old consulting client on the weekends. Everyone's situation and risk tolerance is different. Keep at it until you discover what works best for you!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

VII. The PURR Power Wheel™



Real freedom comes from having a structure that guides you to get things done, so when you have time off you can really enjoy it. This is completely different from the way many people manage their businesses and their lives. No structure often means a constant state of overwhelm, or a constant state of drifting with no real direction. **The project management methods you are about to learn are the remedy for that.**

The 12 steps of the **PURR Power Wheel™** will mean different things to different people. Some people are already crystal clear on where they want to be, they just aren't sure how to get there. For them the Plan, Manage, and Team Build steps in the wheel may be the most useful.

Others are struggling to find purpose and fulfillment in their lives, and will benefit greatly from the Vision section. Still others tend to constantly go off in all sorts of haphazard directions without putting much thought into what they are getting themselves into. They may benefit most from the Risk

and Invest sections.

However, each and every step contributes progressively to the whole. Going through all 12 steps in this section page by page from start to finish at least once is recommended. Twice is better. You will get more out of the earlier steps the second time around when you can put them into the context of the entire PURR Passive Income Power™ System. You will also find this section offers much more than project management principles. There are plenty of examples related to the nuts and bolts of how Digital Age ventures work.

If you feel you already know a lot about a certain step before you begin, the examples provided may help you to see things in a slightly different way. Many of the examples provided contain the seeds of business ideas that may work for you. So if you are tempted to skip ahead to what you may see as the "good stuff" in later sections (like the **Success Stories** and **Tools and Techniques** sections), keep in mind that you will find much of the "good stuff" right here within this section, while learning solid project management methods at the same time. The combination of these things will give you the best chance of succeeding in the Digital Age economy.

You may want to consider using this book as a reference book once you start working on your projects. If you think you may use it in this way, consider picking up a paperback version of the book at some point. When a print version becomes available, it will be announced here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/print

Although there are many advantages to eBooks, one disadvantage is they are easy to forget about after you read them. They can easily become just one more old eBook on your device. Having a paper copy at your fingertips is a way to keep the concepts in mind as you progress through your projects. You can even consider the "old fashioned" approach of annotating the pages with a pen or pencil, to put things into the context of your own unique situation.

Don't get overwhelmed by all the steps. For some projects they are very easy. You just need to consider them as you move forward. For more complex projects the details are here to

guide you. Take as much or as little as you need from the 12 Steps.

Before we get into the details, here is a short summary of the steps in the PURR Power Wheel™:

1. Vision

The first step of PURR Passive Income Power™ is about developing your own unique Vision. You will learn to combine ideas based on your own past experiences and turn them into a Vision that makes complete sense for you. You will come up with personal success metrics to track as you progress through the PURR Power Wheel™. The principles and exercises in this section have the potential to change your life dramatically, and prevent you from taking a lot of wrong turns on the journey to your ideal life.

2. Plan

The Plan step can be more or less involved, depending on your Vision. It covers some important project management concepts. It includes researching the profit potential of the Vision you identified for yourself. You will learn some powerful ways to break things down into manageable steps that you can do yourself or outsource to others. This sets the stage for managing your project in an iterative way that includes feedback loops to make sure your next move is always better than your last move.

3. Risks

It pays to spend some time considering a path forward that contains the least number of obstacles. This section discusses ways to deal with potential obstacles in advance. This is about moving forward in an intelligent way with your eyes wide open, while at the same time not becoming fearful or timid. Doing nothing and staying in your current situation may be the biggest Risk of all!

4. Invest

This step will help you Understand what constraints stand in the way of your success. It offers strategies for overcoming those

constraints with investments of one sort or another. You can look at this step as investing in yourself. It is all about when, where and how to Invest in yourself.

5. Manage

The Manage step is all about taking your Plan and putting it into action. For many of you this may be the chapter when the light bulb really turns on. You will see clearly how all the earlier points come together here to give you a feeling of total control over your projects. You will learn to maintain a laser focus on your current short term goals, while at the same time identifying and capturing new ideas that could affect your overall trajectory as you move forward. You will learn to consider and implement intelligent course corrections as you discover what is working for you, and what is not working.

6. Problem Solve

The Problem Solve step describes common types of problems and how to deal with them. Problem solving strategies are explained, including the decision of whether a particular problem needs to be addressed immediately or not. To avoid getting side tracked it is important to realize that some problems tend to take care of themselves, and others can be put off until later. Still others can be handed off to someone else to deal with for you, which leads to the next step.

7. Team Build

The Team Build step may simply involve getting your family or significant other to support you in your Vision. For others it could mean building a team of freelancers or virtual assistants. It could also mean taking on partners or employees. Partnerships don't have to be formal legal partnerships. It could just be a matter of offering to support or promote someone else's dream on a quid pro quo basis. The Team Build section will go into some practical ways to build and manage your team when the time is right to do so.

8. Measure

This section is all about keeping it real. It is about taking time to Measure the results of your latest Spin of the PURR Power

Wheel™. You will review the high level success metrics you developed in the Vision step. You will also review the acceptance criteria you established for the individual PURR tasks developed during the Plan step. In the absence of real data on your progress, decisions rely on opinions that may have no basis in reality. This step is an important part of your feedback loop. It is critical when it comes to keeping the ship pointed in the right direction.

The Last 4 Steps

The last 4 steps are central to the entire methodology, which is why they are portrayed in the middle of the wheel. They are: **Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat (PURR)**. They embody the philosophy on which PURR Passive Income Power™ is based. They can be thought of as the higher level guiding principles of the system, while the first 8 steps are where the detailed work takes place.

Although they show up as the last 4 steps, they are not meant to be done in order. They are principles to keep in mind every Step of the way. And yes, it isn't a coincidence that the PURR acronym also spells out the word *purr*, as in a high performance engine that *purrs like a kitten*. I actually prefer *purrs like a lion* to better reflect the bold steps you are about to undertake! My hope is that this book will help you to get your life pointed in an inspiring direction, where you will develop the feeling that things are purring along!

Some Common Mistakes

Some people get stuck on the Vision step, and confuse that with Planning. We call those people dreamers. Lots of great ideas, but nothing is ever accomplished. Others are so busy "keeping their heads down" and working, they never spend any time on the Vision step. They say it is all about doing the work and never giving up. While there is some truth to that, you need to make sure you are not digging yourself deeper and deeper into a hole you can't get out of. It happens all the time to people. They "double down" on a strategy that has shown very little in the way of real results. They think all they need to do is work harder or Invest more in the idea. This is a gamblers mentality, and we all know where that can lead.

That is why the Measure step in the process is so important. It is the reality check stage at the end of each Spin of the PURR Power Wheel™. This is where you take an honest look at some real data to determine what is working and what isn't. Based on that you can Refine your approach to go with the flow of what is working for you, rather than trying to paddle upstream. Like a leaf floating down a river, sometimes you need to let the current guide you around obstacles, rather than constantly trying to force things to flow the way you think they should.

The key to success is to Persist, spending time on each of the Steps. Take the time to Understand what has taken place during each Spin of the PURR Power Wheel™. Refine your approach and Repeat all the steps in your next Spin of the wheel based on your new understanding. Failures and "aha" moments may send you in a slightly different direction on your next Spin of the wheel. That's the point. You may have to bump into a few things before you know what the right direction is for you!

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

1. Vision

"I am not yet able, as the Delphic inscription has it, to know myself; so it seems to me ridiculous, when I do not yet know that, to investigate irrelevant things." - **Socrates from Plato's Phaedrus**

"People are not lazy. They simply have impotent goals - that is, goals that do not inspire them." - **Anthony Robbins**

The process of attaining a life Vision can take on a profound quality in Native American cultures. Their Vision quest typically involves fasting while spending some days out in nature alone. Under these conditions the visions can become very real in the form of hallucinations or vivid dreaming. A Vision quest in this context is typically considered a means for contacting the spirit world to receive guidance on your life path.

Contrast that with western culture where it is not uncommon for people to hear an idea in the midst of their hectic lives and decide that it *sounds good*. They may get excited about the profit potential and the results others have achieved using a particular strategy. This can lead them on a journey that may not be aligned with their values or core competencies. Such journeys often end in disappointment, and perhaps even embarrassment.

As you read through this book you will be introduced to or reminded of many types of projects you could choose to take on. Which one is right for you? Will you pick one that you think will make you the most money? Or one that you think you would love the most? Or will you choose the one you see as the most realistic or the safest? How do you choose?

"So often people are working hard at the wrong thing. Working on the right thing is probably more important than working hard." - **Caterina Fake, Co-founder, Flickr**

You need a compass. That compass is your Vision. It can be derived from your past experiences, both good and bad. Within those experiences are kernels of ideas you can connect together to create a powerful life Vision. A powerful Vision can take you beyond a life of ambition into a life of meaning. When there is meaning attached to the work you do you are more

likely to love doing it. Some projects will support your Vision better than others. As Socrates reminds us with the above quote, the starting point should be to *know yourself*.

The upcoming Vision exercises will help you to know yourself at a deeper level. Your personal experiences impact you at deeper levels than you are able to recall in your day to day life. This section is about bringing all that to the surface in order to guide you on a path that makes complete sense for you. Take on projects that have meaning for you beyond the money you can make, and you are more likely to stick with it when the going gets tough.

Every significant life change must begin with a significant change in your own mind. *Where your mind goes your body will follow*. Just as your physical health is a direct result of what you feed your body, your external reality is a direct result of what you feed your mind. *Feed your body drugs and you will eventually look like a junkie. Feed your mind poor ideas or limiting beliefs and your external reality will reflect that*. That is why the ideas you generate in this section are so critical to your success. Not just your monetary success, but also the self-actualization level of success we spoke about earlier when discussing Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

The Monetary Level

That's not to say the monetary level isn't important. It is. This is not a book about simply following your passion. People tend to become passionate about things they are good at, that have meaning for them, and that bring them success. If you are reading this book chances are at least some of your passion for a project will be derived from the profit motive. That is the world we live in. Money is tied to all sorts of things you can be passionate about, like personal independence and taking care of your family. It is all interconnected.

Typically the only people who say money doesn't matter are people that either have plenty of money, or live in a community of some sort that takes care of their basic needs. If you don't fall into either of those categories, then it is very important to find an intersection between your values, dreams, abilities, and making a living. Developing a personal Vision is the starting point for making money in the Digital Age.

Some Things are Better Left as Hobbies

This MAY mean that following a passion you have today is NOT the best path forward for you when it comes to making money in the Digital Age. At least not in the most immediately obvious ways. You don't want to focus so much on money that you chase every shiny new object that promises monetary rewards, but you also don't need to become a starving artist just because you like to paint.

Some things are better left as hobbies, especially if you value creative purity and freedom of expression over making money in those areas. However, let's say you are an artist and take painting pictures as an example. If you feel profiting from it somehow would be a desirable goal for you, then look for things to combine it with where you can make a decent living at the same time.

Turning Interests into Income

To use painting as an example, the path of creating your own original art and selling it is of course possible. However, it is likely to be a long and difficult journey. Only a small percentage of painters are ever able to make a decent living at it.

Consider instead connecting your painting skills with other ideas. Specializing in something specific could increase your odds of success. At the same time you could continue with your original paintings if that is a long term goal. Later on in the **Vision Exercises** you will learn some techniques for uncovering unique combinations of ideas that could fit your life.

For painters, a brainstorming session could result in a list of potential business opportunities that looks something like this (note the relationship between some of these ideas and the **Business Models** we discussed earlier in the **Choose Your Strategy** section):

1. Specialize in painting for a particular niche market that interests you. **Specialization** can come from combining ideas in unique ways. For example, you could specialize in painting wedding or family portraits, or creative designs found on goalie masks in ice hockey, or paintings tourists to your city would

enjoy. When my wife and I were in Rome we bought a beautiful painting of the Spanish Steps from a local artist. Her paintings were so popular we actually had to stand in line on the street to wait our turn as she was selling to other tourists in front of us. Another example could be specializing in painting replicas of the masters like Michelangelo, as some painters do, and sell the paintings online.

2. Create video courses teaching others how to paint.

3. Curate your own blog that features the art of some of your favorite painters. You could have one category on your blog for each your favorites (e.g. Michelangelo, Da Vinci, or some more modern artists that you like). Provide your own commentary around each of the paintings. You could benefit from free search engine traffic from the many people that are interested in these artists. Place ads on the site and/or sell your own original artwork that is inspired by some of your favorite artists. You can also promote your own products from there, like videos you create teaching others how to paint.

4. Create an e-commerce website that helps artists that know nothing about marketing sell their work online. You would get a percentage of every painting sold while at the same time creating a marketplace to sell your own paintings. (The other artists and their supporters would send people to your e-commerce site to sell their paintings, thereby creating a viable marketplace).

5. Become an expert in how to promote art through a variety of channels, and offer coaching services to help other artists make a living from their art.

6. Get a job with a graphic design company, an animation company, a computer game manufacturer, an advertising agency, or any business that requires original artwork. Yes, this one may require expanding your skills to include computer generated art rather than just painting by hand. For some painters this could be a reasonable progression for their artistic skill set.

7. Use your artistic talent to start your own graphic design business (we will discuss **pivots** in more detail later in the **Refine** chapter, this is just an example).

8. Write original articles about art and painting and start your own blog. Get some of your articles published on popular art blogs or other large web sites as a guest poster. This may lead to work as an art critic for a major publication, or as an instructor at a local college. It is a way to build your own personal brand, which can lead to opportunities you couldn't have imagined before you began.

9. Write a book aimed at painters or painting and self-publish it on the Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing platform (KDP) and/or other similar platforms like Smashwords. The book could be about anything from how to paint to detailed strategies on how make a living from painting. It could be an autobiography of your own personal journey as a painter. It could be a biography of another famous painter. I remember reading *"The Agony and the Ecstasy"* about Michelangelo while on a train traveling through Thailand. It was so good I couldn't put it down for the entire journey. These are books you could create based on research materials freely available on the Internet.

10. Create your own audience driven business. Start an email newsletter that offers tremendous value to subscribers for free, and promote it via your own blog. Generate traffic to your blog and newsletter using one or more of the 12 tactics described in the upcoming **Getting Traffic** chapter. It could, as one example, target wedding planners if you are specializing in wedding portraits. It could target other painters if you want to specialize in how to make a living from painting. Any combination of ideas you can dream up could be the basis for an email newsletter that would help get your name out there into a specific community where your prospective customers or patrons are likely to be.

The above list combines painting with other ideas, but the list itself can be combined further to generate an overall Vision. For example points 1, 8 and 10 can be combined in a way that has you specializing in a certain niche (1), writing original articles about it for blogs or popular websites (8), and having your bio in the articles invite readers to join your email list (10).

Are any of the above ideas good options for painters? I don't know, I'm not a painter. I just made them up to give you an example of the kind of brainstorming ideas you can come up with for your situation. The PURR Power Wheel™ is about trying

things to see what works for you (**PURR** = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!)

Specialization vs. Uniqueness

The combination of things that cause a particular idea to make sense for you may be unique, but in most cases the final idea will not be completely unique in the world. This is a good thing, since it is much easier to compete in an existing job or business market than it is to create a market for a completely new idea. You will still look for a way to differentiate yourself in that existing market. This is referred to as your unique selling position (USP) or value proposition. For example, if you want to start an e-commerce site to sell cosmetics your USP may be something like *only natural ingredients and non-animal tested products*. Visitors to your site will come to trust that everything on your site conforms to that USP and some of them will become loyal to your site. However, the cosmetics market already exists and is not a brand new unique market you are creating.

It would be more accurate to say you are looking for something to **specialize** in that is based on a unique combination of things from your background, so that it makes complete sense for you. In the painting example above it would be easier to position yourself as a marketing coach to other painters if you have a background in painting yourself. Other painters may be more likely to seek your help than that of a generic marketing coach that knows nothing about painting. Another example could be if you are an accountant with a keen interest in local real estate. You may decide to specialize in property management accounting to differentiate yourself, or your business, or your job application, or your blog, or whatever business model or strategy appeals to you in the accounting space.

Connection Ideas

"Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That's because they were able to connect experiences they've had and synthesize new things." - Steve Jobs

It is very difficult to become the best at any one thing like the best painter of original artwork (or even be good enough to make a living from it). It is much easier to specialize in a combination of things like some of the examples mentioned above. PURR Passive Income Power™ refers to these as **connection ideas**, because they involve connecting the dots in your life. Use lateral thinking to combine things from your own background to offer something compelling to the world.

Using my own life as an example, writing this book and everything that will go with it is a connection idea that connects the following dots from my life:

1. Reboots in my own life including as an employee, consultant, business owner, and various Digital Age ventures.
2. Professional project management experience.
3. I enjoy writing, and would like to learn how to write, self-publish, and promote a book.
4. Teaching experience. I spent a year traveling the world teaching software development, from Indianapolis to Istanbul.
5. I enjoy helping people, and have experience mentoring others in my professional life.
6. Numerous personal side projects have generated substantial income.
7. Online marketing experience. Some of these techniques should translate well into promoting this book and teaching others how to promote their Digital Age ventures.
8. Professional consulting experience

I will be the first to admit I am not the best at any one of those things individually. I am not the best project manager on the planet. I am far from the best writer you will ever encounter, and on down the list. The key is the combination of these things allow me to offer a unique perspective based on my background. By building a strategy based on this combination of things, I don't need to be the best at any one of them. Each

point on the list provides me with more opportunities to differentiate myself. Nobody can do a better job of being me than me. Nobody can do a better job of being you than you. Package that in a way that resonates with a certain segment of the population, and you are in business.

The upcoming **Vision Exercises** will help you uncover connection ideas for your own life. Combinations of your past experiences, interests, and current skills that may lead to a new path that fits you like a glove. Connection ideas that you may have thought of before but had no idea how to monetize. PURR Passive Income Power™ is here to help you with that!

Successful people are able to make connections between what the world needs and what they are able to provide. As mentioned, this doesn't mean what you end up doing will necessarily be unique in the world. However, what leads you to it and how you differentiate yourself in that market may be.

Learning New Things

Keep in mind that you don't need to have experience with or be good at everything required to realize your Vision. Part of the journey is to learn new things, and if necessary forge partnerships with others who are good at the things you aren't good at. Learning how to work with others to achieve your goals may in itself be a new thing for you to learn. We will cover that in the upcoming **Team Build** chapter.

The idea here is to draw on your past to inspire your future, but at the same time don't limit yourself. In my own example of writing this book I am drawing on past experiences, but at the same time I have never written, published, or promoted myself as an author before. These are all things I need to learn more about as I move forward.

We all need to develop new skills that make us more relevant and valuable in an ever changing world. There are tools out there that can accelerate your progress, and plenty of other creative ways to fill in the gaps. Life is more than ever about developing and maintaining a *skills inventory*. You learn what you need for your next step. Taking that next step results in even more skills to add to your inventory. You can apply those skills to the various **income stream classes** we discussed

earlier as you continue to move forward and take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

The Vision you have for your life determines your purpose, your purpose determines your daily activities, and your daily activities determine who you become (your identity).

Being crystal clear on your vision, purpose, and daily activities is the starting point for everything. The direction of your life flows from there. Your Vision is the compass that helps you navigate the choppy seas of everyday life, and keeps you focused on what is important to you. It helps you say no to things that don't take you in the right direction, and encourages you to be creative in finding more inspiring things to say yes to.

"Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction." - John F. Kennedy

My Vision Example

Although this section is titled Vision to keep things simple, it can help to break things down a bit further at this stage. By way of example, here is the vision, purpose, and daily activities driving me forward today:

Vision: I lead a self-directed life helping people reboot their lives, find purpose, and make more money in their own unique way in the Digital Age.

Purpose: Create learning materials and platforms for "life rebooters" to effectively envision, manage, and collaborate with others on significant life changes while providing them with motivation and support along the way.

Potential Daily Activities: Write books, start a blog, build a Facebook-like social website for life rebooters to network and support each other, create an email newsletter, host a podcast to interview life rebooters, one on one coaching, create video courses.

Notice that the Vision statement is about **how you see yourself** existing in the world. The Purpose is about **what you will contribute** to the world. The Potential Daily Activities are about **what you will actually do** on a daily basis (but not

necessarily all at once).

What Will You Be Contributing to the World?

A key point is to focus on what you will be contributing to the world. My *"Google cut me off"* example at the beginning of this book shows that activities that don't contribute much to the world are not sustainable long term. In that case I was acting as a middle man without providing much value. These types of opportunities tend to disappear as markets and systems mature over time.

In other cases, like with your local grocery store, the middle man does provide value and is absolutely necessary. The differences are not always clear cut, but it helps to try and address the question of what you will be contributing to the world. This will help you make sure your life reboot has a fighting chance to be sustainable long term, and is something that you and others can believe in deeply enough to stick with and make successful over time.

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

1.1. Your Lateral Thinking Engine (Vision)

Edward De Bono invented the term **lateral thinking** over 40 years ago now (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lateral_thinking). Although the term is now commonly used, it seems to me that clear descriptions of what it actually is are few and far between. Without that it isn't nearly as useful as it could be. Let's review lateral thinking as it was originally conceived by De Bono over 40 years ago, and why it is relevant to you when developing your Vision.

"Since most people believe that traditional vertical thinking is the only possible form of effective thinking, it is useful to indicate the nature of lateral thinking by showing how it differs from vertical thinking:

Vertical thinking is selective, lateral thinking is generative.

Vertical thinking moves only if there is a direction in which to move, lateral thinking moves in order to generate a direction.

Vertical thinking is analytical, lateral thinking is provocative.

Vertical thinking is sequential, lateral thinking can make jumps.

With vertical thinking one has to be correct at every step, with lateral thinking one does not have to be.

With vertical thinking one uses the negative in order to block off certain pathways. With lateral thinking there is no negative.

With vertical thinking one concentrates and excludes what is irrelevant, with lateral thinking one welcomes chance intrusions." - Edward De Bono, author of Lateral Thinking

Choosing the Right Tool for the Job

In contrast to vertical thinking, which works well for solving individual problems, lateral thinking works well for determining which problems you should be trying to solve in the first place. The two thinking styles are complementary, they are like different tools in your toolbox. You can't use a hammer to solve every problem. In the same way, vertical thinking is not well suited to every situation.

In the context of the PURR Power Wheel™, lateral thinking is well suited to the Vision step. While each step of the wheel can benefit from both ways of thinking to a certain extent, the earlier steps like Vision will benefit more from the lateral thinking approach. Later steps like **Problem Solve** may also benefit from lateral thinking when creative solutions to problems are needed.

With vertical thinking you only move forward once you identify something that fits your analysis. If it fits there is a tendency to move on without considering other alternatives. This is the standard way to solve problems. If you are hiking up a mountain you tend to choose the first path you find that goes up, rather than consider a path going down that just may have a chair lift around the corner.

Set Your Quota for Idea Generation

At the Vision stage you don't want to get too attached to one idea. This could blind you to better options. Lateral thinking fits better here because it says you can jump to other ideas even if they don't make sense based on current information. You keep generating ideas even after you have identified one that seems promising.

It can help to set a quota for the number of ideas you are going to generate. Let's say you set a quota of 25 ideas. If your 3rd idea sounds good, keep going to reach your quota of 25. Idea 22 could be much better than idea 3. Combining idea 22 with idea 12 could be even better. It is much easier and faster to exclude idea 3 at the end of the Vision step, compared to moving forward with the idea and finding out months later that other options fit you better.

"The advantage of having a predetermined quota is that one goes on generating alternatives until one has filled the quota and this means that if a particularly promising alternative occurs early in the search one acknowledges it and moves on instead of being captured by it. One makes an effort to fill the quota even if the alternatives generated seem artificial or even ridiculous." - Edward De Bono

While vertical thinking uses information as a means to solve an

immediate problem, lateral thinking is a way to re-arrange and re-combine information in new ways to come up with a brand new insight or direction. The **Vision Exercises** coming up in this section will help you generate idea lists of information relevant to your life. You will use them to feed the lateral thinking process for rebooting your life.

Freedom to Generate Bad Ideas

Keep in mind that not all the ideas need to be good ones. Give yourself the freedom to generate bad or even blatantly wrong ideas, which can help you gather momentum towards a good idea. At this stage a bad idea doesn't cost you anything. You may be able to add a twist to a bad idea later, or combine a couple of bad ideas to generate a good idea.

"Vertical thinking involves being right all along. Judgement is exercised at every stage...With lateral thinking one is allowed to be wrong on the way even though one must be right in the end...The need to be right all the time is the biggest bar there is to new ideas. It is better to have enough ideas for some of them to be wrong than to be always right by having no ideas at all...Even if one knows that an idea must eventually be thrown out one delays that moment in order to extract as much usefulness from the idea as possible...A bucket with holes cannot carry much water. One could reject it out of hand. Or one could see how far it could carry how much water. In spite of the holes it may be very useful for bringing about a certain effect." - **Edward De Bono**

Where Your Ideas Are Taking You

The Vision you set for yourself will govern your effort for some time. Make sure you are going in the best possible direction you can imagine before you begin. If you are in Boston and the best place for you to end up is New York, try not to travel through Alaska to get there!

Having said that, there is no such thing as perfect Vision or a perfect Plan. Do your best at this stage, but put some kind of time limit on it. You need to take your best ideas and treat them like a theory, to be proved or disproved as quickly as possible in the next steps of the PURR Power Wheel™.

The best way to prove or disprove a theory is to take action on it and gather some empirical evidence about whether it works for you or not. The fact that it works for others does not mean it will work for you. Just like the scientific method you may remember learning about in grade school, once you develop a hypothesis you have to test it to see if it holds up. If it doesn't, try the next thing!

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

1.2. Vision Exercises (Vision)

*"It's not what you thought
When you first began it
You got what you want
Now you can hardly stand it, though
By now you know
It's not going to stop
It's not going to stop
It's not going to stop
Till you wise up" - Aimee Mann, lyrics to "Wise Up"*

Now I know people sometimes like to skip the exercises in books. You may feel that your next move is already clear to you and there is no need to do this. You may not believe it will lead to a new breakthrough for you. You may feel you already have a secure job and don't need to do this now. You may feel you don't have time. Maybe you are feeling lazy today. Unlike Socrates, you may feel you already *know yourself*.

However, I can tell you from experience sometimes the next thing you try may not be so different from that last thing you tried. It may be just another iteration of an old tired theme that you have been operating under for too many years. You can waste years doing that. This section is about going back to basics to figure out why you were born into this world, so you can get on with it as soon as possible. At the very least, if you want to get significantly different results you may need to consider doing things significantly different. As Aimee Mann says so eloquently in the above quote, now may be the time for you to *wise up!*

So for all of you thinking about skipping the exercises, and I know you are out there, here are some reasons to consider doing them:

1. You may find a brand new path for your life that excites you more than anything has in recent memory.
2. You may be on a "wrong path" or "sub-optimal path" right now, this very minute, and not realize it.
3. You need ammunition to convince people that whatever path you take makes sense. This may include a potential new

employer, investors and/or customers of a new business, potential partners, friends, family members, yourself.

4. You will see clearly that you are unique and that you see a world no one else sees.

5. The world is valuing traditional jobs less and less, but desperately needs new ideas and viewpoints. It needs what you have. First you need to know what you have.

6. This is not just the starting point of doing something different, it is the starting point of becoming something different. The world can take away things you have, but it can never take away what you become.

7. You will be more prepared for what comes next if whatever job or business you are doing now crashes and burns.

8. You may find fun side-projects to do that will diversify your income, increase your quality of life, and generally make getting out of bed in the morning more appealing.

9. The best way to replace bad habits or activities that do little to improve your life is to find something better you prefer doing instead. Finding a new and exciting life project that can produce an additional income stream may be just the thing you need to shift your focus away from unproductive things you may be spending too much time on now. This can include things like watching television, dating sites, gaming, or going to the pub just to name a few. This isn't about never doing those things if you enjoy them. It is about finding a balance that works for you and moves your life forward.

10. Life is just better when you like who you are and what you are doing!

Let's Begin!

The Vision Exercises begin with a series of questions that will generate some fuel (data) to feed your lateral thinking processes. It is never good to start with an empty page when contemplating major life changes. These are questions that everyone can answer. They will give you ideas to work with as a starting point. Ideas that are based on your own unique

background and experiences. Feel free to come up with your own variations of the questions and lists.

There may be some overlap in your answers to the questions, which is okay. Just create lists of answers to the questions without feeling restricted in any way. You can weed out duplicate ideas later. In some cases the same experience or idea may have more than one aspect to it that you may find helpful. Some of the questions are similar, but different enough that they may prompt you to generate some different answers. Remember also our earlier discussion on connection ideas. It may be the connection of 2 or more of the ideas you generate below that will help you to carve out a niche that makes complete sense for you. Okay, let's get started.

1. What good life experiences have shaped your view of the world? Later on you can consider ways to double down on the good and help others to realize similar experiences. Expanding your life into areas that have worked well for you in the past can be a good starting point for a Digital Age venture.

2. What bad life experiences have shaped your view of the world? Later on you can consider how you overcame them, which may lead to ideas for helping others overcome similar problems. This is a potent life path for many. Maybe you haven't overcome your bad life experiences yet. Maybe it is time to overcome them and document your journey on your blog. People are more attracted to powerful stories than they are to gurus who claim to have all the answers.

To borrow from an earlier quote, you may be able to "*turn your mess into your message.*" This is the kind of strong personal message that can really resonate with people. It can inspire you to keep the message front and center and avoid getting off track for short term monetary gains, which will only hurt you in the end. Staying true to a consistent message and only representing products that would really help people that have the same concerns is a powerful long term Digital Age strategy.

3. What are you good at? Consider focusing on your strengths and avoiding or outsourcing your areas of weakness. Exploiting strengths is generally more productive than trying to improve on weaknesses. As much as we may like to deny it, we all have far more weaknesses than strengths. We could spend a

lifetime trying to improve on all our weaknesses and only become okay at some of them. Take the skills you were born with or developed over time and do something great with them. Strengths in this context are not just your specific skills, but also your qualities like creativity, great at analyzing details, or leadership.

For example, maybe you were captain of your football team at school and all your teammates followed you heart and soul. If you aren't doing something with your life now that taps into your leadership skills, then perhaps it is time to consider how you could make that happen. **Hint:** the teacher and coaching business models we discussed earlier both benefit from strong leadership skills, as does any business that involves building a team of virtual assistants to accomplish your goals (more on that in the upcoming **Team Build** section).

4. What do you enjoy doing? As mentioned earlier, some of these activities may be better left as hobbies. However, with a bit of lateral thinking it may be possible to incorporate them into making a living (e.g. the ideas we generated earlier for painters). Following your passion can definitely work. Just keep in mind this is only one of many lists you will create here. The entire process may help you uncover things you could become even more passionate about that are better suited to making a living. The idea is to find things you love doing and work on monetizing the ones with the most profit potential. There is an entire chapter on researching profit potential coming up (Chapter 2.3). For now your task is to explore connection ideas that would energize you and help you to differentiate yourself in a profitable market.

5. How are you different or unique, or how do others perceive you as different or uniquely qualified. These are typically things that energize you rather than deplete you. Becoming more of who you are can lead to great breakthroughs in developing a sustainable life path. Sometimes you can get further faster by focusing on what makes you different from others, rather than focusing on what makes you better than others. In the business world they refer to this as a Unique Selling Proposition (USP). With a little thought this can lead to a path that is much easier for you to achieve. Becoming the best at something and convincing people you are better is very difficult. Pointing out how you are different and how that can

benefit others may be much easier.

6. How have you helped others in the past? List the kinds of things people tend to seek or accept your help for. Don't include times where you have given help or advice that has been ignored. You are looking for areas where your contributions have had an impact. This can include times where people have "stolen your ideas", or taken your help or advice and not given you credit for it. Others imitating you is not only the sincerest form of flattery, it is a sign that you have something of value that others want. If one or two people have wanted it in the past, the Digital Age offers tools to scale that up to help hundreds or even thousands of people solve the same or similar problems.

7. What are some past successes that you felt good about? You may be able to build on them or do similar things. List also the things that you feel led to the successes: your habits, activities, relationships etc. If you feel certain good habits led to those successes, consider if you still employ those same habits now. If not, could you resurrect them?

8. What recurring problems would you like to eliminate from your life that may even make you angry when you think about them? Similar to bad life experiences, this could lead to a life of solving these kinds of problems for the benefit of others, and making a living at the same time.

9. What are you grateful for? Include things you may not be totally happy with yet, like an old car that you want to replace but still gets you where you want to go. Be grateful for partial victories that are taking you in the right direction. Later on you can consider ways to take it from good to very good. Perhaps you can document that progress on your blog. Can you imagine re-organizing your life to find a few hours a week to begin a Digital Age venture? Be grateful for that. Do you have everything you need to get started, like a computer and an internet connection? Be grateful for that. Have some recent failures or circumstances made you realize you need to make some changes? Be grateful for that. Perhaps something you are grateful for is a thing that others desperately want to have in their lives. Later on you can consider ways to help them get it.

10. Who do you admire and why? Aspects of what others

have accomplished may be possible for you too. Give yourself the freedom to think big. If they did it maybe you can do it too (or something similar). You may even be able to come up with connection ideas by combining people you admire. For example, I might say I want to take the best attributes from Anthony Robbins, Steve Jobs and my Mom, and consider where that might take me. A motivational coach & high tech design genius that makes an awesome apple pie anyone? If you think that sounds like a bad idea, that's probably because it is. However, keep in mind the previous section on lateral thinking concepts, and consider where bad ideas can take you eventually.

11. Who would you never want to be like and why? Of course everyone has redeeming qualities, even if they aren't obvious to you. Adding people to this list doesn't mean you think they are all bad. Focus on the aspects you would not want to emulate and why. If you don't feel comfortable naming the people, just focus on the qualities they have that you don't want to emulate. Knowing what you don't want to become can provide clarity later. Draw some lines in the sand for yourself here!

12. What reasons do you give yourself for not making significant changes in your life? This may turn into a long list of reasons why you think you cannot succeed. This is the one list where you can let your negativity shine through. These are problems you need to solve before you can move forward. The upcoming **Problem Solve** section can help you with this. On the other hand, solving some of them may be a simple matter of adjusting your internal self-talk. You can accomplish more than you think you can. The first person you need to convince is yourself. Find ways to overcome these things so you can reach your goals. Then if it fits with your ultimate Vision, help others do the same. Consider doing this list on paper. Then when you overcome the items on the list, you can burn the list!

The above lists are your starting point. Just like sitting down to write a book typically works better with an outline than with an empty page, you now have some raw data to create the next set of lists. Consider writing them up on cue cards so you can mix and match and consider which things could possibly fit together as *connection ideas*.

Before continuing on, recall the earlier examples of what a passion for painting could develop into, and the aspects of my life experience that contributed to me writing this book. These are just 2 examples that may or may not resonate with you, but hopefully will give you an idea of what is possible by connecting ideas together to come up with something completely new and exciting for your life.

To further refine your ideas at this point, review the **659 Profitable Niche Markets**:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/659free

How to Use Your Results

Using the above lists as input, try and create the following lists:

1. Who could you serve with connection ideas from the earlier lists? Potential employers, customers, industries, organizations, communities etc. All ideas targeted at making a living must provide value to someone.

2. What completely outrageous goals could you see as a result of the earlier lists? Recall Elon Musk and the SpaceX example mentioned earlier. Here it can help to take yourself out of your mental picture and consider what some generic brilliant person could accomplish with the things on your list. There is plenty of time later to consider if it makes sense for you. This is a list where thinking big is the goal. Sometimes bigger goals are actually more attainable because they motivate you every single day and drive you forward with strength of purpose. I think it would be awesome if someone were to read this book and accomplish something far beyond what I ever will! Could that person be you?

3. What reasonable goals could you set for yourself? Reasonable doesn't have to mean small. What combinations of ideas from the earlier lists can you see yourself doing something with right now?

Try using phrases from your first set of lists to feed an internet search engine to help you come up with ideas for this next set of lists. The internet is probably the best brainstorming tool

ever invented, with the added benefit that most of the ideas it generates will be a reflection of what others are actually doing in the real world.

For example, when I was brainstorming things a painter could do earlier, it never occurred to me there would be a market for hand painted replicas of famous works of art until I stumbled upon a website that sold them. Consider search phrases like "how to make a living from _____", or combine 2 or more ideas into a single search to find potential ways the ideas can be combined into something that could form a basis for your **Vision**. Consider going beyond the standard Google search to include the search tools on sites like Youtube, Amazon, and quora.com.

Organizing and Prioritizing

Now that you have some compelling goals that provide value to others, try organizing them into themes and prioritize:

1. Organize goals into themes. For instance, all goals related to an interest in painting can be grouped into a painting theme.

2. Prioritize themes and goals. List themes in priority order based on which ones you would feel most energized working on. Within each theme list goals in priority order according to which ones would make the most sense for you to work on first.

Meaning vs. Enjoyment

Keep in mind this isn't all about finding something enjoyable to do with your life, although that's good too. For many people meaning trumps enjoyment by a wide margin. Few could argue that a mountain climber's life is full of hardship and misery. Yet a true mountain climber will give up almost anything to get a chance to summit the great peaks of the world. For them it is meaning, achievement, and steady progress towards inspiring goals that makes up for the hardships and misery they have to endure. Choose a Vision that will inspire you!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

1.3. Your Unique Vision (Vision)

"It is our choices, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities." - **J.K Rowling**

"If you want to know where you will be in the near future, look at what you are thinking and doing today." - **Anthony Robbins**

The next step is to develop your own unique Vision to guide you on your first Spin of the PURR Power Wheel™. Since you are about to create your own Vision now, I will repeat my Vision here that I shared earlier to serve as an example before you get started:

Vision: I lead a self-directed life helping people reboot their lives, find purpose, and make more money in their own unique way in the Digital Age.

Purpose: Create learning materials and platforms for *"life rebooters"* to effectively envision, manage, and collaborate with others on significant life changes while providing them with motivation and support along the way.

Potential Daily Activities: Write books, start a blog, build a Facebook-like social website for life rebooters to network and support each other, create an email newsletter, host a podcast to interview life rebooters, one-on-one coaching, organize live seminars, create video courses.

Notice that the Vision statement is about **how you see yourself** existing in the world. The Purpose is about **what you will contribute** to the world. The Potential Daily Activities are about **what you will actually do** on a daily basis (but not necessarily all at once).

Use the ideas you generated in the Vision Exercises to come up with your own Vision, Purpose, and Potential Daily Activities. Be bold and courageous. If it doesn't take you out of your comfort zone at least a little bit, you may want to re-think it. Achieving something new and significant usually requires doing different things, and doing things different.

Long Term Planning

Long term planning can be a useful exercise, but keep in mind

that the further out you Plan the less realistic it is likely to be. Chances are in that amount of time you may need to course correct many times as you learn more about what actually works for you and what doesn't. On the other hand, if you have a long term goal like sending your own rockets into space, then your Vision needs to take that into account. You will want to ensure you are heading in the right direction to achieve that long term goal. In any case, your first Spin of the PURR Power Wheel™ will focus on things you can accomplish in a relatively short amount of time. Ideally each Spin will be somewhere between 2 and 4 weeks in duration. Each Spin will bring you closer to achieving your Vision.

Focus on The What not The How

The upcoming Plan section includes researching ways for achieving your Vision. Now is not the time to worry about **how** you will accomplish it. At this point you are still focusing on the **what**, not the **how**. Later on we will review ways to approach new things. The Team Build step will provide options for getting help in areas that you feel you can't handle on your own. For now, just assume you can handle anything, without worrying how you would go about it. Try swapping out inner self-talk like: *I'll believe it when I see it* with: *I'll see it because I believe it*.

Where Your Mind Goes Your Body Will Follow

Once a thing exists firmly in your mind, it exists. You just need to go claim it. To strengthen it further try thinking, acting and feeling like you are already there even before you are fully there. It helps to associate with people who are already there. You need to be aware of what is entering your mind each day. It is important that some of what you let in supports the path you are on.

One way to do this is to listen to podcasts produced by people that are already doing what you want to do. In my case I listen to podcasts of successful self-published authors to feel like I am part of that tribe before I have even published my first book. I will introduce you to some good podcasts in the upcoming **Success Stories** section. I am only choosing Success Stories of people that have been interviewed on podcasts. I am doing this mainly so you can hear people talk about their ventures

without having to rely on my interpretation alone. A side benefit is you will learn about some good podcast channels that you can explore further if they interest you.

"...the dominating thoughts of my mind will eventually reproduce themselves in outward, physical action, and gradually transform themselves into physical reality, therefore, I will concentrate my thoughts for thirty minutes daily, upon the task of thinking of the person I intend to become, thereby creating in my mind a clear mental picture of that person." - **Napoleon Hill - excerpt from from Think and Grow Rich**

Never underestimate the power of the mind to create your reality. Consider attaching your Vision statement to your mirror at home so that it is the first thing you see every morning. Get it firmly entrenched in your mind each and every day and let it feed your conscious and sub-conscious mind.

For better or for worse, what is in your mind creates your physical reality. Small time criminals think daily about how to beat the system and get ahead at the expense of others. This leads to jail time and a wretched life. On the other hand, thinking daily about what you can contribute to the world leads to prosperity and a strong community of people willing to support you and help you back.

Take a good look at the people around you, those that you consider the winners and the losers. It probably won't be difficult to see how their inner thoughts and actions are contributing to their lot in life. In western cultures they say *you reap what you sow*. In eastern cultures they call this *karma*. Take a look around and notice that these are much more than nice concepts designed to convince you to be a better person. They are much closer to physical laws than philosophy, since applying them correctly leads to a better physical reality for you.

A good starting point is to begin each day with a powerful intention in the form of your Vision statement. Spend the day striving to live up to it to the best of your ability, and watch how your physical reality begins to change day by day. A good way to live up to it when generating new income streams is to follow the remaining steps in the PURR Power Wheel™. Before long you will have achieved more than you ever thought

possible. It all begins with steering your thoughts in a positive direction at the beginning of each and every day.

Dealing with Detractors

Some people will argue against what I am trying to accomplish with this book or with how I am going about it. Virtually all books have some negative reviews, so I expect there will be some for this book. I hope you prove them wrong by taking from the book what works for you to create a new and exciting life for yourself.

The key is to focus on doing your best for the people you can help with whatever it is you bring to the table. You will never be able to please everyone, and that's okay. In my case I feel it is worth risking criticism if this book is able to help some people out. As I am writing this book in British Columbia, Canada, my neighboring province of Alberta has lost over 60,000 jobs in the first 8 months of the year due to low oil prices. I know people personally affected by this downturn in the economy. Oil companies and construction companies are laying people off at an alarming rate. There are no decent jobs to replace the ones they lost. They need to do something to make a living. My belief that the methods outlined in this book could help some of them drives me forward. Criticism is easier to take when your intentions are good. It helps to think of specific examples of who you could help. That's why the Vision Exercises you just did included the question: *"Who could you serve with connection ideas from the earlier lists?"* Be prepared to deal with inevitable criticism by creating an inspiring Vision for yourself that can help some people. Then focus on helping them with the same good intentions you would have towards a member of your own family!

Whatever you try to accomplish, some people may argue against it. Whether it be a career change or new business venture, chances are not everyone will be on your side for reasons that may have more to do with them than it does with you. Listen to your intuition at this stage, not to naysayers. Don't be afraid to let your authentic-self shine through. The people that resonate with that are the people that will form your tribe. Those that don't will move on to something that suits them better, which is just fine. If you try to please everyone, you will please no one. If you are not authentic,

nobody will listen. Listen to your intuition, be authentic, take a stand, and serve the tribe that resonates with that message!

Checks and Balances

The rest of the PURR Passive Income Power™ system has plenty of checks and balances built in to make sure you are on a realistic track. If you aren't, then course corrections are all part of the process. For now, in the Vision stage, work towards something that you can turn into a compelling story to share with others as you move forward. Something compelling enough to overcome obstacles along the way. Successful people tend to talk more about how big their plans are, not how big their problems are. This is your chance to create the story of your life direction that will overpower stories about your problems, and keep you moving forward when the going gets tough!

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

1.4. Your Success Metrics (Vision)

"It always seems impossible until its done." - **Nelson Mandela**

Before you get into the details of your **Plan** in the next Step, it is important to think about what success means for you. Once you get started doing the work it can be easy to lose sight of the forest for the trees. Keeping your eye on success metrics will help you to stay focused on what matters most to you. It will help you say no to "busy work" that does not move you forward towards your Vision. The success metrics you develop here are among the things you will review each time you Spin around to the **Measure** step (Step 8 on the PURR Power Wheel™).

A metric is something you can measure and compare to a baseline or target. You either achieve the metric-based goal you or you don't. You can also think in terms of the degree of your success. If your metric is to achieve 100 of something by a certain date, and you only achieve 90, you could consider yourself to be 90% there or 90% successful.

At the Vision stage you will focus mostly on your high level success metrics. One example of a success metric is **number of books sold**. Success metrics are bottom-line results based, as opposed to performance-based metrics like **number of words written**. One thing all metrics have in common is they can be easily measured and compared to a target. You can define exactly how the measurement will take place (e.g. by checking your Amazon author dashboard to see how many books you have sold).

Subjective metrics that involve some personal judgment may need to be considered. For example, if your Vision involves improving at something like gymnastics because you want establish your credibility in that niche, you may need to rely on a competition judge's subjective opinion of how you are doing. However, even in cases like this you can usually find some objective metrics you can measure yourself with. Metrics like **landing a triple back flip 90% of the time**.

To focus on creating good metrics, whether they be performance-based or success-based, let's create a PURR Power™ inspired acronym to associate with the word metric:

METRIC

M = Measurable

E = Effective

T = Timely

R = Realistic

I = Inspiring

C = Challenging

Let's review each of these one at a time:

Measurable

To measure my progress with this book I could say success for me means at least 10 people that aren't my immediate family and friends buy the book. Or I could say success means receiving at least 10 positive reviews on a bookseller website like Amazon. This may mean I would need to sell 100's or even 1000's of books to get those reviews, but the metric in this case would be tied to positive reviews rather than book sales. I could further define a positive review as 4 stars or higher on a 5 star rating system. This metric is measurable by simply visiting the bookseller website(s) and counting up the positive reviews.

If I was even more optimistic I may decide nothing short of making it on an established bestseller list would constitute success. Or I might say success means the book becomes popular enough that I am invited on to one of my favorite podcasts to talk about it.

The metrics mentioned so far are all target-based. You pick a target and aim to achieve or make measurable progress towards it within a single Spin of the PURR Power Wheel™. When you achieve the target you may decide to bump it up in your next Spin of the wheel. The magnitude of your target can dictate to some degree the activities required to reach that target. For example, if you wanted to take book sales from 10 books to a million you would need to do completely different things to achieve that next target. It would require many additional Spins of the wheel making incremental progress each time.

Another form of metric is based on a sustainable rate of

progress that can be measured against some standard, or simply against your own sense of what is good enough for your purposes. In my book example I might say that success for me means the book generates a sustainable income of \$1000/month from Amazon Kindle sales. Once I reach that level I can decide to continue actively promoting the book to increase it further, or begin to spend more of my time creating my next income stream.

Effective

You want to make sure the metrics you choose will be effective at helping you achieve your desired results. Let's say you are looking for a new job to better position yourself to work on Digital Age side projects. You could establish a performance metric related to a certain number of job applications submitted per month. As most job hunting experts would tell you however, this is not considered an effective way to find a new job. It is an example of a metric that is measurable but not particularly effective. You want to choose metrics that will have the greatest impact on actually achieving your ultimate Vision. Without getting too sidetracked on good metrics for job hunters, a better one might be the number of new contacts made from networking events like meetup groups related to your industry or interests.

Timely

Let's say you are wise to the fact that just submitting job applications is not going to be an effective way to find a new job. You may decide instead that you should just meet with the top 10 CEOs in your industry. You may feel you could convince one of them to hire you, or at least learn more about what you need to do to land a job at their firm. While that may be true, it may take years to get even a single CEO to agree to meet with you. A metric like this isn't timely enough to suit your needs. In this example you could also say it isn't very Realistic. Some metrics can fail you on multiple levels.

Realistic

To expand on the meetup groups example, you may decide to start networking and meet at least 50 new people related to your industry or interests each month in an effort to get a new

job. While this may be more effective than submitting job applications, it may not be realistic. If you choose a smaller number it may be more realistic. If there are many relevant meetup groups that meet regularly in your area a higher target number may be realistic for you (check meetup.com or Google). Or if you manage to convince the meetup group organizers to let you do a presentation at one of the meetings, you could expect to make many more contacts and position yourself as an expert in your field at the same time.

Taking the meetup group idea further, perhaps all the relevant meetup groups meet in a far off city. You may not be able to afford to travel there for the meetings. Then that metric may not be realistic because it isn't cost effective for you. Or if they only meet twice a year it may not be timely or realistic. In that case you could try joining and contributing to online communities to make contacts that way. Or you could put the word out to friends and family, all of whom know people who know people. Or you could try and contact employees at local companies in your field to ask for an information interview (Google it if you aren't sure what that is).

The key here is making sure the metric you choose is realistically attainable given whatever constraints you may be operating under.

Inspiring

We all know that the more inspired we are by something the more energy we have for it. At this stage you need to take responsibility for your own inspiration by developing metrics that inspire you. In my case if I really felt only 10 people were going to read this book I probably wouldn't find the energy to devote the time I am taking to write it, while also holding down a full time job. On the other hand if I really felt I needed to sell a million copies to be successful, the project would seem overwhelming and would probably be a non-starter. What I need to be inspired is to come up with a number that not only inspires me, but through some research also fits with the above criteria of being realistic at the same time. A metric that satisfies the criteria of the METRIC acronym should be inspiring!

Challenging

The other side of making sure your metrics are realistic is making sure they are challenging. If you are looking for a job and only plan to contact one person per month, you probably aren't challenging yourself enough. You need to find a middle ground between challenging and realistic!

To summarize, it can help to analyze potential metrics with our new METRIC acronym in mind:

M = Measurable

E = Effective

T = Timely

R = Realistic

I = Inspiring

C = Challenging

Blogging Metrics

PurrPassiveIncome.com/start

Once you get into blogging there is no shortage of metrics you may want to track and targets you may want to set. These are all easily measured after you install a free analytics tool like Google Analytics on your blog. Installing Google Analytics is a simple matter of creating a free account and adding a short snippet of code to the footer of your site. It is super easy to do and takes just a few minutes. A simple search on Google or Youtube will return all kinds of free advice on how to install it, or just go to **google.com/analytics**.

For example you may want to set a target of a certain number of daily unique website visitors. This and much more are easily measured by Google Analytics. However, you also want to be selective. With all the data available you will want to avoid actively tracking too many things. Think about the METRIC acronym to come up with good metrics to track. Find the metrics that mean the most for your business, like the conversion rates of various sales pages that you are actively split testing. A conversion rate is simply the number of conversions (e.g. sales or newsletter signups) divided by the number of visitors that viewed the offer. For example, if you get 100 visitors and 8 of them sign up or buy, your conversion

rate is 8%. Split testing is a way to optimize your conversion rate. It has a game-like quality to it and can be a lot of fun. Split testing will be discussed in more detail in the upcoming **Problem Solve** step.

In the case of my social networking site idea, the site would be completely free for users. It would only ever make money if there were enough visitors to warrant placing ads on the site. Therefore, the number of daily unique visitors would be a key metric for that site. I would need to research what I should be targeting for it. Of course it would be absurd to shoot for the kinds of numbers that Facebook is currently enjoying, but I could research or estimate the number of users that would be needed to establish a critical mass for growing a vibrant community.

The main thing at this point is to make sure you have a clear idea of what will constitute success or lead to success for you. Establish ways to measure it before you begin, keeping in mind that you can refine your metrics and your targets as you learn more. A major theme of PURR Passive Income Power™ is managing course corrections along the way. At each Step in the wheel for each Spin of the wheel you will do your best to define things like success metrics, while at the same time Understanding that you may Refine them on your next Spin.

If your metrics are not looking good at the end of a Spin, ask yourself if you can identify anyone at all that is enthusiastic about what you have to offer, even if it is just a few people. If so, a key course correction may be to see if there is a larger market of like-minded people that you could target with your message. If not, and your metrics show that you are not getting any traction with your current strategy and tactics, it may be time for completely new tactics or for a major course correction that could include scraping your current project and moving on to something else.

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

1.5. Thinking Big in Steps (Vision)

"You can have everything in life you want, if you will just help enough other people get what they want." - Zig Ziglar

"Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value." - Albert Einstein

When establishing metrics, don't forget to think beyond your immediate tasks to take into account the bigger picture of your overall business model and strategy. For instance, taking the example of my book project further, I might say success means the book leads to at least 1000 people signing up for the PURR Passive Income Power™ Email Newsletter. In this case the goal of the book would be tied to building a community of like-minded people interested in my free newsletter content, and who may be interested in my next books or other related products or projects.

A related project I have in mind is a social networking site for "life rebooters." At time of writing I have purchased the domain name **LifeRebooter.com** that I plan to use, but it only has a "coming soon" page so far. Similar to starting a blog, this is an example of taking a small action to solidify an intention. As Anthony Robbins says: *"If there's no action, you haven't truly decided."*

It would be very difficult to get a site like that going without an email list of people that may be interested in being part of it. This would help the site achieve a critical mass of members to make it worthwhile for others to join. My social networking site idea is an example of a more advanced strategy that will probably only work if this book and related blog are successful at generating newsletter signups.

So again we come back to the need for a blog to get things rolling. A key to setting up the groundwork for more advanced strategies is a blog where people can sign up for your email list. These are people you can tell about your new ventures that may be interested enough to give them a try and create the all-important early momentum for those offerings. Writing a book first is probably not the best first strategy for most people because of the time it takes. It is taking me well over a year to write this book in my spare time, while getting started with a

blog can be done in a matter of minutes. With a blog you can begin to develop a tribe of enthusiastic followers, and maybe write a book or initiate some other advanced strategy later on after you know people are interested in you and your approach. Once again, here is the page that shows you how to setup a new blog in 5 minutes or less:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/start

Big vs. Now - One Step at a Time

Notice that even though I am planning to create **LifeRebooter.com**, I don't have to do it now. Of course it would be nice if it were ready before you are reading these lines. Depending on when you read this maybe it will be. However, you can't do everything all at once. The thing that makes it possible to focus on just one thing at a time is, again, your email list. When you have that you can simply let your list know when things are ready for them to consider. And since you can't create an email list without a blog for people to sign up from, the blog comes first, the email list comes second. Everything else can come later.

If you do decide to jump right in to writing a book, you will want to make sure your blog and email signup forms are ready before the book is published. You can do that while you are waiting for your beta readers and/or editor to review your book before publishing. I only mention this variation because that is what I am doing. You may have other ways you want to go about it depending on the business model you are pursuing. However, if you are just starting out with Digital Age ventures, or are having trouble gaining traction, I recommend blog first, email list second, everything else later. This strategy can make good sense regardless of the business model or advanced strategies you may have in your mind now.

Lean Startups - Thinking Big but Starting Small

An important concept on this subject comes from the Lean Startup Methodology first proposed by Eric Ries in 2011 (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean_startup). It is referred to as a **Minimum Viable Product (MVP)**. The idea here is to ship something as soon as it is viable enough to start getting feedback from people. Then you start improving on it rather

than spending a lot of time trying to perfect something that you think people **might want**. You can waste a lot of time doing that, only to find out later nobody cares. Or maybe they care, but you aren't doing it in a way that works for them. Think first about what the product **must have** to be viable. Then what it **should have** or **could have** to make it more useful. Lastly think about what it definitely **won't have**. These are things that you clearly identify as beyond the scope of your project. The must haves should be the sole focus of your MVP. Ship it. Get feedback. Then re-evaluate your should haves and could haves and start working on your version 2, if and only if the feedback you received from your MVP is positive enough to warrant that next step.

Creating a blog is an example of a minimum viable product. It is cheap and easy and provides ways to get valuable feedback. Start blogging about what you think might be useful for people. Get feedback by allowing visitors to add comments to the bottom of each blog post. See if anyone is interested enough in what you are blogging about to join your email list. If what you are doing resonates with people, then and only then start thinking about some of the more advanced strategies we will be discussing throughout this book to monetize your ideas.

My **LifeRebooter.com** site that I intend to turn into a social networking site for "life rebooters" is another example of a minimum viable product. A website with just one page that says "coming soon" is about as minimum as it gets. And yet I am already setting myself up to get some feedback on it. By mentioning it here people that are interested in it may sign up to my newsletter so they can be notified when it is available. Once on my list they can simply reply to any of my emails to tell me what they think about the idea, or tell me to get my butt in gear creating it. If nobody signs up for my newsletter and nobody cares about the idea then I haven't wasted much time on that idea. I can simply move on to the next idea having saved a ton of time in the process.

However, keeping up with my progress on LifeRebooter.com is just one of many good reasons to sign up for my email list! You can sign up here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/join

Call to Action

By the way, what you just experienced is a Call To Action or **CTA**. If you want people to join your list or do anything at all, it helps if you to ask them to do it. How you go about doing that is completely up to you. If you think what I just did was too obvious you may want to come up with more subtle approaches for your own business. I made it super obvious here to make a point. Keep in mind if you are too subtle nobody will know you have anything of value to offer! Don't be afraid to tell people about what you have to offer, but only after you have provided them with enough value that they have some reason to believe what you are offering is worth their time and attention. I am doing my best to demonstrate that by example with this book. However, you don't need to write an entire book to do that. A good blog post with a **CTA** at the bottom of the post can be very effective. People that like your blog post may want to learn more and be willing to sign up for your email list. The only way to find out is to ask them!

Is This Book Lean?

I should point out before anyone else does that I am not really following the lean startup approach with this book. I feel compelled to take my time to write a fairly long book and give it my best shot before pressing publish. This makes sense for me because I currently have a stable income, so I don't feel I am in a hurry. I also feel like I have a good understanding of what you need to know if you are just starting out with Digital Age ventures. I have been doing them myself for years while asking and finding answers to lots of my own questions along the way. So I feel what I am writing won't be too far off the mark. It will be refined as I get feedback from my beta readers before I publish, and from the marketplace after I publish (eBooks can be updated as often as you like after you publish).

I also don't want to risk too many bad reviews at the very beginning of my writing career. Selling books on Amazon is so review-driven that it seems to me starting out with a book that doesn't merit some good reviews would be a bad idea. Unlike experimenting with a blog, reviews on Amazon can affect you for some time. Yes, you can write under a pen name to try some things out if you like. Amazon's author central pages allow up to 3 pen names under a single account at time of

writing. However, when the time comes to write under your own name, reviews are an important consideration. So there are pros and cons to the lean startup approach depending on your situation and what you are trying to accomplish.

However, for most Digital Age ventures, I think the lean startup approach of getting something out there fast is a good idea. A blog is a good example. If certain blog posts don't work, just delete them and start over. If the entire concept of the blog doesn't work, start a new blog. By the time you get to something good nobody will know or care that some of your earlier attempts didn't work out!

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

2. Plan

"Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now." - **Alan Lakein**

"If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much." - **Jim Rohn**

My Parable

To lighten things up a bit, let's start this section with a little planning related story from my life. I think of it more as a parable because I was able to take some good lessons from the experience. Let's begin:

My single greatest planning failure happened when I was 21 years old. It was preceded by a "lucky success" that led me to believe I was invincible. It's easy to feel invincible when you are 21. Among other things, the story will show there is a big difference between good luck and good planning.

The setting was a 9 week backpacking trip through Europe, the first of many similar trips I took around the world in later years. This was all the rage at the time. I was reading James Michener's book "The Drifters", a classic novel about this type of traveling. It was a time of adventure, revelation, and new relationships.

One time in Florence, Italy a fellow traveler and I were lucky enough to find an inexpensive but spacious room to rent in the high summer season. We then proceeded to invite other backpackers we met to come and sleep on "our floor." Our new gang had representatives from many countries and many perspectives. One morning we all woke up early and decided to hop a train to Rome, the beginning of more adventure.

The preferred backpacker route in those days was to head south through Italy, then hop a ferry boat from Brindisi to the Greece mainland. We all had the same budget travel guides, the glue that held us together. The boat was filled to the brim with backpacks and backpackers.

What the guide books didn't warn us about (or perhaps I felt

too invincible to bother reading that section) was how the arrival of this large ferry boat would be greeted by a small train station, seemingly in the middle of nowhere. At the station was a ridiculously small train, just 4 train cars to service a large ferry boat with 100's of backpackers.

My Lucky Success

This was the scene for my "lucky success." Amongst the throng of backpackers swarming around the train car doors, my friend and I spotted an open window in one of the train cars. We had the brilliant idea to toss our backpacks through that window, which miraculously landed on empty seats. We were then able to finesse our way onto the train car and walk down the crowded aisles where people were bracing for a long uncomfortable train ride to Athens. When we got to the seats our backpacks had landed on, they were still sitting there. Nobody seemed to question that these were our seats. We lifted the packs and settled in for a pleasant, comfortable journey. We were immensely satisfied with ourselves. It never occurred to us what would have happened if the train had filled up and left without us.

Learning My Lesson

Fast forward to our arrival at one of the Greek islands a couple of weeks later. We got off yet another ferry boat and made our way straight to the beach to catch up with some of our gang. No point finding a place to stay until we found out where the gang was holed up. Once we found them there was no hurry to go to the "room", which was after all just the roof of a hotel. Backpackers simply leaned their backpacks against the short wall surrounding the roof to stake their territory, and slept under the stars.

After a few hours in the sun, it was time to go to the hotel. By this point I was very relaxed and wearing just shorts and shoes, with everything else in my backpack. When I say everything I mean everything, including my passport and most of my money (in those days we used traveler's checks, debit cards had yet to be invented).

The bus system on the island had only one circuit route. The buses were very old and extremely crowded at peak times.

Backpacks had to be deposited in a large trunk at the back of the bus, after which you made your way to the front to board the bus. By this point you can probably guess that my greatest planning failure occurred on that day.

Although the situation did make me a bit nervous, the quick decision I felt forced to make in that moment was fueled by my "lucky success" on the train only a couple of weeks earlier. I threw my backpack into the back of the bus, and proceeded to the front to board. And yes, just like in a movie about a bumbling loser, the doors closed and the bus left before I could get on. There I was, in a foreign country thousands of miles from home with nothing but a pair of shorts and shoes to my name, feeling anything but invincible.

I wandered around like that for hours that day, resolving to myself that I would never do anything so stupid again. The nightmare ended with me sitting all by myself at a small bus stop on the island with darkness setting in. I had been checking every bus that went by for my backpack, hoping for a miracle. Finally, a completely empty bus pulled up, and low and behold the trunk contained one thing and one thing only. My backpack in pristine shape, nothing missing!

Sometimes I think all of life is just a grand setup that gives us plenty of rope to get things incredibly wrong, so that we are forced to take responsibility for getting things right in the future. Lucky for me, 21 years old wasn't too late to learn some new tricks. Believe me, I am the most careful traveler you can imagine now!

The Importance of Planning and Diversification

For me this experience served to illustrate how a bit of basic planning can go a long way toward avoiding serious disasters in life. For instance, the backpack in the story can be compared to the often repeated "all eggs in a single basket" metaphor. Clearly I should have had my passport securely attached to my body somewhere. I could have had my money spread out in various places like the backpack, my day pack, my pockets, maybe even my shoes. After all, I have been robbed more than once in my travels, and they never once took my shoes! Of course in the age of debit cards and electronic money transfers accessible virtually anywhere in the world, these steps are less

relevant. As is the case with most parables, you need to take into account the time when the story occurred.

So how can this story apply to the present day? My "*Google cut me off*" story at the beginning of this book shows clearly how depending on any one thing like one backpack or a single Digital Age tactic can take you from hero to zero in a heart beat. In my case I had some other income streams when I lost my Google Adwords related income (maybe the Greece experience helped me there). However, other affiliate marketers at that time had quit their day jobs to run Google Adwords campaigns full time. When Google changed the rules they were left hanging. Their entire income literally went to zero overnight. This isn't so different from depending on a single employer for your livelihood, or just a single income stream of any kind. It pays to have multiple income streams to fall back on and ramp up if needed.

The Dangers of Getting Distracted

The Greece backpacker parable also illustrates how easy it can be to get distracted by what is going on around you. This can cause you to take your eye off of what is most important for your success. The last section on Vision has hopefully given you a clear idea on a direction you want to take with your life. The Plan section is about making sure you focus on the right things to get there. It is so important to be clear on your Vision, purpose, and the core value you are providing to others. It helps you to say no to things that don't support your Vision, allowing you to focus on what is really important to you and your tribe.

These aren't always easy or clear cut decisions. Sometimes diversity is what you are trying to achieve, as is the case with having side projects that reduce your dependency on any one thing like a job. However, each side project should have a clear Vision or be part of an over-arching Vision that you work toward without getting sidetracked by things that don't support that Vision.

Simplicity Beyond Complexity

I had a boss once who used to emphasize striving for "*the simplicity beyond complexity*." The implication being that a

simple but untested idea, product, or Plan is basically useless in its original form. That is the kind of simple that can be seen in hindsight as naive. On the other hand, the kind of simple that evolves from an iterative process that gathers feedback and continually improves on the original idea can become elegant or even profound. That is what we are trying to achieve with the PURR Power Wheel™. That is why I took more international backpacking trips after that first one, just so I could get it right eventually!

When it comes to project management methods, a guiding principle is to keep things as simple as possible, but no simpler. My expectation is you are not reading this book because you plan on building a skyscraper in New York city. Life rebooter projects may seem daunting, but they are far less complex than that.

In the same way that you must make decisions about what you will include in your projects, I need to decide where to draw the line on this book project. If I provide you with a full-blown review of every project management technique, the book will become too long and boring for most people. On the other hand, if I provide too little detail, I won't be living up to the promise of this book, which is to *guide you step-by-step to develop a compelling personal vision and turn it into reality.*

So the following chapters of PURR Passive Income Power™ can be thought of as *project management lite*. It is more than most people would typically use for rebooting their lives, which should greatly improve your results. It should be all you need to handle personal and small business projects as quickly and efficiently as possible. If your particular project calls for less project management than what is presented here, then of course you can do less. If it calls for more, then you will need to search beyond this book to learn more. However, PURR Passive Income Power™ should be more than adequate for anyone wanting to change jobs or start a small business or "digital age venture", either full time or on the side.

Captainless, Rudderless Ship Without a Compass

Another old boss of mine used to compare an un-focused organization with a "*captainless, rudderless ship without a compass*", something we were of course trying to avoid. This is

a deceptively difficult goal even for companies filled with really smart people. It can be even harder in our personal careers and lives. Especially if we don't develop the habit of taking action and constantly refining our approach. Most of us aren't nearly as smart as we sometimes think we are. It is all too easy to get things wrong, at times not even realizing it until years later. Far from being a reason to give up, this should serve to illustrate the importance of getting started on the best path you can envision now, and being willing to consciously and intelligently course correct as necessary.

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

2.1. The Flow Factor (Plan)

"It is relatively easy to bring order to the mind for short stretches of time; any realistic goal can accomplish this... But it is much more difficult to extend this state of being through the entirety of life. For this it is necessary to Invest energy in goals that are so persuasive that they justify effort even when our resources are exhausted and when fate is merciless in refusing us a chance at having a comfortable life." - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Flashback to Christmas 1991. I received a book that dramatically changed my view of the world and my own path forward. The book is titled "**FLOW, The Psychology of Optimal Experience**" by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. By now the word Flow is relatively mainstream and often overused, perhaps causing it to lose some of its original meaning in the process. Since it is such a useful state of mind when it comes to achievement, I feel it is worth reviewing the basics here. Paraphrasing Csikszentmihalyi, here is my take on what Flow is and how it feels:

1. Being so immersed in the present moment that you achieve extreme order in your mind, there is no room for unrelated thoughts or outside anxieties, you become completely focused and "un-self-conscious."
2. Time flies by and you barely notice it, you may look up to see a clock and suddenly realize you have been working at something for hours.
3. You feel the activity itself is the reward, you would do it whether you got paid to do it or not.

I found the concept of Flow compelling back in 1991, but more compelling still was the idea that Flow doesn't have to happen by accident. It can be reproduced by setting up activities according to a certain set of conditions, which we will cover in this section. For example, writing this book ticks all 3 of the boxes from the above list for me. That is a big reason why I tend to gravitate toward writing projects, and to activities like computer programming earlier in my career.

You may find these same activities boring and tedious. You may

need something more active like public speaking or rock climbing to put you into Flow. With this in mind, a guiding principle when developing your Vision and setting up your Plan is to understand the kinds of activities that will put you into Flow.

Designing Tasks With Flow In Mind

Whether or not you achieve the mental state of Flow can depend on how you design and organize the individual tasks required for your project. To achieve it we need to dig a little deeper into what causes the Flow state to develop. To further paraphrase Czikzentmihalyi, here are key conditions to consider if you want to produce more Flow in your projects and in your life:

- 1.** You should have clear goals and a way of making progress toward your goals.
- 2.** The individual activities should not be too easy (boring), and not too hard (overwhelming).
- 3.** The activity itself should provide measurable (and preferably) immediate feedback, so that you know how you are doing and can clearly see the results of adjustments you make along the way.

A good example is a game of tennis where each of the above 3 points can be satisfied by the following:

- 1.** You want to win the game (a clear goal), and you have everything you need to make it possible (e.g. a tennis racket and tennis shoes).
- 2.** You can play with a partner that has a similar skill level to yours (so you aren't bored or overwhelmed).
- 3.** You can keep score and make adjustments to your technique which affects the score (ongoing measurable feedback).

This is also a good example of how the exact same activity could produce Flow for you today, but not necessarily in the future. For example, imagine if you practice tennis on your own every day for months, and your playing partner only shows up

once in a while to play a game of tennis with you. It is only a matter of time before you will find that same match up boring, and your playing partner will feel overwhelmed. What produces Flow for you will evolve as your skill level increases. That is why designing activities for yourself is so important, rather than letting others design them for you (as often happens in a traditional job).

Flow and PURR Passive Income Power™

At this point you may have recognized that some of the key elements of the PURR Passive Income Power™ system fit pretty well with the conditions of Flow.

The **Vision** and **Plan** steps of the PURR Power Wheel™ assist in developing clear goals. They give you the freedom and guidance to formulate your own tasks that you perceive as not too hard and not too easy (**spoiler alert**: tasks that seem too hard can be broken down into sub-tasks that are more manageable, or outsourced to others if you simply don't have the required skill set and don't have the time or desire to learn). Then with the **Manage** and **Measure** steps you will gather feedback in the form of metrics and acceptance criteria, so you can course correct as needed and witness whatever results those course corrections produce.

Designing Work That You Love

As much as we would all like to be in Flow all the time, that isn't realistic. The idea is to maximize your Flow activities, and find ways to deal with activities that do not produce Flow for you. For example, accounting activities tend to either bore me or overwhelm me because I am not trained as an accountant. I Manage to do my own personal taxes (which I find boring) because it doesn't take long and isn't hard with all the excellent software available these days. However, when it comes to my incorporated consulting business, I outsource all my bookkeeping and accounting activities to a qualified accounting firm. Since accounting isn't part of my core Vision, the fact that those activities don't produce Flow for me is easily overcome by outsourcing.

That example may seem obvious, but we have all heard stories of people entering a field (like accounting) because someone

else thought they should (e.g. parents), or because they thought all that hard work would pay off with a good job someday. Depending on the person and the circumstances, those may be good reasons to pursue an accounting career or create an online business in an accounting related niche. However, if you don't actually find accounting enjoyable (Flow), it may not be the optimum path for you.

The point at this stage is to open your mind to more than one path forward and more than one way to accomplish the same things. *Flow potential* is worth considering as a means to help you decide between competing alternatives. We all tend to be good at and work hard at things we enjoy doing, and we tend to enjoy activities that put us into Flow. By designing our activities according to the principles of Flow, we have the potential to get further faster and get better at things more quickly. Flow is a key concept in designing work for yourself that you will love doing.

Avoiding Negative Flow

One thing to be careful of is to avoid what could be considered "negative flow." That is, flow activities that take you away from pursuing your Vision. These are distractions like video games or constantly checking your social network accounts to the point that it impedes your progress. Anything that causes you to spend a lot of unproductive time in front of your computer can be considered a negative flow activity in the context of rebooting your life and livelihood.

Understand that people who design games and social networks understand all about Flow, and of course they want you to spend time on their platforms. To compete with that it helps to design your own activities with Flow in mind, so that you get to the point where you will naturally prefer those activities over anything else. An advantage you have over daily distractions is that the tasks you will create for yourself later in this section will be designed to help you accomplish the Vision you just developed in the last section. Develop a compelling enough Vision for yourself and you will naturally come to prefer your own "self-designed Flow activities" over the ones others create for you to further their goals, but distract you from your goals.

This gets easier when you start to see real progress towards

realizing your Vision. At that point, distractions that don't contribute to realizing your Vision may lose their power over you completely. There is nothing more intoxicating than experiencing real progress towards a powerful Vision you have developed for yourself!

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

2.2. The PM Triangle (Plan)

Rebooting your life and livelihood is a project that usually requires many steps and decisions you need to make along the way. Let's review some basic project management concepts here.

The project management triangle refers to 3 competing constraints that exist for all projects:

Scope = A detailed description of what you will do.

Schedule = Dates when milestones will be reached.

Cost = How much the project will cost.

The 3 sides of the triangle are highly interdependent. Once they are established, then changing one will affect the others. For instance, adding things to the scope will affect either cost or schedule, you can choose. If you decide to do it all yourself then it will take longer, and the schedule will be affected. If schedule is more important and you want to stick to your deadline, cost will be affected as you outsource some of the work to others.

A related factor that can be thought of as the center of the triangle is **quality**. Without considering this the triangle can be thought of as assuming a certain level of quality. This makes sense for some projects where quality is clearly defined and non-negotiable. However, you could accelerate the **schedule** or lower the **cost** of a project if you were willing and able to sacrifice quality. For some projects you can sacrifice some quality and still meet all or most of your objectives.

For example, I didn't bother to include an image of a triangle when I introduced this topic above. An image would have increased the quality of this chapter. However, not having it probably won't affect the success of this book in any measurable way. On the other hand, too many shortcuts of that nature probably would. Also think back to our earlier discussion of a Minimum Viable Product (MVP), which we could think of in this section as a Minimum Viable **Plan** or **Project**. You could consider decreasing the scope of your first project so you can get some feedback before proceeding with your next steps in a

follow up project, if the feedback you get is positive enough to warrant another project to take things to the next level.

The above relationships hold true for all projects. You may argue that you could add more of your own time to personal side projects at no extra cost. For example, if you decide to watch less TV and work more on the project. However, you would technically still be increasing the cost because your time is worth something, even if you had been wasting it in front of the TV up to that point. In fact I would argue that your time is the most valuable thing you have. Unlike money, time is the one thing you can never get back. My wife and I were just looking at some old photos from just 9 years ago. It is shocking how young I look in those photos compared to how I look now! That younger guy is gone forever. Your time is extremely limited and precious! Use it wisely.

Okay, just had to get that off my chest. Back to the Project Management Triangle. These relationships are elastic and work in all directions. Want to lower your costs? This is likely to affect either scope, schedule or quality. These are the choices you have. Many project related issues can be solved more quickly by being clear about these choices and making decisions that you deem appropriate. If you are cash constrained then throwing money at problems isn't an option. In this case your choices are to reduce your scope, alter your schedule, or sacrifice some quality.

All of these choices can be viable options depending on your situation. The faster you can pick one and move on to working out how it affects your overall Plan the better. This will be discussed in more detail in upcoming chapters. For now, just think a bit about the project management triangle, and the related factor of quality. These are high level project management principles that can bring more clarity to any project.

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

2.3 Research Profit Potential (Plan)

"Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought." - **Albert Szent-Gyorgyi**

"There is nothing like looking, if you want to find something. You certainly usually find something, if you look, but it is not always quite the something you were after." - **J.R.R. Tolkien**

The project management triangle element you will define first is your **scope**. You need to know exactly what you want to accomplish before you can formulate your Plan to accomplish it. An important consideration at this point is **profit potential**. Recall that this is something we purposely avoided thinking about in the Vision section. However, now that you have some idea about your ideal Vision, the time has come to start thinking about the best ways to monetize that Vision.

A Vision can translate into different strategies, business models, tactics and niches (subject areas). When it comes to profit potential the first thing to focus on is the niche. Some niches have more profit potential than others. Niches are easy to investigate with keyword searches. The things you find will inform you about other levels like the strategies, business models, and tactics other folks are using in that niche. A good starting point when researching a niche is to review things like blogs, Youtube channels, and podcasts to Understand the monetization methods being used in your niche. You will learn ways to go about those searches in this section. The upcoming **Tools and Techniques** and **Success Stories** sections will give you lots of ideas on what to look for. That's one reason why at the end of the book I recommend reading the book again. You will get more out of sections like this one the second time around. This is another example of the power of iteration!

For example, part of my Vision is to help you make money in the Digital Age. Besides writing this book there are many ways I could go about it. I could create a course that goes into great detail on blogging. Or I could create a blog or course about how to profit from using Facebook ads or Google Adwords to promote your business. Or I could specialize in helping you with strategies to optimize and split test your landing pages to build your list of email subscribers. These are all different strategies, tactics and niches that support the same overall Vision I have

for helping you succeed in the Digital Age.

Now is the time for you to start thinking about your Vision and how it could translate into profitable strategies in profitable niches. Can you see yourself creating something that the people already in your chosen area might want to recommend to their tribes, if you offered them an affiliate commission to do so? A typical progression when you start to move beyond blogging to offer your own products is: book, then course, then coaching. These translate into small, medium, and large price points (coaching costs more than courses and courses cost more than books).

Success Story #5 is about a guy quitting his job to work full time on his business after creating one successful course. **Success Story #1** is a good example of bloggers graduating to selling their own recipe books based on the success of their blog (which allowed them to quit their jobs and work on their blog and recipe books full time). Keep in mind that books don't have to be super detailed like the one you are currently reading. Many people do very well with short books that help solve a particular problem, like *"what should I cook for supper tonight to be healthy and happy!"* Of course there are other strategies that have nothing to do with books or courses or coaching. If you are more interested in one of the other business models that we discussed earlier, then research examples of people doing that in your niche. For example, **Success Story #3** is about e-commerce sites and importing products from China. Research others that are doing that with products in your niche.

So let's begin your planning with some basic research into what others are doing in your area of interest, with profit potential a key factor to consider. If you plan to start with a blog it also helps to know the kinds of strategies and tactics other bloggers are focusing on, beyond how they are monetizing their blogs. For example, how often do they post new content? What are they writing about? Do they have an email list? What do they offer as incentive to join their lists (their lead magnet)? What kinds of emails do they send to their lists once people join? Why not join some lists and find out? The nice thing about the Digital Age is the ease with which you can see what others are doing. Evaluate their strategies and determine what you can do to compete with them and improve on what they are doing.

Perhaps even more important would be to consider ways you can cooperate with them in ways where you both benefit. **Success story #4** is about two people with hobby blogs in the same niche that have helped each other out to great effect.

Keyword Based Research

When doing your Vision Exercises in the previous section you came up with keyword phrases to describe different aspects of your Vision. Now is the time to modify those keyword phrases to represent what you think people would type into search engines when they are looking for what you have to offer. These new keyword phrases will form the basis for your **profit potential research**. For example, before writing this book I could have searched on the keyword phrase "make money online" to see what others are offering in that area. I didn't do that search because I have already spent many years buying information products and following thought leaders with "make money online" related offers.

However, by way of example, notice how the exact words "make money online" never appear in my Vision statement that I shared with you earlier. "Make money online" is one example of translating my Vision into a phrase that people might type into a search engine if they are looking for the kinds of things I am planning to offer. I wouldn't worry about keyword planning tools at this point. You aren't trying to optimize a blog at this stage. You are simply trying to get an idea of the kinds of things people are offering for sale in your area of interest.

Look For Affiliate Programs

Of particular interest when you are doing your research will be to notice if there are any good products with affiliate programs in your niche. This will allow you to monetize your blog by promoting those products on your blog. To find that out simply add the words "*affiliate programs*" to the end of your search terms. For example, you could search on *dog training affiliate programs* or *video game affiliate programs* and find plenty of opportunities in those niches.

That technique works very well for niches like dog training, but many not work so well in other niches. For example, I just searched on "*jeep affiliate programs*" and didn't come up with

sites that I happen to know are good affiliate programs for that niche. In that case focus more on the types of things a jeep enthusiast may want to buy.

When I searched on "*jeep parts*" the particular site I have had some experience with came up #3 in the organic results (the results below the ads). That site is 4wd.com. I clicked through to the site and searched the homepage on the word "*affiliate*" with the "*find function*" in my browser (or you can just scroll to the footer of the page where these links are usually located). That took me directly to their "*Affiliate Program*" link. Clicking on that link takes you to the signup page for their affiliate program, which at time of writing is being handled by an affiliate network we will discuss below (cj.com). This means I could have just as easily joined that affiliate network and searched their dashboard using keywords like *jeep* (more on that below).

The existence of good affiliate programs with relatively high payouts also means there will be people promoting those programs via advertising. This means that simply adding Google AdSense code to your blog, the easiest of all monetization methods, would produce decent payouts per click (google.com/adsense). With Google AdSense ads on your site you get paid every time someone clicks on an ad on your site. They don't have to buy anything. The amount you make per click depends on the competition amongst advertisers to get those clicks. I have made over \$2 for a single click in some niches. In other niches I only made 5 or 10 cents per click. The presence or absence of good affiliate programs can be a good indicator of how much money you can expect to make from your blog and from more advanced strategies you may choose to work on when the time comes.

Another indicator is simply how much the related products in your niche are worth to the Google AdSense advertiser, whether they have an affiliate program or not. You will make more per click on blog posts about insurance or investments than you would on blog posts about basket weaving. Other than gut feel, a way to see relative amounts advertisers are willing to pay for specific keywords would be to join the Google Adwords program and use the keyword planning tool offered there (probably not necessary if you are just starting out). Google Adwords advertisers have the option to advertise in the Google search

results or on other people's websites (which translates to Google AdSense ads for blog owners).

Google AdSense is a contextual advertising platform. This means you simply add your AdSense code that contains your AdSense id to your blog template so that it shows up in the same place on all of your blog posts, and Google will serve ads based on the context of the blog post it is on. So if you write a blog post about insurance Google will automatically show ads related to insurance on that blog post. If you blog about lots of different topics AdSense will serve different types of ads on all your blog posts depending on the topic you are writing about on each one. Like magic, AdSense just knows what relevant ads to show no matter what page your AdSense code is on. That is why AdSense is both easy and effective for bloggers.

Although not impossible, keep in mind you probably aren't going to make a full time income from a single blog that includes only Google AdSense and/or affiliate links. **Success Story #7** is about someone making a good living with this approach, but she has around 30 blogs and a highly optimized process and strategy. As we discussed in earlier chapters, blogging is a starting point to *get you in the game*, and to provide you with some return for your early efforts. You may find that making any amount of money at all from the comfort of your own home is a major motivator to take things to the next level. Blogging is also a way to build a following and test out your ideas on real live people to see if they like your approach. To replace your job, if that is your goal, you will most likely need to proceed to some of the more advanced strategies discussed in this book. We will cover them in more detail later. For now, let's stay focused on the example of blogging as your entry point into Digital Age income streams.

Google Searches

Type your keyword phrases into Google with and without the "*affiliate program*" extension. When you are searching without the affiliate program extension to your keyword then you will need to click through to the sites to see if they have an affiliate program, as demonstrated with the "*jeep parts*" example above.

In addition to looking for affiliate programs, pay particular

attention to the ads that show up in the results (typically at the top and right hand side of the search results). People are paying good money to get their ads to show up there (google.com/adwords). This means they are probably making money on whatever they are offering. If you want to be more sure they are really making money, try doing the same search every week for a month to see if those ads keep showing up. If they do then the product on offer is likely making them money. Google Ads are expensive and nobody would continue running them for long if they weren't making money from them. This will give you an idea of the potential to create or source your own products if you decide to move beyond blogging at some point in the future. While the initial scope of your first Spin of your first project should focus on what you will be doing next, having an idea of where that could lead is worth considering at this point.

Spend some time exploring the search results that are of most interest to you. Try and determine how those websites are making money. If they are linking to other sites that sell something, chances are they are making money from those relationships. With URL masking techniques, it isn't always obvious when a link to another site is an affiliate link. In this case, simply take note of what the sites being linked to are selling. Then do another search on "*<product name> affiliate program*" to find out how to sign up for the affiliate program for that product. In many cases this will turn up an affiliate page for products that are actively seeking new affiliates. Or use the "jeep parts" approach described above to find the affiliate programs. If the products you find in your searches don't have affiliate programs, you may be able to find competing products that do by searching on a generic name for the product or product category. Searching for affiliate programs on Google sometimes has the advantage of turning up private affiliate programs that are often the most lucrative. Private means you can only join them from the website where the products are sold or a related site owned by that same company, rather than from an affiliate network, which we will discuss next.

Affiliate Network Searches

One way to easily find products with affiliate programs is to join some of the larger affiliate marketing networks like Commission Junction and search for products you can promote from their

dashboard (they have products that would be of interest to virtually any niche you can imagine). Most of these networks require you to specify the website or blog you will promote the products on. This is yet another reason to make creating a blog your first priority. Many well known brands run their affiliate programs through networks like Commission Junction, but not all of them advertise that fact from their own websites. In that case your Google searches may not locate those affiliate programs. That is where searching inside the affiliate network dashboards comes in.

Note: Commission Junction changed their name to **CJ Affiliate by Conversant** in 2014, but many in the industry still refer to them as Commission Junction, and they can still be found at **cj.com**. This is an example of why this book links mostly to my own blog to provide names and links to these kinds of services, so that the book doesn't become hopelessly out of date shortly after it is published. Names of services in this industry seem to change all the time. At this stage it is more important for you to learn the concepts we are discussing here, rather than get sidetrack learning about the tools. Specific tools will be listed and kept up to date at the links to my blog provided in the upcoming **Tools and Techniques** section of this book. However, I believe sections like the one you are now reading benefit from discussing at least one well established example of a category of things like affiliate networks.

You will find there are big differences in the competing networks. Commission Junction for example has lots of well known brands and lots of physical products you can promote, but the commissions are generally quite low (e.g. many are between 5% and 15%). Other networks have less well known products but many digital download products where the commissions are much higher. The upcoming **Tools and Techniques** section will link you to the more popular affiliate networks so you can sign up for the ones that interest you (there is no cost to sign up for these networks).

Keep in mind as well that some companies have more than one affiliate program to expand their reach, and the affiliate terms can be different for each one. Large companies may also have an internal affiliate program they run from their own website that pays higher commissions than the affiliate programs they

offer on the various networks like Commission Junction. They essentially pass on their savings in affiliate network fees to you. However, as an affiliate it still pays to get into the affiliate network dashboards to review the affiliate program there because of all the data those networks make available to you.

Affiliate networks are "transparent marketplaces", which means they report on metrics to help you understand how much money other affiliates have been making on a particular affiliate program. This helps you to choose the programs with the most profit potential. Metrics like epc (average earnings per hundred clicks) will help you understand that it isn't all about the commission percentage. Sites that have a higher conversion rate can make you more money even if their commission percentage is lower. Higher epc also means those products are probably more popular, which means they may be a better fit for your tribe. The metrics provided by the affiliate networks will help you to make decisions with that in mind. Keep in mind as well that although a particular brand may pay more from their internal affiliate program, there may be other competing products available on the affiliate networks that pay even more than that. And of course never lose site of the fact that you should only promote products that would be helpful to your tribe. If you promote poor products to your tribe, you won't have a tribe for long!

Amazon Searches

Amazon is another place to try using your profit potential search terms (without the "affiliate program" extension). Find out what books are being written in that niche. Read the free previews of books which often include the Table of Contents for the book. This will give you invaluable information on potential niches or sub-niches to the main niche. When just starting out, specializing in something very specific can be a good strategy, because there is usually less competition. You can expand out to the larger niche as you start to make progress.

For example, if you wanted to go into the dog training niche the *"Amazon Search Table of Contents technique"* may give you the idea to start out blogging about *"dog psychology"* or *"potty training your dog"* or *"teaching dog tricks"* or *"clicker training"* or *"radio training."* I'm not even sure what those last two are, but after 2 minutes on Amazon reading Tables of Contents for

free I can tell you that dog training books have chapters about them! You could create a blog that specializes in just one sub-topic with a related keyword in the domain name to help with search engine traffic. Or you could begin a larger dog training blog where one of those sub-topics is the first "Category" of posts you will establish on your blog. Assuming you found some good affiliate programs in the Google searches you did, then you have a good chance of making some money from your blog after you make use of some of the tools and techniques you will learn about in this book.

Of course Amazon is also a good place to search if you are planning to write your own books. In that case you may want to click through on each book in your niche to read the reviews people are leaving. This will help you to understand the gaps in the market. The complaints reviewers leave about one book could be things you could do a better job on or focus on exclusively in your books. From a profit potential point of view you can check the Amazon sales rankings which are provided for each book to get an idea of how popular the books are. If you have 2 or 3 different niches in mind, these sales ranks can be an indication of which ones will result in the most book sales for you.

Yet another profit potential consideration on Amazon is the number of popular books in your niche. If there are a lot then one "starter strategy" you could consider would be to join the Amazon Associates Program and write short reviews of the books on your blog. Then link to the Amazon page for each book from your blog review page using your Amazon Associates affiliate link. These links are easily created using your Amazon Associates dashboard.

Although the Amazon Associates program pays low commissions compared to other affiliate programs, keep in mind you get a commission on (almost) anything your site visitors buy on Amazon for 24 hours after they click on your link. If they click on your book link and end up buying an expensive office chair you will get a pretty good commission. I have received Amazon Associates commissions on items completely unrelated to anything I have ever promoted for Amazon. Since Amazon is such a popular way for people to buy almost anything, this can be a significant portion of your income. At time of writing the Amazon Associates commission

structure ranges from 4% to 8.5% depending on your volume of sales. To get to the higher levels you would need to be making thousands of sales per month. They need to keep their commissions low because their product prices are low, which is why so many people shop there. That's also why you may make more money in volume promoting things on Amazon than you would promoting other sites with higher commission percentages.

Video Courses and Udemy Search

Video courses typically have much higher price points and potential profit than books. If you think your tribe would appreciate good video courses, consider the potential for creating your own. You can try the Udemy search engine to see what kinds of courses are already being offered in your niche. Similar to Amazon self-publishing, Udemy allows you to upload your own video courses to their site. They will both market and distribute them for you and take care of all the payment processing and other details.

However, you wouldn't have to create your own courses. Udemy has an affiliate program so that you can offer many of their courses to your tribe and earn an affiliate commission. Learn how to make the most of Udemy here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/Udemy

Note: I will reference Udemy in this book primarily as a concrete example of a paid video course distribution channel. I have taken courses there and know of people doing well marketing their courses on that platform. However, there are others that may suit you better depending on your situation (e.g. Pathwright). By the time you read this there may be others that have become more dominant over time. Keep in mind that platforms and distribution channels come and go. However, the concepts we are talking about here will never change.

Podcast Searches

Fire up the podcast player on your mobile phone, or download a free one from the App Store or Google Play store (depending on

the type of phone you have). Go to Search and type in your keywords to find podcasts in your niche. Also try searching on Google with your keywords followed by the word "podcasts", since the names of podcasts don't always reflect what they are about (e.g. search on "jeep podcasts"). Podcasts are a great way to learn more about your niche and the kinds of things people are monetizing it with. Each episode is likely to promote something the podcast host benefits from in some way. They may have a product or service or email newsletter they want you to know about. If the podcast includes ad reads for other people's products then you can be fairly sure they have enough of a following to be profiting from the podcast itself.

However, keep in mind many successful podcast owners don't want to include ads for other people. They want to keep their audience focused on their own message and offers and what their guests are talking about. If you want to feel like part of a community and better understand how people are profiting from a niche, podcasts are worth looking into. They provide a way for you to "find time" you didn't think you had to do some of your research. You can download episodes to your phone and listen while doing other things, like exercising or commuting to work. They are free and probably very interesting to listen to in any case, if they are related to a niche you are already interested in as a result of your Vision Exercises.

Search Where Your Tribe Lives

While the above examples are great places to search out any subject area or niche, other search engines may be more relevant for you. For instance social networking sites like Twitter have search engines (just type "Twitter search" in Google to find it). If you think your tribe is likely to hang out there then try your key search terms there. If your tribe loves free videos try your search terms on Youtube to find out what kinds of videos people are producing in your area of interest. Wherever you think your tribe tends to hangout is a good place to search for ideas.

Avoid "Analysis Paralysis"

While doing some research before you begin is good, the most important thing is to begin. Don't expect to hatch the perfect Plan on your first Spin of the PURR Power Wheel™. Keep in

mind your first Spin is just that, your first Spin. With each Spin of between 2 and 4 weeks you will consider doing all of these Steps again as you learn more about what works for you. You will learn more from the research you do in Spin 2 than you did in Spin 1. To get there you have to start Spin 1!

If the blogging option is beginning to resonate with you as a good starting point, then simply starting the blog is the first step. Don't worry about joining affiliate programs or even adding Google AdSense for at least a couple of months after you begin. This section was about researching profit potential to make sure you have a reasonable chance to make some money from your blog eventually. As you can probably see from the information provided in this section, you can spend a lot of time researching the best affiliate programs to promote. Wait until you have enough website traffic to make choosing and implementing specific affiliate programs on your blog worthwhile. If you are going to do anything before you start to focus on your blogging, install Google Analytics (google.com/analytics). Then you will know how much traffic you are getting and which of your blog posts are the most popular.

I suggest you wait until you are getting 100 visitors per day before you start monetizing your blog. Just focus on getting good at blogging first. The research techniques described above are for you to evaluate profit potential and choose the best starting point you can envision at this point. It isn't intended to sidetrack you with monetization before you have anything to monetize. If you can't get 100 visitors per day, monetization may be a waste of time anyway. Better to spend time finding a niche with profit potential where you can attract visitors, rather than waste time trying to monetize a blog with no visitors. It is also worth noting that most monetization methods involve getting accepted into a program. For example, you are more likely to get accepted into an affiliate program or the Google AdSense program if you have some traction with your blog before you apply.

We will discuss how to get visitors in the **Getting Traffic** chapter of the upcoming **Tools and Techniques** section. However, it is important to take things one step at a time in an order that makes sense, so you can get somewhere worthwhile in the shortest possible time. If you can't get 100 visitors a day

to your blog, better to find that out as soon as possible and move on to something else without wasting a lot of time on monetization activities. I should also make it clear at this point that blogging for profit isn't all about blogging. To be successful you will probably need to spend more than half your time working on tactics you will learn in the Getting Traffic chapter. You can do that without monetizing your blog to start with. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg resisted placing ads on Facebook for quite some time in the beginning so he could focus on making Facebook *cool*. It is worth considering a similar approach on your blog!

To expand on what I said in an earlier chapter: blog first, analytics second, build up to 100 visitors per day third, email list signup form and monetization fourth.

Here is that link again to get started on your first blog in less than 5 minutes:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/start

Scope - Deliverables - Assumptions

The time has come to get specific about the first leg of the Project Management Triangle, scope. This will allow you to clearly outline what you Plan to do next. We are talking about the scope of your first project. It could take one or more Spins of the PURR Power Wheel™ to accomplish it. Your scope statement might look something like this:

Scope: I will create a blog about dog training with an initial focus on exploring dog psychology, and an initial goal of attracting 100 blog visitors per day.

Deliverable: A dog training blog organized by category with at least 10 blog posts in the first category related to dog psychology.

It can also be helpful to clearly state assumptions and what you will do if your assumptions are wrong:

Assumption: There is enough interest in dog psychology to allow me to attract 100 visitors per day. If not I may need to create new blog categories like "clicker training" sooner than

expected.

It can also be helpful to clearly indicate what is not in scope:

Not in Scope: I will not begin monetizing the blog for this initial project. The entire focus will be to generate 100 visitors per day.

In the next section you will break your project down into SMART PURR Tasks organized into "Spins." Each Spin of the PURR Power Wheel™ will have a time constraint of 2 to 4 weeks. At the beginning of each Spin you will select the number of PURR Tasks you feel you can accomplish in that time frame.

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

2.4. SMART PURR Tasks (Plan)

"Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do."
- **John Wooden**

At this stage you have gathered a lot of information about yourself and turned that into a compelling Vision, project scope, and defined deliverables. Now you need to develop your step-by-step plan to execute and make it a reality. This section is about creating your step-by-step plan with what we will call **SMART PURR Tasks**, to be explained in detail below.

This is not a to-do list. It isn't about organizing your daily life with reminders to do this or that. You can still use to-do lists if you find that helpful for daily reminders, but that is different from the SMART PURR Tasks we will be discussing here. This is about creating your own personal blueprint for realizing your life Vision. These are the life-changing tasks that will take priority over your normal daily activities for the number of hours per day you decide to devote to your project. During that time you will put the blinders on and work on your project, one SMART PURR Task at a time. Each task will be self-contained so that you can focus on it exclusively, and not feel overwhelmed by the remaining tasks on the list.

You may not know what the tasks should be to realize your Vision. That's okay. It just means your first tasks should be about figuring that out. Your first project, or the first Spins of your first project can be about research, learning, and clarifying your strategy and tactics. What value will you provide? How will you provide it? How will you get the word out? Just asking yourself questions like this about the things you don't know yet will lead to your initial task list. This book will provide many of the answers, or at least point you to places where you can learn more. No one book can cover in detail all the places your journey may take you. When in doubt ask questions, then do whatever it takes to find the answers!

How complex should your plan be? PURR Passive Income Power™ says it should be just detailed enough to get results. You want to be careful about over planning and under planning.

Progressive Elaboration

How many tasks you design for yourself at the beginning of your project will depend on how far down the road you can see, and the type of project you are working on. Keep in mind you will constantly be thinking of new tasks to add to your list once you get the ball rolling. Some tasks may end up being too large and you will break them down into smaller tasks. The Project Management Institute (PMI) refers to this level of planning as *progressive elaboration*. Other project management methodologies have different names for it. The Agile Scrum method talks about a *backlog refinement meeting*. The Japanese have a management method called *Kaizen*, which essentially means continuous improvement. Although purists will point out these are not exactly the same things, the point here is refining your tasks in one way or another is an essential part of managing your projects.

For example, there are numerous tasks related to the project of producing this book. The actual writing of the book is just one of them. Daily writing is a repetitive task I have identified for the project. The ideas that I want to include in the book are like sub-tasks to the repetitive weekly task of writing the book. At the beginning I had just a few basic ideas. The more I get into it the larger my list of ideas becomes. At this moment as I write these words I have recorded hundreds of ideas that are "in my hopper", only some of which will make it into the book. The list of ideas for tasks will grow as you start to make progress on your project. These will be stored in your PURR Hopper and "dragged" into a Spin if and when you get to the point where it makes sense to do them. Shortly you will learn about some free online software that makes this very easy and even fun to do. More on that later.

At some point I will have to cut off the flow of new ideas for the book and publish it. New ideas after that point will have to find expression in The PURR Passive Income Power™ email Newsletter. I consider the Email Newsletter as a related but separate project from the writing of this book. In the same way, you may have lots of ideas that will eventually need to be separated out into different projects. This can turn into a lifetime of exploring exciting opportunities. You just need to get started and ideas will begin to flow.

The more ideas you have the better your life will become. The more you learn about how things work and how others are succeeding (e.g. via the upcoming **Success Stories** section), the more ideas you will be able to generate for yourself. There is nothing worse than an idea when it is the only one. You get attached to it and hold on to it even after it should be clear it was a bad idea. Better to have lots of ideas and only work on the best ones. PURR Passive Income Power™ is a way to manage it in a balanced way that ensures you consider new ideas, while at the same time staying focused on the current task at hand.

Different Types of Projects

If you were building a house then you would need to do a lot of up-front planning. You would need to complete blueprints before you even started digging the foundations. The size of the foundation absolutely depends on how many stories your house will be. You need to take into account how heavy the roof will be after the largest snowfall you can anticipate for the area you live in, along with many other variables.

For those reasons, if you were actually building a house, you wouldn't use the PURR Passive Income Power™ methodology to do it. It was not designed for that purpose. House building is an example of a complex project that has a generally accepted set of steps that all good builders can predict and follow. Nothing short of completing a very detailed plan before you start building would be acceptable. Sure there can be small course corrections like if you change your mind about the floor layout, but this is still within the context of an overall well-established methodology for building a house.

However, when it comes to rebooting your life there is typically much more uncertainty about the best steps to take. For this you need an iterative/adaptive approach like PURR Passive Income Power™. Any project with a high degree of uncertainty can benefit from an adaptive approach.

For example, in recent years software development projects are moving more and more to iterative agile methodologies. This means more time is spent near the beginning of a project building a very basic version of the software that people can test and provide feedback on, and less time on detailed

planning. It turns out you can talk to people about what they need and want until the cows come home, but they will never think to tell you what they will tell you after just 5 minutes working with an early version of the software. In the same way, you don't know what will work for you in your projects until you try a few things.

In my experience managing software development projects for clients, the conversations often go something like this: *"Hey wait a minute, why can't it do such and such?"* The answer is usually *"because you never told us it needed to do that"*, but if you are smart you will never say those words. It is just the nature of building something complex with a high degree of uncertainty. You need many iteration cycles where you get constant feedback after each iteration to make sure you are heading in the right direction. With PURR Passive Income Power™ we call those iterations *Spins*.

Guiding Principle for Your Planning

So the guiding principle becomes: *"wait as long as possible to do detailed design, when you know the most, rather than early on when you know the least."* For many projects this one paradigm shift can save many months of wasted planning effort, while at the same time producing a much better result than if you tried to work it all out in the beginning.

In terms of PURR Passive Income Power™, this means your SMART PURR Tasks will focus on the **what** and the **why** to begin with. As you will see in the upcoming *"magic formula for designing tasks"*, the **what** and the **why** can be captured in a single sentence. We don't waste much time at the Planning stage worrying about the **how**. This comes later when we get closer to actually needing to complete the task. This will all be explained in detail below, complete with examples to illustrate the points.

Dealing with Uncertainty

Similar to software development projects, the path for rebooting your life is uncertain. It can be even more uncertain than software development projects. You may not be sure if your next step should be a new job or a new business. You may not be sure if you should keep pursuing what you were trained

for, or if it is time to learn something new. There may be good opportunities you have never even heard of when you begin this process that may be perfect for you. These things can be uncovered by iterating toward the best goal you can think of now, and being willing to **Refine** your direction as you notice things along the way. You may run into some dead ends that seemed good when you started, but for one reason or another don't work for you. Or they may take so long to see results that you simply can't wait that long and keep food on the table at the same time.

The PURR Power Wheel™ is tailor made for dealing with this type of uncertainty. At this stage the goal is to design just enough tasks in just enough detail to get you moving in the best direction you can think of with what you know now.

Focus on the Process

At this point we turn our focus from the Vision to the process. The Vision remains to inspire and set direction, but the process is what will get you there.

In the Digital Age, access to information is greater than it has ever been in history. The downside to that is we are often so overwhelmed with possibilities that we don't focus on any one thing long enough to make real progress. The process you are about to learn is a remedy for that. Think of it as developing your very own heat-seeking missile aimed directly at your goals. It is the thing that will keep you on track, moving you relentlessly forward towards realizing the Vision you have for your life, while at the same time considering and managing course corrections along the way. The difference this can make in your life is worth the effort you put into it many times over. It can be the difference between achieving lasting success in your life, and sinking like a *"captainless, rudderless ship without a compass"* in the first big storm that hits.

What is a SMART PURR Task?

"A real decision is measured by the fact that you've taken a new action. If there's no action, you haven't truly decided." - **Anthony Robbins**

SMART is a common acronym in project management

(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART_criteria). The definition for the letters can vary from place to place, but for our purposes we will define them as:

S = Specific
M = Measurable
A = Achievable
R = Relevant
T = Time-bound

The SMART acronym is often seen as criteria for defining goals and objectives, but we will be using it to help us define tasks. PURR Passive Income Power™ recognizes that goals and objectives don't always need to be SMART, as this could limit your Vision and prevent you from every attaining some of the "outrageous goals" we discussed earlier.

For example, our "becoming an astronaut" example from earlier is one that probably isn't very SMART because it may not be achievable, and certainly isn't time-bound. It could take anywhere from years, to many years, to "ain't gonna happen." That doesn't mean you shouldn't attempt it if that is your Vision. The same could be said for Elon Musk's Vision for creating SpaceX to launch his own rockets into space. Even though he achieved it, at the planning stage that outcome would have been far from obvious. So don't let SMART prevent you from thinking big and tackling one of the outrageous goals you identified in your Vision exercises. Make sure your Vision is big enough to inspire you. Even if you never achieve your outrageous goal, starting out on that path can still lead you to some amazing outcomes.

On the other hand, PURR Passive Income Power™ says that individual tasks should be SMART. They need to be Specific. You need to be able to Measure them so you know when you are done. They need to be Achievable and Relevant to the scope you have set for your project. You need to be able to estimate roughly how long they will take (Time-bound).

Where the PURR Comes In

The PURR in "SMART PURR Task" reflects the idea that your tasks should adhere to principles described throughout this book as much as possible (**PURR** = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand,

Refine, Repeat). For example, whenever possible define your tasks with the principles of Flow in mind. This can help you design work for yourself that you love doing. Another example is taking into account Risks and Investments in yourself and your project, which we will cover soon. Another example is considering team building as a means to accomplish some tasks, something we will cover in detail in the upcoming Team Build section.

The key is to set yourself up for success by designing small tasks like puzzles that are manageable and fun. You will design enough tasks up front to ensure you are heading in the right direction. When the time comes to do the tasks you will be able to focus on just one task at a time, without getting overwhelmed by the size of the overall project.

If your project involves creating something for an audience or market to consume, there is another Flow consideration to keep in mind. Whenever possible you will want to design something that puts your intended audience in to Flow. This consideration may impact the kinds of tasks you create for yourself in the first the place. For example, my goal of creating a social networking site for readers of this book is intended to provide an engaging Flow experience for people to network and learn from each other. Any tasks related to that project should reflect that. The social networking site is in some respects an outrageous goal for me. At this point I am just a guy with an idea. I know full well that successful social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn are in fact large companies with many employees, while my **LifeRebooter.com** site is just me and a "coming soon" page as I write these words.

Before I even get to the social networking site, I first need to create a book that (hopefully) puts readers into Flow. I know that long clumsy sentences and poor grammar will take readers out of Flow. I know that each sentence and each section should provide a logical flow of ideas. I know that I have to inject some real life stories and examples to make things clear and interesting for readers. I also know I have never written a book before. I will need to get feedback from beta readers or an editor to help me with the Flow aspect of the book. This may impact my tasks (scope), my budget (costs), and my schedule. Even then I may not succeed, but I still need to do my best to achieve this. If I don't nobody will ever recommend the book to

others, and the social networking site is unlikely to ever get off the ground.

The Magic Formula for Designing Tasks

I will _____ so that _____.

Using the above formula to design all of your tasks not only makes it clear **what** you will do, but **why** you are doing it. It takes care of the **S** (Specific) and the **R** (Relevant) in **SMART**.

It also encourages you to build in the **A** (Achievable), because it is hard to state something in such a positive way unless you feel up to the challenge. This doesn't mean you have to know exactly how to do the task when you first write the task. It just means that you believe you can find a way to get it done. That is why reading books like this one is an important step. By understanding the basics and how others have succeeded, you will develop a higher degree of confidence that you can do it too.

If you don't feel capable of achieving the task you are designing you may need to split it into smaller tasks that do seem achievable. Or you may decide to re-write the task in a way that indicates you will outsource the task. Or you can schedule it for later after you learn more and acquire more skills.

You also need to keep in mind that the tasks should be **Measurable** and **Time-Bound**. You need to be able to measure the success of tasks so you know when you are done, and be able to estimate how long they will take (this will be discussed in more detail later).

Why This is Magic

Part of the magic of this technique is the **what** and the **why** are encapsulated in a single sentence, which is easily understandable by anyone. It intentionally leaves out details of **how** the tasks will be accomplished. Considering the **how** at this stage weighs you down and discourages big picture planning. It may result in wasted effort creating detailed plans for tasks that may never be needed, at least not in the form you can imagine them in the early stages of your project.

Instead, we save detailed planning of how the tasks will be accomplished to a time shortly before actually performing the tasks. Again, the idea is to save detailed planning for later when we know the most, rather than at the beginning when we know the least. It also conforms to one of the ideas we discussed near the beginning of the book, which is all learning should have an immediate purpose. The immediate purpose in this case is the completion of a task you may not have known how to do when you created the task.

This frees you up to quickly design tasks as far into the future as you can see based on what you know now. It makes it easy to re-prioritize tasks by simply moving a single sentence to a different position in your list of tasks. With the free software we will discuss soon, this can be done with a simple drag and drop action on your computer.

This approach also makes it easy to see at a glance what is coming next. It makes it easy to squeeze in additional tasks as they are identified. It makes it easy to assign tasks to others. It makes it easier to ensure tasks flow in a way that makes sense keeping later tasks in mind.

This approach is much more than a typical To Do list. It lends structure to your entire journey. It allows for intelligent course corrections along way. It allows you to design your "task puzzles" in a way that most suits your personality and skills. It allows you to inject time tested concepts like Flow into your process.

Compare all that to getting bogged down in the details of the first few tasks you can think of. Which is more likely to lead to a breakthrough result? Magic my friends, magic. Never underestimate the power of magic!

Become passionate about this process. It breaks down barriers and fills up your empty spaces with productive achievement. It replaces old habits and propels you to become better. It will energize your daily life, and take you places you never dreamed of.

What Is NOT a Project Task

Something open-ended like *"respond to customer emails"* isn't

a project task, it is an ongoing sustainment activity. You will need to allocate time to it or outsource it when the time comes, but it is outside your allocated project time. Projects focus on specific incremental outcomes, not sustainment tasks that go on forever.

Recurring Project Tasks

That's not to say there may not be some recurring tasks that are part of a project, but these will be measurable and have a definite endpoint. For example in writing a book you may have weekly writing goals. Since I am working full time at a job while writing this book my weekly writing goals are fairly modest (notice my use of the "magic formula"):

I will average writing 2000 words per week so that I can complete the first draft of my 80,000+ word book in 40 weeks.

This is a recurring activity that will be part of all my initial Spins of the PURR Power Wheel™ while the book is being written. It will be replaced in later Spins of the wheel with specific post production tasks like formatting, adding the cover, and uploading to Amazon. Once the book is ready to go I plan to treat the book launch as a separate project.

Note: Although this concept is similar to the Success Metrics we discussed earlier, the difference here is 2000 written words per week is a progress indicator, while 300 books sold per week is a success metric. The former is for the most part in your direct control, while the latter depends on lots of other factors. While making terrific progress on a goal is great, the success metrics you developed earlier will help you to understand if that progress is translating into actual results.

One-Time Tasks

To further illustrate how to write SMART PURR Tasks with the magic formula technique, I will use some example one-time tasks from the writing of this book. It is a real project going on now, and I think it is the kind of project most people can relate to, whether or not they ever intend to write a book. Here are some SMART PURR Tasks from my book writing project:

1. I will install Scrivener on my Surface Pro laptop so that I can auto-generate all the book formats I need when I'm done (e.g. Kindle version, epub version, print version).
2. I will copy my book project from MS Word into Scrivener now so that I can better organize the book contents and my research & ideas.
3. I will research print-on-demand services and document the steps needed to submit the book to one of them, so that I can offer a print version of the book to readers who prefer print copies over e-readers.
4. I will design and create a book cover so that people are encouraged to read the book.

These are all Time-Bound tasks since I can estimate how long they will take. They are also Specific, Measurable, Achievable, and Relevant tasks for my book project. They are tasks that can put me into a Flow state in part because they have clear outcomes and don't seem too boring or overwhelming to me. Completing them will give me immediate feedback and a sense of making progress. Progress builds confidence. They also describe the **what** and **why** in a single sentence, while ignoring the **how** for now. This is all part of the magic mentioned earlier.

Notice as well that the Scrivener related tasks represent a course correction I made along the way. When I started writing the book I had never heard of Scrivener. As I started listening to self-publishing podcasts, it became clear that almost every indie author was singing the praises of Scrivener. This is a small example of embracing new ideas as you learn about them. Although it didn't change my overall strategy or direction, it did change my tactics on how to get there.

**What if a Project Task Does Not Seem Achievable?
Example.**

I believe the last one about the book cover is achievable because I have some Photoshop skills and I know places where I can purchase relatively inexpensive stock photography to use in the cover design. However, I'm not really sure I can come up with a professional looking cover. In that case I may re-

write or replace that task to be about finding a good cover designer to do the work for me. I will have to weigh the factors we discussed in the PM Triangle section (quality, scope, schedule and cost). These are the kinds of judgment calls we all have to make on our projects.

Assigning PURR Points to Tasks

PURR Points should reflect roughly how large each task is compared to other tasks. There are various theories on how best to do this.

This is an optional step. It can help you plan the number of tasks you can fit into each Spin of the PURR Power Wheel™. After you have a few Spins under your belt you will be able to better plan future Spins based on the results of your previous Spins. For our purposes we will keep things simple and assign a value between 1 and 10 to each task. This doesn't mean a 10 task will take exactly 10 times more time than a 1 task. Think of it more as 1 = small, 5 = medium, and 10 = large, with the numbers in between providing flexibility to estimate tasks that you feel are somewhere in between small medium and large. The important thing is you are not estimating in terms of hours and minutes, which implies more precision to your estimates than is actually possible. Estimating with PURR Points is easier to do, easier to track, more useful when planning future Spins, and better represents the level of precision that is possible when considering tasks that in many cases you have never done before.

It helps to establish a baseline task that you can compare other tasks to. For instance, in my examples above let's say the "design and create a book cover" task is a 5. Then all other tasks can be assessed based on whether you think they will take more or less time. Relatively speaking, installing the Scrivener software is much easier, so we may give that a 1. Researching and documenting steps to use print-on-demand services may be somewhere in between, let's give that one a 3. Going through this process also helps you to think about the tasks in a bit more detail before assigning PURR Points to them. It may lead to breaking the tasks down into smaller more manageable tasks, which we referred to earlier as **progressive elaboration**.

For example, at this stage I may consider that the Scrivener installation task includes purchasing and downloading the software and learning how to use it. If I were to consider any of those extra steps significant, I could make them separate tasks. In my case I decided that learning how to use the software should indeed be a separate task. Being so new to the software and having read there is a steep learning curve, I decide that this will take more time than researching print-on-demand services, so I give it a 4. I end up with something like this:

SMART PURR Task List

Task	PURR Points
<u>I will</u> install Scrivener on my Surface Pro laptop <u>so that</u> I can auto-generate all the book formats I need when I'm done (e.g. Kindle version, epub version, print version etc.)	1
<u>I will</u> learn how to use Scrivener well <u>so that</u> I can work smart and speed up the creation of the book.	4
<u>I will</u> average writing 2000 words per week <u>so that</u> I can complete the first draft of my 80,000 word book in 40 weeks.	10
<u>I will</u> design and create a book cover <u>so that</u> people are encouraged to read the book.	5
<u>I will</u> research print-on-demand services and document the steps needed to submit the book to one of them, <u>so that</u> I can offer a print version of the book to readers who prefer print copies over e-readers.	3

Note: For these examples we will represent the concepts in spreadsheet form as shown above. Free software alternatives will be presented later.

Tip: You may find it helpful to add a *"Category"* column to your SMART PURR Task List. For instance you may want to organize tasks on a book project according to categories like Writing and Marketing. If your project is technical in nature, such as a website or software development project, you may also want to add a column for "Acceptance Criteria." This would be used to describe the testing that would be needed to confirm the task was completed properly. These things are kept out of the main discussion in an effort to keep things as simple as possible for projects that do not require that level of detail. The upcoming **Spin Planning** section discusses free software that makes all this easier to manage.

Prioritizing, Dependencies, and Assignments

Your SMART PURR Task list should then be prioritized with the most important and urgent tasks listed at the top. If one task depends on another task being done first, then it should be lower down in the list. For instance the *"install Scrivener"* task must be done before you can do the *"learn Scrivener"* task. Both these tasks come before the others because they are needed to improve my writing productivity, while the other tasks listed aren't needed until near the end of the project.

If you have other people helping you with the project, then you can add a column to indicate who the task is assigned to. Later on we will discuss adding more columns like Task ID, Spin #, Status, and Completion Date. Although this may sound like a lot if you are using spreadsheets to track your projects, with the free software we will discuss soon it is all built in and easy to manage. I plan to show you how to do it on my blog using my book launch project as an example. For now, let's not get too distracted with too many details, and continue discussing the concepts.

Priorities Can Change, aka Course Corrections

You can add, subtract, and re-prioritize your SMART PURR Task list when it makes sense to do so. This is how you make the course corrections along the way we have been talking about. This is another benefit of the "magic" 1-sentence SMART PURR task format. It is easy to move tasks around in the list. If you are using software this can be managed with simple drag and

drop actions on your computer.

Intelligent Course Corrections vs. Lack of Focus

Not all new opportunities need to be acted on immediately. Similarly, not all problems need to be solved immediately. Be careful not to get into a mode of chasing every idea or solving every problem as soon as you think of it. As one of my managers once said: "we have to stop starting and start finishing."

There is a fine line between being agile in your approach, and lacking the focus needed to accomplish things. A good way to deal with this is to simply add new ideas and problems to your SMART PURR Task list as they arise. Then prioritize them for consideration in future Spins of the PURR Power Wheel™. We will call the section of your task list that contains new tasks your *PURR Hopper*. These are tasks that are not part of your active or past Spins. When you decide to make them part of a Spin you will simply "drag them over" to your new Spin if you are using the free software I will recommend soon.

What you will find with this process is some problems aren't as big as you first think they are, and others simply go away on their own in time. Similarly, some opportunities sound irresistible to begin with, but upon further reflection contain some kind of fatal flaw, or just aren't as good as they first seemed. Adding them to your PURR Hopper for later consideration allows you to stay focused on what you are doing, and gives your subconscious mind time to work on them while you continue to make progress on your current tasks.

Now of course there are situations where things may need to be dealt with immediately. This will be covered in more detail in the upcoming Risk section, where we will discuss responding to both positive and negative risks.

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

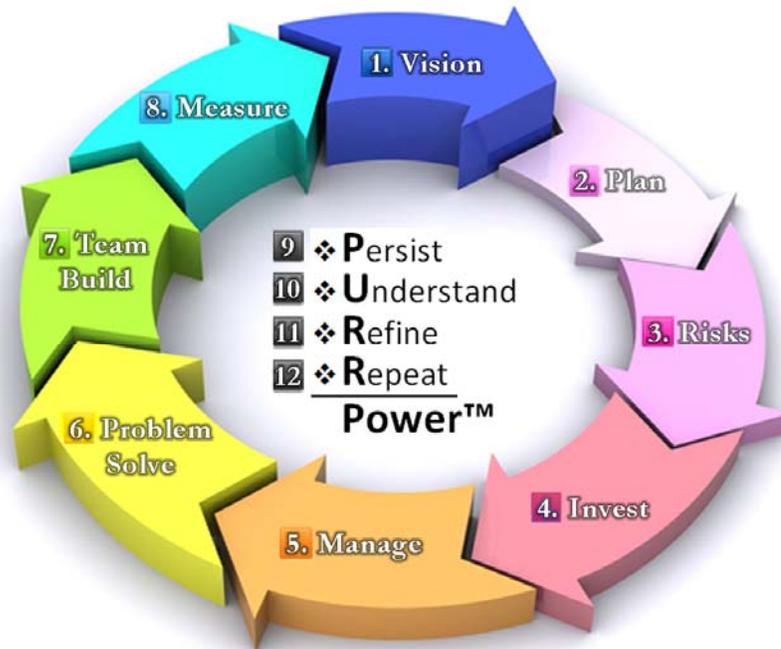
2.5. Spin Planning (Plan)

"I'm as proud of what we don't do as I am of what we do." -
Steve Jobs

At this point you have an ordered list of SMART PURR Tasks. This is like a road map that provides directions for your upcoming journey. Just like a road journey where you need to decide how many miles or kilometers you will travel per day, you now need to determine at what rate you will take on and conquer your SMART PURR Tasks.

Once you have completed this section you will have developed an **Opportunity Plan**. It can keep you on track and provide a basis to communicate the current state of your Plan to others.

Let's review where we are at. PURR Passive Income Power™ is an iterative approach that has you visiting each of the steps in the PURR Power Wheel™ for every iteration. We call these iterations *Spins* of the PURR Power Wheel™:



How long should each Spin take? It will depend on the size of the project and how much time you have to devote to it. In most cases somewhere between 2 and 4 weeks is probably ideal. For our illustration purposes let's assume you choose 4 week Spins.

Since your SMART PURR Task list is already prioritized, you just need to start at the top of the list and work your way down, deciding how many of the tasks you can fit into your next spin. Add a Spin column to the table you started in the last section, and enter a 1 beside the tasks you feel you can accomplish in spin 1.

SMART PURR Task List

Task	PURR Points	Spin
I will install Scrivener on my Surface Pro laptop so that I can auto-generate all the book formats I need when I'm done (eg. Kindle version, epub version, print version etc.)	1	1
I will learn how to use Scrivener well so that I can work smart and speed up the creation of the book.	4	1
I will average writing 2000 words per week so that I can complete the first draft of my 80,000 word book in 40 weeks (recurring task).	10	1, 2, 3 (R)
I will design and create a book cover so that people are encouraged to read the book.	5	
I will research print-on-demand services and document the steps needed to submit the book to one of them, so that I can offer a print version of the book to readers who prefer print copies over e-readers.	3	

The remaining tasks you just leave blank. You don't need to plan Spin 2 until a few days before Spin 1 is complete. As we have been discussing, PURR Passive Income Power™ recognizes that you will learn a lot during each Spin of the wheel. You may decide to re-prioritize, add, or delete tasks as you go. Deleting certain tasks as you come to Understand more can save you a lot of time and re-focus your efforts on the ultimate prize. The important thing is to start moving in a direction. Just like with an automobile, turning the steering wheel only has an affect when the vehicle is moving!

Tip: If using the free software we will discuss soon you will have different "buckets" for each Spin, and one for your PURR Hopper. You will simply drag tasks between your buckets to organize your Spins.

Task Quantity and Size Considerations

You may find you can accomplish more or less than you Plan for each Spin. That's okay. If you get more done great. If you get less done, then what remains can be added to the next Spin, assuming it still makes sense based on what you learn in the previous Spin.

In this example you are setting a Spin duration of 4 weeks, and allowing the Spin Scope to vary. This has no effect on the overall Project Scope unless you come up with completely new tasks that take you beyond the scope you defined for your project. Recurring tasks will of course be added to all Spins until they are complete. Our example of a recurring task is shown with an (R) in our table above, just to emphasize its recurring nature.

You will get better at estimating how many tasks you can fit into a Spin as time goes on, especially if you are assigning PURR Points to each task. For instance, if you find you are able to complete 30 PURR Points in Spin 1, then that is a pretty good estimate of how much you should Plan for in Spin 2.

It also helps to break things down into relatively small tasks whenever possible. From an estimating point of view, it is easier to work with ten 3 PURR Point tasks than three 10 PURR Point tasks. Smaller tasks also provide more immediate

feedback on progress, and are more manageable in general.

The idea is to try and create your very own "*Flow machine*" where, similar to a video game, you line yourself up with SMART PURR task challenges that align perfectly with your skill level. Whenever this isn't the case consider breaking down the tasks into smaller tasks, introduce new tasks that will allow you attain the required skill level, or outsource tasks to others.

Estimating and Linking Spins to Milestones

Although PURR Passive Income Power™ values flexibility over long term planning, you may be in a situation where you know exactly where you are heading, and you need or want to estimate how long the project will take. In PM Triangle terms it may be time to create your **schedule**. To do this it can help to think in terms of milestones rather than tasks, and create your schedule based on that. Estimate the progress you will make on each milestone by the end of each Spin.

For example, let's say you want to create a paid membership website. We discussed this earlier as an advanced strategy that is not necessarily suitable for a beginner. However, more advanced projects are the projects that will benefit most from this additional level of planning. The membership site would specialize in something specific, like investment strategies. Once up and running, your plan is to add new premium content for paid members every month, and charge them on a monthly basis.

Assuming 4 week Spins and a full time job on the side, your high level milestone schedule might look something like this:

Milestone Schedule

Spin	Completion Date	Milestone
1	May 1, 2015	Basic blog created on my own web hosting account
2	May 29, 2015	Blog has 30 pages of good free info. for visitors

3	June 26, 2015	Initial premium content, including videos, 50% complete
4	July 24, 2015	Initial premium content complete
5	Aug 21, 2015	Automated payment processing to add/remove members
6	Sept 18, 2015	Membership site launch complete
7	Oct 16, 2015	Top 3 Getting Traffic strategies up and running

Your milestones will guide you to design tasks that will go towards achieving each milestone. It is important to note that these deadlines do not come from bottom up estimates. In other words, you are not listing all the tasks at this point, and then estimating how long it will take to do each individual task that goes into achieving a milestone. You may not design any tasks at all for the later Spins before you begin the project. The milestone deadlines are just high level estimates based on experience if you have any, and some basic research and gut feel if you don't. Find a reasonable balance between caution and optimism. You may find you need to change your schedule later as you learn more. You may also find the simple act of having a schedule with deadlines will motivate you to achieve the deadlines!

In the end they are both estimates and objectives. Having deadlines can really help to get things done. If you are a week away from the scheduled completion date for a milestone, you may be motivated to put in the extra effort to get there.

If you want your estimates to be more accurate, you may want to spend a couple of weeks before you start the project to research what will be involved to achieve each milestone. This doesn't mean you have to figure out exactly how to do everything. That is what the Spins are for. You just want to educate yourself to the point where your estimates are based on a certain level of knowledge.

For example, when considering the milestone associated with Spin 5 in the above Milestone Schedule, your research will likely

reveal that there are software products that specialize in managing membership sites and integrating with payment processors. This includes password protecting your premium content and automatically removing access from members that decide to cancel their membership. This amount of research may be enough to understand at a high level what is needed to achieve your Spin 5 milestone. You will understand that it isn't about creating something from scratch or hiring a programmer to create something from scratch. It will be more about choosing the software that best suits your needs, getting it installed on your web servers, uploading your premium content, and integrating it with one of the payment processors recommended by the membership site software provider (by following their instructions).

These research findings can lead to preliminary PURR Tasks that you add to your PURR Hopper at the initial project research stage. They can be broken down into manageable SMART PURR Tasks as you get closer to Spin 5. You don't have to create all the anticipated SMART PURR tasks at the beginning. This can be an ongoing activity as you get closer to each Spin, although planning tasks a Spin or two in advance is helpful. It helps to ensure you always do the highest priority tasks first and that you never find yourself in a position of wondering what to do next.

Understanding that a solution to your problem such as membership site software already exists, and just needs to be understood and installed, will help tremendously with your estimates. It is also helpful to understand you don't need to create SMART PURR Tasks for your entire project before you begin. You will add more tasks to your hopper as you begin to make progress.

Remember, we want to defer detailed planning to later when we know the most, rather than at the beginning when we know the least. This means you may want to keep your tasks in the "magic 1-sentence format" right up until you start each Spin. Then do your detailed planning for each task during the Spin itself.

This milestone estimation phase is optional, but will give you a better idea where you are heading. Or at least where you think you are heading. You can spend more or less time on the

estimates depending on your situation and preference. Keep in mind you may still find a reason to make course corrections along the way, no matter how sure you feel about your direction when you begin.

What if Your Membership Site Doesn't Work Out?

Notice that most of the milestones in the above example represent something useful regardless of whether your membership site is successful or not. Having a basic blog gives you a platform to make affiliate commissions, launch an email newsletter, or take on other advanced strategies. The blog content you create should attract search engine traffic and generate comments that are the starting point for creating a tribe of enthusiastic followers. We discussed some of these things earlier, and will discuss them in more detail later in the book. A key point here is that whenever possible, design your milestones in a way that each one provides a strong benefit even if you don't complete all of them.

Course Correction Example

To expand on that further, you will learn from each milestone what works, and what you like and don't like. You may find you enjoy creating the premium content the most. As you proceed through the project you may learn about sites like Udemy that will market your video courses for you, similar to what Amazon does for eBooks.

They will take payments on your behalf and manage affiliates so that both you and your affiliates get paid for every sale. At that point you may decide to forgo your plans for a membership site and focus on creating premium content, leaving the other details to a site like Udemy.

PurrPassiveIncome.com/Udemy

There are pros and cons to both approaches. A pro of going with Udemy is you get to focus on getting products out to market faster and take advantage of their marketing clout. On the other hand they take some of your profits, and you are entrusting much of your business to a 3rd party. As you will learn in the upcoming Risk section, keeping as much control of your business as possible is very important. The Risk section

discusses strategies for doing just that. Controlling your own method of product delivery would be one of them.

You could consider a hybrid approach. Going with Udemy initially may be a means to test the market before you spend time and money creating your own membership site. It could also be seen as a marketing strategy to sell some of your introduction level courses, with the hopes of converting some customers to your membership site for more advanced and time sensitive material. You may end up wanting to do both Udemy courses and a membership site eventually.

From a Minimum Viable Plan (MVP) perspective, starting out with just one small course on Udemy may be a good idea. They have some marketing clout and can get some eyeballs viewing your product. You can test different price points and see what people are willing to pay for your expertise. You may be able to create a loyal following before you spend a lot of time on extraneous factors like building websites, dealing with membership site software, payment processors, marketing, list building etc.

These are the kind of judgment calls we all have to make. What works for others may not work for you and vice versa. For our purposes here, this is simply an example of the types of course corrections you may end up considering as your projects progress. It is all about finding out what you enjoy the most and what works for you.

Using Software to Manage Your Project

The most obvious software to manage Spins of the PURR Power Wheel™ would be spreadsheet software like Microsoft Excel. This is something that many people may already have access to. It is a reasonably good option, although it can be a bit clunky when it comes to things like moving tasks between your Hopper and your Spins and re-prioritizing them. It also isn't conducive to sharing projects with a team. And it isn't free, although it may seem free if you already own spreadsheet software.

Much better would be free Software as a Service options that specialize in task management. In this case you would login to a website to track your tasks in an environment that is easy to

share with a team. It makes managing tasks much easier than a spreadsheet ever could.

Rather than provide a list of existing Software as a Service offerings here, which may be completely out of date by the time you read these words, I decided to create a page on my website that I will keep up to date with my latest recommendations.

I will focus on the services that I feel fit best with the PURR Passive Income Power™ methodology, and that are free for the size of projects most readers of this book would be undertaking. I Plan to describe on that page how best to use the software, complete with screen shots and perhaps some screen cast videos. This is a great way to manage your PURR Passive Income Power™ projects.

You can find that page here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/software

Hopefully it will exist by the time you are reading these words! At time of writing it only exists in my Plan as a SMART PURR Task. Even my blog is only a "coming soon" page at this point. This is the nature of project work. This is an example of how laying out your Plan in SMART PURR Tasks helps coordinate all the moving parts of your project. The fact that the software page exists as a task in my Plan gives me confidence that I can discuss it here, and not forget to get it done later!

Not only that, having spent some time planning many tasks at a one-sentence summary level helps me to remember to mention it here and now. This makes it easier to ensure earlier tasks flow in a direction that makes sense keeping later tasks in mind. There are many benefits to Planning, not least of which is the feeling of control it can give you in a potentially chaotic project environment!

This also means if you are one of the first people to read this book I can't guarantee the software page will exist at the level of quality I have in mind for it, or even exist at all! Such is the nature of managing a project with lots of moving pieces. Keep our earlier discussion on Minimum Viable Product (MVP) in mind as well. You simply cannot do everything at once!

My current Plan is to work on my blog while my beta readers have a chance to go through the book and provide feedback. Right now the main priority is to complete the book. Plans for future Spins need to remain at a summary level, so that I can focus on what is most important here and now. In other words, I am following my own advice from this chapter!

You keep moving and do the best you can. This is always better than doing nothing, or waiting until everything is perfect before moving forward. If you are Persistent, you will get it all done eventually. Even if you do miss a few things you are still light years ahead of where you would be without Planning and Persistence and all the other prominent features of the PURR Passive Income Power™.

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

3. Risks

"Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash."
- **General George Patton**

"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." - **Wayne Gretzky**

Risk is a fact of life. Everything you do involves some risk. Doing nothing can lead to massive regret and may be the biggest risk of all. Everything you enjoy in life is a result of risks taken on by others. There is no progress without risk.

However, not managing risk can lead to a loss of time and money. Not being prepared for risks can lead to fighting one urgent fire after another. It can cause you to completely lose focus. Contrary to popular belief, many of the most successful entrepreneurs are not risk takers by nature. They are folks who are good at identifying and pro-actively managing risks. The time to plan for risks is before you get into the stressful situations that may arise once the project is underway. You don't want to focus on it so much that it prevents you from moving forward, but neither do you want to ignore it altogether.

How much risk you are willing to take on has a lot to do with your personality. If you are **risk averse**, you may want to spend a bit more time on this section. It can help you find lower risk alternatives. It can help you to better understand the impact certain risks may have on your life if they become a reality. However, even if you consider yourself a **risk taker**, it is important to understand the risks you are taking.

You may find that your **risk tolerance** changes at different stages of your project. You may be more risk averse in the beginning if your confidence is low. Your risk tolerance may increase over time as you gain more experience and are able to see your Vision more clearly. The one absolute is there is no progress without risk. You just need to decide how much risk you are comfortable with as your project progresses. Here are a some things you will get out of this chapter:

1. Identify risks you can avoid.

2. Manage and respond to risks if they occur.
3. Make informed and deliberate decisions about accepting a risk, or not.

Would you dive off a cliff if you don't know how deep the water is below? I hope not, unless the risk of continuing to stand on the edge of the cliff was life threatening. Yet metaphorically, that is often exactly what people do when managing their life projects. Enthusiasm is good, charging blindly ahead is not. This step of the PURR Power Wheel™ is all about going into your project with eyes wide open.

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

3.1. Identify Risks (Risks)

A risk can be defined as a future event that may or may not happen, but would impact your project if it did. Negative risks are those that could have a negative impact on your project. The Project Management Institute (PMI) also emphasizes being prepared for positive risks. That is, possible future events that may have a positive impact on your project. For positive risks you want to be prepared to take advantage of the situation, if it occurs.

For our purposes we will consider positive risks as another way to think about the course corrections we have been talking about all along. PURR Passive Income Power™ is all about identifying potential new opportunities as you progress, and responding to them in a structured way.

Since every Spin of the PURR Power Wheel™ takes you through the Risk step, you will have plenty of chances to identify new opportunities as time goes on. If your Spins are 4 weeks long, you will get a chance to consider this at least once every 4 weeks. Later in this chapter we will discuss creating a Risk Log to document all the risks you identify, both positive and negative, so that you can review them at least once during each Spin.

Example of a Positive Risk / Opportunity

Let's say part of your project was to create a loyal following of people to support your business. Even just a few years ago, getting a book published would have been one of the least likely ways to go about it. Traditional publishers were (and are) gatekeepers in the business of sending out hundreds of rejection letters every day, based on one staff person's opinion. The emergence of self-publishing options on platforms like Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) has changed the game dramatically. It can be both an alternative to a traditional book publishing deal, and a way to prove to a traditional publisher that you have an audience for your book.

If you had identified and were prepared for a positive development like that, you could have been among the first to get a book self-published. The first people to self-publish had a much easier time rising to the top of the rankings on sites like

Amazon. You could have gained *"first mover advantage."*

"Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity" - Seneca, Roman Philosopher

Known Unknowns vs. Unknown Unknowns

The self publishing example could fall into either one of these categories. Perhaps you had been reading for years that self publishing was coming, but nobody knew when it would be available. This would be a known unknown.

On the other hand, if it came out of the blue from your perspective, then it would be an unknown unknown. As you can see from the example above, even unknown unknowns can be taken advantage of when you are on the lookout for opportunities, and are prepared to act swiftly to take advantage of them. The PURR Passive Income Power™ Spin system is designed to help you be prepared.

Contingency Funds

Risks can effect scope, schedule, cost and quality. One way to be prepared is with a contingency fund. For example, when planning your budget you can add an extra 20% for contingencies. This is money you can tap into when dealing with (positive or negative) risks that become reality. You can do the same for schedule. Aim for completion in 6 months, but prepare for 2 months of slippage to deal with unknowns.

Adjusting Scope

When a risk becomes reality, you can consider changing your scope. This may allow you to keep your original budget and schedule intact. In our self publishing example you may consider changing your scope from "advertising on Facebook" to "writing a book." This could make sense if you didn't feel you had the time and resources to do both. In this case you might consider taking some of the money you had set aside for Facebook ads and use it instead to hire an editor and cover designer to help you get your book to market.

Known Unknown Risk Areas to Consider

Now let's focus on identifying known unknowns, for both positive and negative risks. This will lead to more specific ways to deal with risks on your project. The list below contains some risk areas to consider. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but will hopefully get you thinking about things you may not have considered before. Chances are the risks for your project will fall into one of these risk areas, although you may come up with more when considering your specific project.

Cost, Schedule and Scope - Yes, the project management triangle again. Here you are looking for any specific risks you can identify that would affect cost, schedule and scope. It is worth considering this in a general way to begin with. The other risk areas listed below are specific examples of things that could affect cost, schedule, and scope.

Quality - Also discussed in the Project Management Triangle section. Here you are considering specific risks you can identify that could have a potential impact on quality.

Personnel - Does success of the project depend on the availability of certain key people?

Legal - Do you need copyright or trademark protection? Are you infringing on a copyright or trademark? Is your business model legal in every respect?

Ethics - Even if it is legal, is the business ethical? If not, are you prepared to take the heat and legal challenges from outraged customers? There are opportunities out there that would be seen by most people as unethical. Like promoting free trials for a big commission where the free trials convert to expensive monthly charges for the customer, but the details of the monthly charges are hidden in fine print. There are people out there singing the praises of strategies like this. Don't be fooled. Examine everything about what you are getting yourself into. If you wouldn't send your Mom to the offer, should you really be doing it, even if it is very profitable? Only you can decide.

Contracts - Have you ever encountered a webpage with a long list of Terms and clicked an "I Agree" box followed by clicking a

"Continue" or "Proceed" button? Then you have entered into a contract that could negatively affect your business, if you unknowingly break their rules somehow. Businesses like my consulting business require more formal signed contracts. In any case, contract terms are obligations that need to be taken seriously. You can also use contract terms to your advantage. I'll give a personal example in the upcoming **Plan Risk Responses** chapter of how you can use contracts to limit your risk, and save money at the same time.

Disclaimer: Anytime I say anything specific about contracts, I will remind you that I am not a lawyer. I'm just talking from my own experiences. Please consult a lawyer if you need help understanding contracts!

Suppliers - Does your business depend on supplies at a certain price point to keep things going? What if this supply dries up for some reason, or is constantly late?

Services - Similarly, what services does your project depend on? Do you depend heavily on a certain promotional or advertising service to attract customers? What if they go out of business, start costing more than you can afford to pay, or decide they don't want to accept your business anymore? If you don't think this can happen, refer back to the very first sentence in this book (my *"Google cut me off"* example).

Technology - In what ways does your business depend on technology? What if that technology becomes unavailable for any length of time? Do you have a backup plan?

Innovation - If your project is breaking new ground, there will be more risks to consider. For example, what if you spend a lot of time creating what you think is the best thing since sliced bread, and nobody cares?

Competition - Most people think about competition as the negative risk of some large company sweeping in to take all your customers away. However, consider that there may be less risk when you have a reasonable number of strong competitors. Existing competition shows there is a profitable market for your service or product. It can be easier to compete and grab a small share of an established market than it is to create a brand new market.

Apple made creating brand new markets look easy when they convinced us we needed a smarter phone, and then later that we needed a tablet device to bridge the gap between smart phone and desktop computer. There was zero competition in the smart phone and tablet markets before they got into them. Those products simply didn't exist at that time. They made it look easy. It isn't easy.

For example, if you are intent on creating a new market for your idea, be sure to conduct some market research before you get too far into it. Even then you may say, as with tablet computers, that people don't know what they want until they can see it and hold it in their hands. In some cases that is true, but keep in mind there are many more business failures than business successes every year. Forbes.com reports that 90% of business startups fail. Of course I would love to see you change the world with your project, more than you can possibly imagine. Just make sure the risk/reward ratio makes sense for you, and consider if you are willing to accept what it would mean if it didn't work out.

Some people aren't overly concerned about losing everything. They may feel moving to some remote place in Asia and eating nothing but rice everyday isn't so bad. After all, there are people in those places that smile everyday, and some owners of successful companies rarely do! Some of the richest people in the world have lost everything more than once. They have also recovered more than once. They had the nerve, charisma, and connections to do that.

If none of that sounds like you, then you may want to stick to more established, competitive marketplaces. You still need to compete, so it isn't risk free. There are some markets that are so competitive that you may be better off finding something else to do. Especially if you can't identify something extra or special you would be offering to that market. These are all judgment calls that you have to make. As we discussed in the Vision section, there can and should be unique elements to what you are doing. Like a unique combination of things from your past that brings you to the idea, and a unique selling position (USP) or value proposition. That is different from creating a completely new and unique marketplace.

Disaster Recovery - If you run a website or data-driven business of any kind, losing your data is likely to be a serious blow. If you run a brick and mortar business, then disaster recovery planning may be more about getting the right insurance.

You may decide it isn't necessary to consider disaster recovery for the type of project you are doing. As with every step of PURR Passive Income Power™, take only what makes sense for your project. However, if your business involves data of any kind, especially if you are storing customer data, then a disaster recovery plan is very important. It could be as simple as regularly backing up your data files to the cloud. For example, the files for this book get automatically zipped up and uploaded to my Microsoft OneDrive account every time I close my word processing software (Scrivener). I can access those files from anywhere in the world. This is a relatively easy one-time setup. It all happens automatically after that. There are many cloud services out there that would work just as well.

This means if there is an earthquake where I live (and everyone says one is coming), my files are safely stored on servers in a completely different city. Probably many different cities, since the folks at OneDrive will likely have their own Disaster Recovery plan, with redundant backups on many servers in many locations. I believe this is the case, and yet I still back my files up on 3 different computers on my home network from time to time. The 9/11 disaster shone a bright light on this problem, but many businesses still don't have a disaster recovery plan of any kind. If you have a Software as a Service type of business that manages data for customers, and you lose the data, chances are you will have lost your business and your livelihood. Even if you started again, who would trust you?

Disaster recovery planning can be a big topic depending on the business you are in, and is beyond the scope of this book. However, a good starting point for data-centric businesses would be to make sure you have at least daily automated backups. The backups should be stored in a different geographic location, far away from the earthquake zone, if you happen to live and do business in an earthquake zone! With the emergence of cloud computing, there are many inexpensive and much improved ways to accomplish this.

Risk Identification Techniques

Although understanding the various risk areas is helpful, you still need to identify risks specific to your situation. Here are some techniques to consider:

Brainstorming - This is a one you are probably familiar with to some extent. Take some time to think about all the things that could go wrong and right. Build on each idea to see where it takes you. Reviewing chapter 1.1 on Lateral Thinking Concepts may be helpful here.

Ask People - Chances are there are lots of people around you that would be more than willing to point out what could go wrong! Even better is to ask experts in the area you are entering into. Listening to the voice of experience is always worthwhile. Don't be afraid to ask!

Do Research - Use the tools available in the Digital Age to learn what you need to know. You can learn a lot for free, but don't be afraid to spend a little money. I recently bought a Kindle eBook for around \$4 that covers all the legal aspects to consider when self-publishing a book. It is written by a lawyer with experience self-publishing books, and with decades of legal experience. She has essentially done much of my risk analysis for me. At \$4 this saves me a lot of time and is a tremendous bargain.

Analyze Assumptions - Earlier you were encouraged to list your assumptions when defining your scope. Analyze those assumptions now and convert them into specific risks that you can list and monitor.

Flow Charts - Try creating a flow chart of all the steps and decision points you are expecting for your project. What if one of the steps takes longer than expected, or isn't possible for some reason? Will it be a show stopper? Will it prevent progress on the remaining steps, or can they continue to progress while you work out the bottleneck?

The Risk Log

At this point you have lots of ideas about the types of risks to

consider and how to identify them. Now what should you do about it?

The Risk Log is where you list the risks you identify. This allows you to monitor the risks as your project progresses, and gives you a place to record your planned risk responses should they occur. Keep in mind that some of the concerns you identify as part of this process may just translate into additional tasks for your SMART PURR Task list. In those cases you may not need to list them in the Risk Log, since you have a plan to take care of them as a task in one of your Spins.

For example, when considering the risks involved in setting up a blog, you may come to realize that it should have a privacy policy. You can probably just set that up as a SMART PURR Task. The Internet is full of examples of how to setup a privacy policy. Almost every website you visit has an easy to find link to their privacy policy in the footer area of their site. Setting up that page will limit your risk. Since there isn't much you can do about it beyond setting up your own privacy policy page, just making it a one-time task probably makes sense. In that case there may be no need to add it to your risk log.

For the risks that you do want to monitor, consider the following basic format:

Risk Log

Risk ID	Description	Impact	Planned Response(s)
1	Key personnel leave	Potential major disruption to schedule	Mitigate: Make sure key personnel have sufficient incentives to remain for the duration of the project. Cross-train team members to be able to handle other jobs temporarily, if it

			<p>becomes necessary.</p> <p>Backup Plan: Identify ways to replace key personnel in advance, in case they do leave (see Team Build section in PURR book)</p>
2	Self-publishing becomes a viable way to publish a book	Potential to increase your reach and attract new customers	Self-publish a book

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3.2. Plan Risk Responses (Risks)

For each of the specific risks you identified, the next step is to fill in the **Planned Response(s)** column in your Risk Log. There are **5 basic ways** to do this:

1. Avoid - Some risks can be avoided. For example, you can fund a startup company through venture capital. This is risky, you are going into debt based on projections. Alternatively, you can consider just investing some of your own money to get started, and funding your growth from sales. You would grow more slowly, but this strategy would allow you to avoid the risk of taking on venture capital.

2. Mitigate - Develop risk responses that will lessen the risk. For example, the "Mitigate" responses to the "key personnel leave" risk identified in the preceding Risk Log. These are proactive things you can do to try and prevent the risk from occurring in the first place, and minimize the impact if they do.

3. Transfer - Transfer all or some of the risk to someone else. For example, if you have a hole in your roof and are afraid of heights, outsource that task out to a roofer. Let them risk life and limb climbing around up there trying to fix the hole!

Another example closer to home for me is in the IT consulting business, where people occasionally get sued for "errors and omissions." My initial response to that was to purchase errors and omissions (e & o) insurance. This transferred the risk to an insurance company, but it was expensive.

When I decided to take a contract in Seattle, I found the e & o insurance would become too expensive. Up to that point I had been working in Canada. In the USA people are more likely to sue than in Canada, and the insurance premiums reflect that. I canceled the insurance and took on the risk myself (the **accept** option discussed in point 4 below). At that time I thought the only mitigation strategy available was to make sure I did a great job so I wouldn't get sued. This is something I would be trying to do in any case. I imagine anyone who ever got sued was thinking the same way. However, I simply accepted the risk at that point.

Then my brother clued me in to the fact that insurance isn't the

only way to transfer risk. You can transfer risk in contracts as well. I eventually negotiated an errors and omissions clause in my next contract that limited my liability to \$500. This transferred most of the risk to my client. It cost me nothing, much better than the insurance strategy. It was also a great way to emphasize to clients that they were responsible for testing new software before agreeing to use it!

Again, I should emphasize that I am not a lawyer. These are simply strategies that worked well for me. Please consult a lawyer if you need advice on contracts!

4. Accept - Decide the project benefits are worth a risk that you feel may be unavoidable. In this case the Planned Response is to accept the risk. In accepting the risk you can do so passively, where you do nothing unless it happens. Or you can be more proactive by working out a backup plan in advance, in case it happens (see the Backup Plan example in the preceding Risk Log).

There is one risk that we are always accepting whether we are starting a business or looking for a job. That is the risk that despite all your best efforts, your Plan simply does not work out. Sometimes the only possible response to this is to accept you need to scrap your project, reboot, and move on. This isn't all bad. The PURR Passive Income Power™ system will help you identify the need to accept this risk as soon as possible (by monitoring your success metrics). The key as always is to learn what you can from the experience, refine your strategy, and start over in a direction that will come closer to what works for you (**P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat).

5. Exploit - This is the option to consider for positive risks. Exploiting a positive risk can mean anything from a minor course correction to rebooting in a completely new direction. If you uncover new opportunities that are simply better than what you were Planning, then rebooting and moving on can be a huge breakthrough in your life. Always move towards alternatives that give you joy and motivation. Give things a fair chance, but try not to stick with a Plan if it is dragging you down.

Risk Response Implications

The basic implications of responding to risks can again be tied back to the Project Management Triangle. You may need to increase your budget, or dip into the contingency reserve fund we discussed earlier. You may need to adjust your schedule, if responding to the risk will take a significant amount of time. You may need to change your scope, which we have been discussing in terms of course corrections and rebooting in a new direction.

You may also need to think in terms of temporarily diverting resources away from the SMART PURR Tasks currently being working on, if the need for a risk response is urgent. Resources may need to be re-deployed to deal with the new problems or opportunities. For small course corrections this can be handled without too much fuss. For larger reboots more care should be taken.

If you are working with a team this will be a chance to demonstrate your leadership skills. You may be quite stressed out yourself at a time like this, but resist the temptation to just tell people to stop what they are doing and do something else instead. It is very important to gather the team together and explain to them exactly what happened. If the new direction is temporary to deal with a risk that turned into a reality, be clear about that. If you are rebooting in a completely new direction, be clear and open about your reasons for doing so. If you screwed up, be honest about it. If someone else screwed up, don't call them out in front of the group. Frame everything in a positive light related to how the team can move forward. Present your new Plans, but be open to the team's feedback. They may have good ideas you didn't think of. As much as possible get complete buy-in from the team. Do your best to make sure your next steps are met with enthusiasm and energy on all fronts.

If you don't have a formal team and are mostly working on the project yourself, consider people close to you in life as your team. We all depend on our personal support groups much more than we realize, whether that be your spouse, family, or close friends. It is always helpful to discuss issues with others, or at least consider what you would say to others to explain the problems and your solution. This helps to clarify things in your

own mind.

Back in my computer programming days we used to have the concept of the "programmer dummy." This could be either a real or imaginary mannequin (dummy) sitting in the corner that you could go to and explain your programming challenges. Even though the dummy could of course never answer back, just the act of explaining the problem to "someone else" would often be enough to return to your seat with an answer to the problem. It is amazing how often you can answer your own questions just by stating the problem out loud. The added advantage of doing so to a real person is they may have some good ideas for you too!

Monitoring Risks

It is important to monitor risks to ensure you are able to execute your planned risk response as soon as possible, should the risk occur. The PURR Power Wheel™ has risk monitoring built in. As part of each Spin, you will review all the steps in the PURR Power Wheel™ to see where you can improve or make changes going forward. This is your chance review and possibly update your Risk Log. Some risks may go away with time and can be removed from the Risk Log. You may identify new Risks that should be added. Risks that are already in the log may require some action. The upcoming **Manage** chapter goes into the Spin Review process in more detail. Reviewing your Risk Log at least once per Spin is recommended!

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4. Invest

"If you want to be truly successful invest in yourself to get the knowledge you need to find your unique factor. When you find it and focus on it and persevere your success will blossom." - Sydney Madwed

You just finished the Risk section. One of the major risks of any project is that you don't get an adequate return on what you Invest into it. That is why the PURR Power Wheel™ includes **Invest** as a separate and distinct step. It is very important to consider the investments you are making in yourself and in your project.

Opportunity Cost

Although Digital Age ventures typically require far less investment than traditional businesses, every project requires some form of investment. There is an **opportunity cost** to everything you do. When you invest money in one thing it means you have less to invest in other things. Perhaps better things. It is very important to consider all your alternatives before investing in a project. That is one reason I emphasize reading this entire book before you get started. For example, PURR Passive Income Power™ gives you a broad overview of many different business models and Digital Age strategies that you can choose to invest in. Understanding them all before you get started gives you a better chance of picking one that will work well for you and your unique situation.

At the very least you will be investing your time. Your time is worth a lot. When I look back at all the projects I tried that went nowhere, it is clear to me that this book could have been published years ago. The time I spent on those other projects prevented me from working on this one, until now. In the same way, the time I am spending now writing this book prevents me from working on other things. Maybe better things. That is the risk I am taking. That is the risk you will be taking on your projects. That is why PURR Passive Income Power™ places such an emphasis on developing a powerful **Vision** for your life. So you can spend your valuable time on things that truly matter to you.

End of Life Perspective

I met a gentleman once while traveling in Asia with my wife. He was near the end of his life. He was full of ideas for projects he wanted to do. He lived in North America and could see lots of things in Asia he thought the North American market would value. He hadn't hit on anything that worked in the way he longed for in all his years. He chased a lot of things. He spoke to me with regret that he was out of time. His body was failing him. He had trouble walking. His time was almost up. I don't want that to be me. I don't want that to be you. If you just skimmed over the Vision exercises, consider going back and giving them another go.

The most precious thing you will ever Invest in your projects is your own time. Do your best to make sure you are moving in a direction that has meaning for you. Something you can build on throughout your life, so when you get near the end of your life you have the feeling of a life well spent. It all starts with how you spend your time now. When you run out of time, you can't go to the bank and borrow more.

Recovering From Losses

In contrast to your own time, it may be possible to recoup other things you Invest in your projects. If you say to someone "*trust me*", you are investing the goodwill you have established with that person. If things don't work out you may be able to regain their trust. It may not be easy, but unlike time, it is possible.

Same thing with money. Unlike time, if you Invest money in your project, and it doesn't work out, you can make more money. That's not to say money isn't important, it is. I just want to begin this section with the perspective that of all the things you can Invest, your time is the most precious, and money comes second. Some of the most successful people in the world today lost and re-gained fortunes in their lives. They got the money they lost back.

Planning Your Investments

Now that I have all that off my chest, the following sections will be about identifying and planning for the financial investments

you will make in your project! At this point I will assume you have done your best with the Vision section, so you are spending your time in the best way you can imagine at this point in time. I will assume you are using the PURR Passive Income Power™ system to be constantly on the lookout for intelligent course corrections along the way. In short, I will assume you are on the right track and we can move on to managing any monetary investments that may make sense for your project.

Keep in mind as well that investments in your projects are also investments in yourself. This is unlike other financial investments such as the stock market, where you are simply looking for a monetary gain. Investing in yourself allows you to gain in all sorts of other ways. You will ultimately become a completely new person with a completely new life. So if you have a choice between investing in the stock market and investing in yourself, keep in mind all the intangibles that come with investing in yourself. The financial rewards should be greater as well, if you pick the right projects and manage them well!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

4.1. Needs vs. Wants (Invest)

The difference between a need and a want can be a gray area. I spent over \$1000 for a Surface Pro laptop to write this book. I didn't need a device like that for any other reason. I already had an iPhone, an iPad, and 3 computers at home. I could have written the book from one of those computers, so you could argue it was a want rather than a need.

On the other hand, that laptop inspires me to write everyday, no matter where I am. At the moment I am typing on it from a comfy chair in a hotel lobby. And since I didn't need it for any other reason, it would have seemed like a waste of money had I not followed through to write the book. It gave me some "skin in the game." It is also a lot of fun to use. Using the touch screen monitor for scrolling and the keyboard for typing has become an enjoyable habit. So it added some motivation.

Would I have been able to complete the book without it? Perhaps, but it adds so much to the experience and creates so much extra time for writing due to its portability, that I have come to rely on it. So the difference between need and want in this case is definitely a gray area. If you can afford such things it may not be hard to justify the investment. If you can't, this is an example where you could still achieve your goals in other ways without spending money.

Where to Begin

If you have been doing the exercises in the previous sections, you already have all the raw data you need to begin to identify your needs and wants. Simply review your SMART PURR Task list and your Risk Log, with an eye toward investments you may need to make to accomplish the tasks and manage the risks. Investigate alternatives so you can begin to distinguish between needs and wants. Your SMART PURR Task List and Risk Log may not be detailed enough at this stage to help you identify every possible investment. There may be some hidden costs. At this stage most of the tasks you identified are only one sentence long, and you may not have listed out all the tasks right to the end of your project. You may want to dig a bit deeper on certain things at this stage if you suspect there could be some hidden costs there.

However, keep in mind the idea of establishing a contingency fund to cover the risk of things like hidden costs. At this point just do the best you can to identify investments you may need to make in your project. This is already far more than most people do when embarking on new projects. Working through this part of the PURR Power Wheel™ will give you a much more realistic idea of your project costs than you will have if you don't do it!

Here are some examples using my sample tasks and risks from earlier. The first two come from my SMART PURR Task list, the third from my Risk Log:

Potential Investment	Potential Alternatives
Purchase Scrivener software	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Microsoft Word 2. OpenOffice (free)
Purchase stock images for book cover	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pay cover designer for completed cover 2. Design a basic cover without stock images
Pay team members for cross training time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accept the risk of key personnel leaving 2. Learn all jobs myself so I can step in if needed

Some alternatives are more expensive and some less so. If free options exist then the investment would technically be a want not a need, but you have to consider what your return on investment (ROI) would be. Would it make you more productive and save you time and money in the long run? Would it allow you to sell more of your product in the long run, as may be the case with a professionally designed book cover? Even if an investment makes sense, you still may not be able to afford every investment you can dream up at this stage. You may need to defer some investments for now until you start generating some cash flow to support them. Deferring project investments as long as possible is a good business practice in any case.

For example, why pay a cover designer until you are convinced the book you are writing is at a point where it is worth investing in? What if other things come up and you never finish the book? What if you change your mind about the title of your book as you are writing it (I did this at least 20 times while writing this book). Playing around on your own with some inexpensive stock photos and cover ideas may be worthwhile in the beginning to generate some enthusiasm for your project, but actually paying a cover designer is another matter.

Higher Level Investments

While the analysis of reviewing your SMART PURR Task List and Risk Log can help you identify specific investments, there are higher level investments you may want to consider. Renting office space, getting incorporated, and taking on virtual assistants to name a few. Chances are you can do without a lot of these things in the beginning, and perhaps long term as well. Then if things don't work out, you have less to lose. If they do work out, you can consider investing further in some of these things. You will be proving your idea one step at a time, and only investing more when you have the resources and business results to justify it. Deciding when and where it makes sense to invest depends on your personal risk tolerance, the needs of your particular project, and the speed with which you want to see results.

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

4.2. Budget Funding (Invest)

At this point you have a list of potential investments and investment alternatives. Time to do a bit of research to estimate the costs and make some decisions. This will include an estimate of when you need to make each investment, always putting off significant investments as long as possible until you actually need them. Record these in an Investment Register. For example:

Project Investment Register

Investment	Estimated Cost	Estimated Investment Date
Purchase Scrivener software	\$40	December 2014
Pay for a professional cover design	\$100 - \$300	September 2015

You can continue to update this register over the life of your project as you learn more. Notice that the "Pay team members for cross training " potential investment from the last section has dropped off the list. This is an example of accepting a risk and not investing anything extra into managing the risk.

Plan Your Budget

Once you have your Investment Register filled out, creating your basic budget is easy, assuming you have or can obtain the funds for those investments. Simply add up the costs for each month. Either plan to have the money available for those items when the time comes, or defer certain investments until a later date if you can't afford them now. Don't remove them from the register as you don't know what the future holds. Every budget decision you make at this point can have an impact on the Project Management Triangle factors of Cost, Schedule, and Scope. The underlying factor of Quality can also be affected. Although you tried to work these all out earlier in the process, now you have more information and you may need to modify things a bit. This is all part of the iterative nature of the PURR Power Wheel™. Course corrections may be needed at any time as more information becomes available.

Your first evaluation of these investment options comes before you begin the actual project work. This means it will come before you enter into the upcoming Manage step for the first time. At this point course corrections are relatively easy. You will also re-evaluate your options at least once during every Spin of the PURR Power Wheel™. Perhaps your project starts generating some cash flow, making certain investments possible that you think you can't afford now. The upcoming **Manage** chapter will guide you in evaluating potential course corrections.

Cash Flow Funding

To expand on previous points, one way to fund your project is to base it on cash flow. Rather than set aside money now, you rely on money you have coming in every month to pay for things as needed. You may have to put off some investments until your cash flow catches up with your expenditures. This cash flow can come from other streams of income if the project you are working on does not produce income yet. For many people this can come from a traditional job while working on a dream Vision as a side project. I am holding down a full time job as I write this book. This means I have a good income and some savings to draw from to fund my book writing project. I also have income and retained earnings from my IT consulting business. From this point of view my other income streams give me the funding and freedom to work on this project, without the added stress of running out of money.

If you have no cash flow and no savings, then your first project may be to find a job or take on some freelance work to generate some cash flow (see the earlier **income stream classes** section for more details and options). It takes time to build Digital Age businesses to the point where you can rely on them for your livelihood. Consider that the Vision you created earlier may need to be a longer term Vision if it involves investing in ways that you can't support at this time. You may need to hustle to make this all work out!

Borrowing is an option if you feel that kind of risk makes sense for your situation. However, if you want your project to be more fun and less stressful, consider funding it from savings or cash flow. If that isn't possible now, consider using your Vision

as motivation to take some preliminary steps first, like taking on some freelance work to generate some cash flow. Get your house in order, then work on building a bigger house!

Funding by Spins, Milestones and Tasks

"There are many talented people who haven't fulfilled their dreams because they over thought it, or they were too cautious, and were unwilling to make the leap of faith." - James Cameron, film director, producer, screenwriter

In the **Plan** chapter we discussed identifying a target Milestone for each Spin. We also talked about prioritizing your SMART PURR Task List so that the most important tasks are always on top of the list. These smaller project increments may not result in significant new revenue. Attaining those goals will not necessarily help fund your next steps. However, the PURR Passive Income Power™ system does strive to make sure you are always working on the most worthwhile and highest priority tasks first. It emphasizes creating milestone targets for each Spin that produce something of value even if the overall project is never completed. So it may be worth it for you to fund your next immediate steps, even if you don't have a clear plan for funding the entire project. There is power in just moving forward. Taking concrete steps solidifies your intention. Spending some money gives you some skin in the game. It can activate your adrenalin and put the world on notice to come and meet you half way, which it has a way of doing when your actions demonstrate a clear intention.

Once you gather some momentum you may find innovative ways to fund later stages of the project, or find ways to get it done without the need for additional funding. You may inspire a partner to come on board to help with the workload, and provide some of the needed funding. You may discover a possible course correction along the way that changes the game completely for you. Remember, turning the steering wheel of a car only changes the course of the car if the car is moving! These are all important things to consider when embarking on a project. Decide what the project means to you, and what you are willing to do to make it happen!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

5. Manage

"Management is all about managing in the short term, while developing the plans for the long term." - **Jack Welch**

The time has come to dive into the trenches. Up to now it has been all about direction-setting and various levels of planning. Time to start doing the actual work!

The thing about being *"in the trenches"* is you don't have a good view of where you are going. Metaphorically you are in a deep trench with a shovel. When you look around all you see are the walls of the trench. You have no visibility of where the trench is going. You are just digging. You need a survey line to follow to make sure you are digging in the right direction. In the same way, when you get focused on individual tasks, there is a tendency to lose sight of where you are heading. You need something to guide you.

This chapter is about using and expanding on the outputs of previous Steps of the PURR Power Wheel™ to make sure you are staying true to the Vision and Plan you developed. When course corrections do make sense, you will manage them in a structured way. You won't end up chasing every shiny new object you come across, which would get you nowhere. You want to make sure longer term Plans can evolve as you are diligently working on short term tasks.

This **Manage Step** will train you to **focus**, while at the same time remaining **flexible** in a structured way. People that spend their days responding to emails and tweets and surfing from one cool video to the next lack focus. They are not pursuing their own goals, they are being led around by the nose to the tune of someone else's drummer. While these distractions can be entertaining, they are the enemy when it comes to rebooting your life and livelihood. To summarize:

Distractions bad. Focus good. Flexibility essential.

So how do you focus without closing yourself off to potential new opportunities? Let's start with the focus side of the equation.

Managing your PURR Passive Income Power™ journey is all about doing and tracking the work you planned in your SMART PURR Task List. One task at a time, one Spin at a time. This is true whether you are a one person team, or leading a team of people to reach your goals. Each person should be focused on one task at a time, rather than feeling overwhelmed by all the tasks on the list. When that task is complete, there is another task already lined up and waiting. If you want to be really focused, make your SMART PURR Task List the only thing you check when you wake up in the morning. Don't check your emails or Twitter feed or anything else until you have begun to make some progress on your tasks. Make your SMART PURR Task List the primary focus of your day.

Dealing With New Opportunities

What do you do when you identify potential new and better opportunities? As a rule, try not to shift gears to head in a different direction. Just add the new task to your SMART PURR Task List, but don't assign it to the Spin you are currently working on. We call this *adding a task to your PURR Hopper*. Remember, all tasks use our magic 1-sentence formula to describe the task. It shouldn't take long to add it to the list. This is an easy way to capture your "aha moments" and stay focused on your current tasks at the same time. Unless the new idea is a total epiphany and would completely invalidate everything you are currently working on, just adding it to the list will allow you to stay focused on the task at hand. You will prioritize the new task along with all the other tasks on your list before planning your next Spin. By the time you get to it and compare it to your other tasks, you may find it isn't as earth-shattering an idea as you thought it was. If it is earth-shattering, chances are it will still be earth-shattering a couple of weeks later!

Example of Shifting Gears

You may want to shift gears immediately if you feel a new opportunity is time sensitive and is of the once in a lifetime variety. Especially if it enhances what you are already doing. We discussed this in the Risk section as exploiting a positive risk.

For example, half way through writing this book my employer

offered to send me on a week-long "*PMP Exam Prep Boot Camp*" and pay for the exam. This added up to thousands of dollars in value, and they would be paying my salary while attending the course. PMP stands for Project Management Professional. It has become a highly respected international certification in recent years. This is the kind of thing I tended not to bother with as an independent consultant due to the time and cost involved. Shifting gears temporarily from writing the book to take advantage of this opportunity was an easy decision. I had to divert some of my writing time to studying for the 4 hour exam, and going through a rigorous application process. For example, I had to document 4500 hours of project management experience. This included contacting old co-workers to get their permission to use them as references to confirm my participation in projects we worked on together.

This was clearly a unique opportunity. Passing the exam furthered my career goals and my writing goals, since this book is partly about project management. From a book promotion point of view, being able to present myself as a certified project management professional couldn't hurt, and the process of studying for the exam was bound to stir up some ideas for the book. This is an example where flexibility was more important than focus, although certainly it required focus. The focus was just on something different for a while. I thought of this as a course correction, not a distraction.

Unforeseen Problems

What if some unforeseen problem comes up? If it is related to the task you are working on, and doesn't take you in a completely new direction, then it can be seen as part of accomplishing that task. It may mean your PURR Points estimate for that task was on the low side, and it will take longer than you thought to accomplish that task. That's okay, it was just an estimate. Some other tasks may be quicker than you thought to make up for it. If it is a larger problem, you can make it a separate task or tasks for later if it can wait. Just add the new task or tasks to your PURR Hopper. If the problem is urgent, you may need to add it as a new task to the current Spin you are working on, and divert some resources to deal with it now. These are the kinds of decisions you need to make as a manager.

When faced with problems, don't forget to consult your Risk Log. You may have already seen the potential for this problem arising. You may have a planned and recorded a risk response to deal with it in your Risk Log, at a time when you were less stressed out than you are now.

The bias should always be towards staying focused on what you are doing. Just record the new tasks in your PURR Hopper whenever possible, but be flexible enough to shift gears when it makes sense to do so. This is the balance you want to achieve between focus and flexibility. It will help you to effectively manage the short term, while continuing to allow your longer term Plan to evolve as you learn more.

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

5.1. PURR Task Management (Manage)

"Information without execution is poverty. Complexity is the enemy of execution." - **Tony Robbins**

Let's do a quick review of a few things we discussed earlier. First is the free online software that will make your job of managing your SMART PURR Tasks much easier. The software can also serve as a central *"information radiator"* to keep everyone involved with the project up to date with what is going on. For my latest recommendations, go here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/software

Spreadsheets are an option also, and are a great way to talk about things conceptually here. Below are a couple of relevant spreadsheet examples we discussed earlier in the Plan section. These are specific examples of inputs to the Manage step:

Spin Milestone Schedule (the membership site example)

Spin	Completion Date	Milestone
1	May 1, 2015	Basic website created on my own web hosting account
2	May 29, 2015	Website has 30 pages of good free info. for visitors
3	June 26, 2015	Initial premium content, including videos, 50% complete
4	July 24, 2015	Initial premium content complete
5	Aug 21, 2015	Automated payment processing to add/remove members
6	Sept 18, 2015	Membership site launch complete
7	Oct 16, 2015	Top 3 advertising strategies up and running

SMART PURR Task List (the book project example)

Task	PURR Points	Spin
I will install Scrivener on my Surface Pro laptop so that I can auto-generate all the book formats I need when I'm done (eg. Kindle version, epub version, print version etc.)	1	1
I will learn how to use Scrivener well so that I can work smart and speed up the creation of the book.	4	1
I will average writing 2000 words per week so that I can complete the first draft of my 80,000 word book in 40 weeks (recurring task).	10	1, 2, 3 (R)
I will design and create a book cover so that people are encouraged to read the book.	5	
I will research print-on-demand services and document the steps needed to submit the book to one of them, so that I can offer a print version of the book to readers who prefer print copies over e-readers.	3	

As you manage your project, you will want to keep in mind the concepts discussed in the **Plan** chapter, like recognizing priorities and dependencies in your SMART PURR Task list.

Adding To Your SMART PURR Task List

At this point we need to add some columns to our SMART PURR Task list so we can manage the project. Since many of you will be reading this on a narrow e-reader, I will remove the task descriptions and adopt a Task ID to identify each task. This will allow us to view the additional columns here. If you are using a spreadsheet to track your tasks, you will want to include all the

columns we discuss along the way in that spreadsheet. Here are some additional columns you can use to manage your project:

Spin 1 Tasks

Task ID	PURR Points	Assigned To	Completion Date
1	1	Brad Morgan	2015-04-18
2	4	Brad Morgan	
3	10		
...			

Managing a Spin

Managing an individual Spin can be as simple as that. At this stage the PURR Point estimates we discussed in the Plan section help you to understand how long a task will take before you start it or assign it to someone on your team. Managing a Spin becomes a simple matter of assigning and tracking task completion, where the tasks have already been designed by you to take you in your desired direction. Part of the SMART PURR Task approach we discussed in the Plan section was ensuring the task is Measurable. This should make it fairly easy to identify when tasks are complete. As an option, you may want to add a **Notes column** to your spreadsheet for describing details about how the task was resolved, and any issues you ran into.

The person working on the task may need to take the 1-sentence task description and break it down into sub-tasks to get the work done. We try to minimize the need for this by designing very specific SMART PURR Tasks to begin with. However, at this stage the person working on the task is free to do whatever they need to do to accomplish the task. Chances are you will be both the manager and the person doing the work, at least in the early stages of rebooting your life and livelihood. It is a good idea to think about these as 2 different hats you are wearing. This is the beginning of understanding how you could incorporate freelancers and virtual assistants

into your business. Most of what is discussed in this section is from the management perspective. These are things you would still need to do even if you have other people doing the actual work on the tasks (unless you eventually hire a project manager).

Project Focus

Keep in mind that we are talking about a project here. Projects have a definite end date. You are creating a unique product, service, or result. At some point you will be finished. If not, then you aren't working on a project. If it goes on forever then you are working on a process, or operational activities to keep a product, service or result relevant and viable. In that case you probably don't need Spins. We will talk about that in a bit more detail next. However, keep in mind that this Manage chapter is mostly relevant to projects.

Operational Activities

When a successful project ends it will enter into *operations mode*. This is the time after the book is written, the website is built, your product has been created, or whatever you have set out to do has been accomplished. It will then take on a life of its own, which is the essence of *passive income*. Depending on what you have built, and how much you want or need to promote it, there may be some activities required to sustain the passive income. Our definition of passive income is you continue to make money long after you have completed the project, and there is potential to make much more than you could ever make getting paid a salary or hourly wage. It doesn't mean you never need to do anything ever again to sustain it. For example, if you have created a product that you sell on your own website, there will be customer service issues to deal with. Word of mouth and search algorithms may help drive sales to your product, but you will probably still need to do something to sustain and market it if you want it to be successful long term.

However, operational activities are generally less time intensive than project work. If you write a popular book it will sell better if you find ways to promote it everyday, but it will continue to sell even if you ignore it for a few weeks or months. As well, repetitive tasks are relatively easy to outsource (see the

upcoming **Team Build** section for more details). Ideally you will organize your operations strategy in a way that frees up your time to start your next project to develop yet another stream of passive income. This can be accomplished with outsourcing and making use of some of the automation tools we will discuss in the upcoming **Tools and Techniques** section.

Okay, that was a small digression to put where we are at now into perspective. The rest of this chapter is about the project you are working on now. You will need to find time to manage it, even if it is your 10th project and you have many other income streams already flowing. Even if you hire a project manager to manage the level of detail we are discussing here, you will still need to manage it at some higher level. You need to maintain control of your life and livelihood. That is the one thing you can't outsource!

Spin Rate

As mentioned earlier, tracking *PURR Points*, which would feed the Spin Rate calculation we are about to discuss, is an optional step. However, it is needed if you want to improve your ability to estimate how long the project will take as you gain more experience. For instance, if you have completed 3 Spins and have 4 Spins left, this calculation will give you a fairly realistic estimate of how far you will actually get in the next 4 Spins, based on your performance in the first 3 Spins. This is typically much more accurate than estimating a "percentage complete" based on gut feel.

Your Spin Rate is the average number of PURR Points you complete in a single Spin. This helps when planning the next Spin. For example, if you completed 20 PURR Points in Spin 1, 25 in Spin 2, and 15 in Spin 3, then your Spin Rate is the average of those. In this example your Spin Rate would be 20 PURR Points per Spin, which is calculated as follows: **$(20 + 25 + 15) / 3 = 20$** . This means when planning Spin 4 you would plan to complete 20 PURR Points, and assign tasks to that Spin accordingly.

In my opinion, you should never go back and change your PURR Point estimates after you learn how long the task actually took. Spin rate is based on your estimating skills, not on actual

times. The logic here is if you over or under estimated a task, chances are you would also over or under estimate similar tasks. This eventually gets built into your Spin Rate, so that planning for future Spins will be relatively accurate. Leaving the original estimates alone also recognizes the fact that things will average out over time. You may over estimate some tasks and under estimate others. So it is probably best to keep things simple and leave the original PURR Point estimates alone.

SMART PURR Task List Hopper

We have already discussed the PURR Hopper in general terms. The SMART PURR Task List Hopper refers to the tasks on your SMART PURR Task List that are not yet assigned to a Spin. It doesn't need to be a separate spreadsheet, but you could choose to do it that way. If using the online software we discussed earlier, it will be a separate "bucket" that you can pull from using drag and drop to feed your Spins.

However, the PURR Hopper is also a conceptual way to think about tasks that are waiting to be assigned. They are *in the hopper*. When you get ideas for new tasks, you just add them to the hopper as long as those new tasks are not urgent. They will be prioritized and considered again when planning your next Spin. If the new tasks identified along the way are urgent, you may decide to add them directly to the Spin you are working on, and bypass the hopper all together. This should be the exception rather than the rule.

In its simplest form, the PURR Hopper looks something like this:

PURR Hopper (tasks not yet assigned to a Spin)

Task	PURR Points
I will create the PurrPassiveIncome.com /software page <u>so that</u> readers of the book can find and understand how to use good free software to manage their PURR Passive Income Power™ journey.	6
I will ...	

I will ...	
I will ...	

As a rule, you would simply add the task to the hopper and continue to focus on the Spin you are currently working on. Assigning PURR Points is always optional. You just need to record the new task in the hopper and get back to focusing on your current Spin. You don't need to worry about prioritizing it yet. You will prioritize the hopper when the time comes to plan your next Spin, which is the topic of our next chapter.

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

5.2. Spin Review Time (Manage)

A couple of days before the end of each Spin there is a *control point* that we will call the **Spin Review**. Ideally, major course corrections should happen at a control point, not when you are in the middle of a Spin.

This is the step in the **PURR Power Wheel™** where you will find your balance between focus and flexibility. To use our earlier trench metaphor, the Spin Review control point is where you stick your head up out of the trench to take stock of where you are at, and where you are heading. To use our mountain climbing metaphor from earlier in the book, you are now higher up the mountain, and can see further than you could in your previous Spin Reviews. The Spin Review takes place a couple of days before the end of a Spin, in preparation for the next Spin.

This is the time to review the tasks in your PURR Hopper to decide if they are still needed. It is a time to prioritize and order the tasks in your PURR Hopper, which can be done by dragging tasks up or down in the list (if you are using the online software we have been discussing). It is a time to consider ways you can improve your process. A course correction, if needed, could be anything from a slight change in direction to shutting down the entire project. In any case, a course correction based on the analysis described below is never a failure. Whatever comes next will always be better for you than sticking with something that no longer makes sense for some reason, based on what you know now. The key is to always make sure your next move is better than your last move.

During the Spin the idea was to focus on completing tasks and simply recording ideas for new tasks in your PURR Hopper. Now the focus shifts temporarily to adding more new tasks to the hopper if needed, deciding which uncompleted tasks still make sense, and determining the priority and dependencies of the tasks. If you have chosen a Spin duration of 4 weeks, then the following activities would be done once every 4 weeks (a couple of days before the end of each Spin).

Recall that the central steps in the PURR Power Wheel™ don't necessarily occur in order, they integrate with the other steps. The following points relate to the **Understand** step (Step 10).

Understand activities are done here and now during the Spin Review:

Spin lessons learned. Review the last Spin and record what went right and what could have been improved on through better planning, more resources, or more knowledge and skill. If you have stakeholders or advisers on the project besides yourself, give them a demo or presentation summarizing your accomplishments in the last Spin. Record their feedback and consider it for your next Spin.

Full wheel review. Review and update all the outputs you produced previously from other Steps in the PURR Power Wheel™. For example, an output to the Risks step (Step 3) is the Risk Log. Don't forget the outputs from your Vision exercises. Things that may have seemed impossible before may seem possible now. You may come up with some completely new ideas and perhaps even a new Vision at this stage. All those previous outputs are inputs to the Spin Review process. Make adjustments as necessary now that you know more. These adjustments should be reflected in the tasks you select for your next Spin. Intelligent course corrections can only happen when you review your original course on a regular basis, and apply your new Understanding!

Plan your next Spin. This includes the following:

- 1.** Review your PURR Hopper and potentially add more tasks based on what you know now.
- 2.** Remove any tasks from your PURR Hopper that no longer make sense.
- 3.** Prioritize the hopper so the most urgent and most important tasks are at the top, keeping in mind any dependencies between tasks.
- 4.** If you are tracking PURR Points, estimate and assign points to each new task.
- 5.** If you have uncompleted tasks from a previous Spin, re-assign them to the next Spin and adjust the PURR Points to reflect an estimate of the effort remaining for that task. Account for the portion of the PURR Points you did complete in

your Spin Rate calculation.

6. If you have already established a Spin Rate, then assign the appropriate number of tasks from the top of your prioritized PURR Hopper to your next Spin. This means if your Spin Rate is 20, and the PURR Points for the top 5 tasks in your prioritized PURR Hopper add up 20 (or as close as possible to 20), then assign those 5 tasks to your next Spin.

7. If you aren't tracking PURR Points or Spin Rate, then simply estimate and assign the number of tasks you think you can get done in the next Spin.

If you are tracking your Spins with the spreadsheet format we have been discussing, then assigning a task to a Spin is a simple matter of entering the Spin number in the Spin column for that task (after you have re-prioritized your task list based on the steps listed above). If you are using free software discussed earlier, refer to the instructions here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/software

Managed Change vs. Scope Creep

The Spin Review control point is your chance to manage change. You can change the scope if it makes sense to do so after reviewing everything discussed above. You can modify your project documents to reflect a new direction. If you have partners or a project sponsor, you may need to get sign off on the new direction. That is **managed change**.

Scope creep is **unmanaged change**. This is a common pitfall with the many options available in the Digital Age. There is the tendency to jump around from one idea to the next, from one tactic to the next, chasing each shiny new object as you become aware of them. This often goes well beyond scope creep to include complete changes in direction without giving the first direction a real chance to succeed. These people are spinning their (non-PURR) wheels and **ending up nowhere**. And by these people I mean me, at times. Having tried lots of things may be good from the point of view of writing this book, but it wasn't always done in the smartest way. I had to begin incorporating my professional experience and attitudes into my side projects. This book is intended to be a reflection of that.

Managed change is about spinning the **PURR Power Wheel™** in the smartest possible way to end up with the best possible result!

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

6. Problem Solve

"We cannot solve our problems with the same kind of thinking that created them." - **Albert Einstein**

A problem can be defined as an obstacle preventing an outcome. Every project runs into problems now and then. That is when the real fun begins. You may think I mean that last sentence sarcastically. I don't. Learn how to solve problems effectively, and there is nothing in this world that will give you more satisfaction. Satisfaction equals real fun. You will go to bed at night feeling great about what you have accomplished. Compare that to sitting around wondering what to do next as the problems pile up. Rather than accepting those nagging feelings that things are not quite right, this chapter is about attacking problems head on. Getting good at this can benefit you in many ways.

Problem as Opportunity

Making more money is about creating more value or becoming more valuable. The more problems you solve the more valuable you become. I was forced to solve lots of problems for people early in my employment and later in my consulting career. Eventually I was able to charge clients high hourly rates for long term contracts. The only reason people were willing to pay those rates was because I was seen as *knowledgeable* and *experienced*. That knowledge and experience came from solving problems. Every small problem I solved supported the rates I was able to charge later.

This concept applies equally to negotiating employment contracts. You need to make a compelling case that you are worth the salary you are asking for. It all comes down to your history of solving problems for people (employers, clients, customers). In my recent return to traditional employment I found that most job interviews are now behavioral or experience based. They ask you to give examples of problems you experienced in the past, like conflicts you may have had with a co-worker, or mistakes you may have made. Then they ask: *how did you handle it*. What they are really asking is *how did you solve the problem*.

The *problem as opportunity* narrative is even more compelling

if you are starting a Digital Age venture. Find a problem you have some experience or know-how to solve, then find a way to help others solve that same problem. *The key point is you need to find ways to provide more value if you want to make more money, and problem solving is the road to providing more value.*

Work Hard, Work Smart, Solve Problems

If project success was easy everyone would do it. It is only worth doing because it isn't easy, so that succeeding sets you apart from the crowd. Lots of people work hard. Far less people know how to work smart. Work hard, work smart, solve problems. A nice recipe for success.

The **working hard** part is simply a decision you need to make. Are you going to work hard at this? Imagine you are writing a test. There are only 2 possible answers to the *will you work hard at rebooting your life* question: yes and no. *Maybe* is not one of the possible answers on the test page. You need to pick between yes and no. I hope you pick yes. If not, you can safely skip this chapter and all the remaining sections in the book, and move on to enjoying your current life as best you can.

The **working smart** part relates to all the other sections in this book. Have you developed the right Vision, the right Plan, the right SMART PURR Tasks, risk responses, and smart Investments you plan to make in yourself? I won't list all the sections of the book here. You get the idea. PURR Passive Income Power™ is all about working smarter so you can get somewhere that fits you and satisfies you, years ahead of where you would be without working smart. Even if you go slow, you will be doing the necessary work to ensure you are always heading in the best direction you possibly can. This means you can avoid many time consuming **wrong turns** along the way. *Slow and steady and smart wins the race!*

Problem solving is what this section is all about. You will learn creative ways to overcome obstacles. You will learn about different problem types, strategies for solving them, and common impediments you may run into. If you find some of the upcoming material on the dry side, keep in mind getting good at this is the *key to the kingdom* when it comes to making more money in the Digital Age!

6.1. PURR RESCUE Cycle (Problem Solve)

"If you're going through hell, keep going." - **Winston Churchill**

Think of problem solving as a recurring cycle. New problems arise, and problem solutions can lead to new problems. Life itself can be thought of as an endless cycle of solving daily problems. Not dealing with them as they arise can easily lead to the mental state of overwhelm. If not handled effectively, problems can destroy your confidence. It is hard to feel you are making progress if your list of problems is constantly growing.

We all tend to put off dealing with things when we don't know where to begin. It can help to have a basic checklist of steps to consider when solving problems. To that end, I thought I would make up another PURR Passive Income Power™ inspired acronym to go along with the METRIC acronym discussed earlier. When faced with problems, I think we would all like to be rescued from time to time. So the new acronym is RESCUE, defined as follows:

R = Recognize and define the problem
E = Establish alternatives
S = Strategize solutions
C = Create an action plan
U = Unleash resources
E = Evaluate results

Let's go through them one at a time.

R = Recognize and Define the Problem

Recognizing a problem is not always as easy as it may sound. Although some problems seem to hit you over the head with a hammer to grab your attention, others are more subtle. Maybe you have had 5 job interviews and no job offers. Is there a problem with your resume? Probably not, you are getting interviews, so your resume is probably awesome. Working harder on that is probably a waste of time.

Instead the problem may be that you are applying for the wrong kinds of jobs, or your communication style at interviews is lacking, or you aren't choosing the right results-oriented stories to describe your experience, or you are talking too much

without looking and listening for cues from the interviewers. You may be presenting yourself too seriously when they clearly have a laid back corporate culture, or vice versa. You may need to do a better job of showing them you can fit in at their company.

Or maybe the revenue for your business is down from last month. Recognizing the problem in this case may require an in-depth review of the metrics you developed earlier in this book. If that doesn't help you may need to develop more metrics to get to the bottom of it. Perhaps your Google Analytics tells you that 50% of your website visitors were coming from the coveted US market, and now 90% of your website visitors are coming from markets with less disposable income, or markets that would be less interested in paying for your products. You can't find ways to solve the overall problem of decreased revenue until you are able to recognize the root cause of the problem (we will cover *root cause analysis* in the upcoming **Problem Solving Techniques** chapter).

Once you recognize and Understand the problem, you need to clearly and accurately define the problem. Write it down. Then ask yourself if it is possible there are underlying root causes that you may not have identified. Consider that the root cause may be you. Perhaps the problem seems to be that your virtual assistants are getting things wrong. Did you spend enough time explaining what you wanted in the first place, or did you assume they should know? Ensuring team members get adequate direction and training if necessary is your responsibility (the upcoming **Team Build** section will discuss team considerations in detail).

Defining the problem includes understanding the problem urgency and magnitude. Some problems are just a part of accomplishing a task from your SMART PURR Task list, and should be treated as just part of the task. Other problems may require new tasks to be created and prioritized according to the steps outlined in detail in the preceding **Manage** chapter of this book. Some problems can be delegated, others you must handle yourself. Clearly defining the problem will help you make these kinds of decisions.

E = Establish Alternatives

Having a clear understanding of the problem is great, but you still need to think about different options for solving it. Always consider that there may be many different ways to solve a problem. It pays to take some time to consider your options. The upcoming **Problem Solving Techniques** section will outline some common approaches for coming up with a list of alternatives.

For example, in the job interview problem discussed above some alternatives could include calling the interviewers to see if they would be willing to give you a candid assessment of why they didn't choose you. Or you could do some more research into how to handle job interviews to see if you can work out what you may be doing wrong. You could ask friends for advice, your personal support network is always an important source of inspiration. You could choose a completely different approach for your next job interview, even if you aren't sure exactly what needs to change (trial and error).

S = Strategize Solutions

Alternatives are great, but you still need to think about the best strategy to implement them. In this context the word strategy refers to a combination of alternatives and detailed tactics to solve a particular problem (in contrast to your overall business strategy). The strategy will include specific details of how you will implement the alternatives you have identified. In the example above, where you have lost your US based website visitors, there are a number of strategies you could consider.

You may have listed as one alternative further optimizing your website for US based searches in the search engines. Recognizing that Google has different websites and ranking algorithms for each country may lead you to develop a search engine optimization (seo) strategy aimed specifically at the US based google.com, rather than other Google sites like google.ca (Canada) or google.fr (France). Another option may be to use the configuration options available in Google's paid search engine advertising platform (Adwords) to specifically target ads to US visitors.

Another strategy may to be to focus on the Yahoo and Bing

search engines. They have less traffic but may also be less competitive for your search terms. Being number one in a search result there may be better than being on page 2 in Google. Another strategy could be to write articles for big popular websites that do well in the search engine rankings and cater to a US based audience. You would include a link to your website in the author bio section of the article.

Then you could benefit from the search engine authority of the larger website, while at the same time pre-selling your site visitors with a great article you have written that distinguishes you as an expert in your field. This strategy has the added bonus of giving your article exposure to the daily fans of the larger website, in addition to folks who find that article in the search engines based on keywords you include in the article. These are all strategies you can consider under the alternative of improving your US search engine presence on the internet.

The above strategies will compete with other strategies you can come up with based on other alternatives you may have identified. For example, you may decide your best source of traffic doesn't come from keyword searches on search engines. Instead, you may do better with social traffic from sites like Facebook, which has an ad platform that can target your ads to people that live in a particular country. Or like me, you may choose to write a book and let sites like Amazon.com help you find people interested in your message, and link to your website from within the book. These are all examples of strategies that can help you solve the problem of getting more US based website visitors, which should ultimately lead to solving the overall problem of a loss in revenue.

C = Create an Action Plan

Strategies are great, but if they are complex strategies like some of the examples described above, you still need a step-by-step action plan. If you are following the PURR Passive Income Power™ system, then of course the action plan steps will become SMART PURR Tasks. You will introduce them into your Spins as appropriate, based on factors like their urgency compared to other tasks you are already working on (see the preceding **Manage** section for details on how to do this).

U = Unleash Resources

Action plans are great, but someone needs to do the work. Unleashing resources is a matter of assigning the SMART PURR Tasks to yourself or to a team member. If you don't yet have a virtual team, you may decide to use one of the methods described in the upcoming **Team Build** section to hire someone to solve just this one problem for you, rather than become a permanent member of your team.

E = Evaluate Results

The last step is to follow up by evaluating your results. If things aren't getting better you may have to Refine your approach and try again. Perhaps you haven't correctly identified the root cause of the problem. Perhaps there are better solution alternatives you have not yet considered. Perhaps your strategy needs to be improved. Perhaps you have assigned the wrong person to the job. You may have to fire yourself from the problem and get someone with skills you don't possess to do the work for you, or you may need to take a course and learn some new skills. As mentioned at the start, the RESCUE process can turn into a recurring cycle as you keep trying new things until the problems are solved. This gives you a reason to wake up every morning. It can be a lot of fun when you start to see results!

Remember, problems are tremendous opportunities once you figure out how to solve them. They can form the basis for entire businesses if you can help others solve those same problems. Solving them can be the reason you succeed while others cannot. Get good at solving problems, and you will find a world of opportunity open up before you!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

6.2. Problem Solving Techniques (Problem Solve)

There are some types of problems where the solution is obvious. If a machine in an assembly line breaks down, it is clear you won't make any more money until the machine is fixed. There may be alternative solutions like fixing it or replacing it, but the steps you need to take are fairly straight forward. This section is more about problems without a clear solution, where some creativity is required to understand the problem and come up with a good solution.

Here are some good problem solving techniques for you to consider:

Brainstorming - get some people in a room and start throwing out ideas to solve the problem. No ideas are considered bad, the point is to build on every idea rather than tear them down. Try the improvisational comedy technique of following every comment with *"Yes, and..."*

Lateral Thinking - similar to brainstorming but you can do it on your own without others in the room. This was discussed in detail in chapter 1.1. Recall the idea of coming up with a quota for the number of ideas you will generate before choosing a path forward.

Root Cause Analysis - just keep asking why. When you think you have the root cause ask why one more time. The floor is wet. Why? The pipe is leaking. Why? The water pressure is too high. Why? The main valve is defective. Why? It is 3 years past it's scheduled end of life date. Why? The maintenance budget was cut. Why? At this point it is becoming clear what needs to be done. Clearly just mopping up the wet floor was not going to solve the problem!

Decomposition - decompose a big problem into smaller more manageable problems. An earlier example discussed the loss of US traffic to your website as a root cause of your decreased revenue. One of the alternatives we came up with was to get the US search engines to love you more. Historically the absolute best way to get google.com to love you is to get other authority sites to link to your site, referred to as "white hat" authority backlinks. You could decompose that problem into getting 10 good backlinks. You could decompose it further into

writing or outsourcing the writing of good articles that you try and get published on authority sites with your backlink in the author bio. Or you could focus on adding high quality content to your website that others would see as a benefit to their readers, and therefore want to link to (linkbait). There are other ways you could solve that problem. You may want to try them all. The key is taking big problems and decomposing them into smaller, more manageable problems.

Shift your mental state - this one seems simple but is extremely powerful. Sitting at the computer struggling with a problem? Try going for a nice walk. There is a very good chance when you get back your mind will have worked out a solution, or at least a reasonable way to move forward. You may never have achieved it by struggling at the computer all day. Try convincing a traditional employer of that one! Another good technique is to think about a problem before you go to sleep at night and let your mind work on it overnight. Greats like Thomas Edison and Isaac Newton have credited the hypnagogic state that occurs between sleep and wakefulness with enhanced creativity (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypnagogia). Meditation is another great way to change your state and get a different viewpoint on things. Some forms of meditation are even called "insight meditation." Shifting your mental state in one way or another is like magic pixie dust you can sprinkle on any problem!

Ask good questions - that nice walk works much better if you have been asking yourself good questions. One great question is: "What am I really trying to accomplish here?" Sometimes the apparent problem isn't one you really need to solve to reach your true objective. An example of a really bad question is: "Why do these things always happen to me?" You can waste entire days asking yourself questions like that. Another example of a good question is: "How are other people solving this type of problem?"

Reverse engineer - a nice thing about the Digital Age is the transparency it provides. You can learn a lot just by researching online how others do things. Having problems handling customer questions and concerns? How do great companies handle their customer service? Try becoming a customer and find out. How can you apply their strategies in your own business? That is reverse engineering.

Trial and error - another way of describing the scientific method. People talk about the large number of times Edison tried and failed at inventing the light bulb, until he finally succeeded. Of course that is impressive, but in reality he was just a scientist/inventor following the well established scientific method of creating a hypothesis, then testing it out. Scientists and inventors expect to fail repeatedly until they get it right, it is all part of the process of their profession. The scientists that are looking for cures to the remaining big health problems of our time have been trying and failing for decades. But they are making progress, and one day they will succeed.

Every trial brings you closer to your goal. Very difficult problems cannot be solved by intellect and planning alone. Just like the main PURR Passive Income Power™ concepts we have been discussing throughout this book, you learn by doing. Sometimes the only way to solve a problem is to do something and see what happens. If it doesn't work, it still brings you closer to a solution because your knowledge of what doesn't work has just increased!

I remember vividly working on a railroad construction project in the mountains when I was younger. A backhoe had fallen over the side of a ravine, and was sitting on its side about 20 meters down. Everyone was standing around scratching their heads wondering what to do. The construction foreman walked up and started barking orders at people. No discussion at all about "how did this happen." Everyone started moving. Within 30 minutes the backhoe was back up the ravine sitting beside us on the railroad track.

It seemed to me that construction foreman was the smartest person in the world. I asked him afterward how he knew what to do. (I was working for the railroad, not his construction crew, so he could share his secrets with me.) He said he didn't know, he just knew doing something was the only way forward. As people started moving he stood back and could see the next step just a bit sooner than everyone else. He appeared to be in complete control of the situation. The rest of us shook our heads in awe after the problem was solved and he walked away. In reality, he had just got people moving in a direction that led to a solution! In hindsight, some of the steps to that solution were not really required. He was using trial and error,

but we were all so caught up in the drama of the situation we didn't notice! To this day that is still one of the most impressive displays of leadership I have ever witnessed.

A/B split testing - this is a specific type of trial and error tailor made for the Digital Age, where statistics related to your trials are often readily available. It is ideal for problem-solving challenges like making an ad campaign profitable. My Google story at the beginning of this book described how I was able to make \$13,000 per month in profit using their Adwords platform. I got there with a/b split testing. You start by running two ads that each get shown 50% of the time. After a short while you will find one ad clearly performs better than the other one based on metrics like click through rate and sales resulting from that ad. (You need to setup "conversion tracking" to know how a particular ad relates to sales.)

Once you have a clear winner you replace the loser with another ad that you think will perform even better. The previous winner becomes the "control." Then it becomes a game of "beat the control", which is referred to as a/b split testing. It is great fun when things are going well! I did the same thing with the pages the ads led to. This is referred to as a/b split testing to *optimize the landing page*. When I publish this book I may want to do some split testing of my book description on Amazon to see which one leads to the most book sales. I may want to do the same thing on the pages where people sign up to be on the PURR Passive Income Power™ Email Newsletter list.

There are all kinds of things you can easily split test in the Digital Age. If you want to make more money, split testing is key. In the end, money is just a way to keep score. You work hard to create something of value for people. Split testing is a way to get it into the hands of more people so they can benefit from it. One thing you will learn very quickly is you really don't know what people will respond to until you try it. Ads that I thought would get a great response often got terrible results, and vice versa. You just don't know until you try!

Good enough - don't think you have to make everything perfect. You don't have time for that. For instance, you can't spend all day split testing ads. Eventually the small extra returns from the next "better" ad won't cover the opportunity

cost for your time. If you have a large number of problems, determine which ones are having the greatest effect on your results and solve those ones. Prioritize. Divide and conquer.

In software development we say *you can't automate every exception, or you'll never be done*. This means if a certain type of problem only comes up once or twice a year, don't spend time building a solution for it into the software. Just make sure there would be a way for the software users to work it out on their own. Focus on the big problems they have to solve everyday.

In certain project management circles they talk about the *definition of done*. Before you begin solving a problem, describe what done looks like, and don't go beyond that. This can take the form of a list of *acceptance criteria* that must be satisfied to obtain a desired result. Once you have satisfied that list you are done, move on to the next problem!

The Pareto Principle, often referred to as the 80/20 rule, is a good way to think about the concept of "good enough" (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pareto_principle). It is based on real data, not just a theory. For instance Microsoft has reported that fixing the top 20% of the reported bugs in a system fixes 80% of the errors and crashes in that system. Companies report that 80% of profits come from 20% of the customers and 20% of the time spent by staff. That is why people often say that 80% of the results come from 20% of the effort.

That means the reverse must also be true. 80% of the effort yields just 20% of the results. Why is that? It is because we all tend to strive for perfection in an imperfect world. It doesn't take a math genius to see that working only on the 20% and moving on to the next thing once you get 80% of the results is a winning strategy in most cases. This means prioritizing your PURR Hopper and doing the most important things first. It means you may leave some things undone in your PURR Hopper once you see you have achieved 80% of the results. It means having a laser focus on your Vision at all times, so you don't waste time solving problems that don't advance you toward your Vision. When things are "good enough", it just may be time to move on.

A primary focus of this book is on *making more money in the*

Digital Age. You will make more money getting 80% of the results on 5 things than you will spending that same amount of time trying to achieve 100% of the results on just one thing. Of course I am assuming you aren't designing jet airplanes, where that last 20% may save hundreds of lives. Focusing on achieving 80% of the results is only a good strategy if nobody gets hurt in the process!

Okay, it is time to take my own advice and move on to the next chapter. I haven't listed every conceivable problem solving technique here, but for the purposes of this book, I think it is good enough. In fact it may be better than good enough. If I did try and list every problem solving technique here you may get bored reading them all. Sometimes less is more!

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

6.3. Solution Impediments (Problem Solve)

Solution impediments are things that may get in the way of your problem solving efforts. I believe they come in 3 general categories:

1. Real Constraints

Perhaps the problem is clearly understood and you believe solving it is critical to your success, but you simply don't have the time or money to deal with it. These are real constraints that you need to resolve before you can focus on solving the problem. If the constraint is cost, you may be able to solve it by finding free or very inexpensive ways to solve the problem. Or you may decide to borrow some money. Or perhaps you could try the barter system where you offer to help someone else with something they need, in return for them contributing their expertise to solving your problem. If the constraint is time, perhaps you can solve it by paying someone else to solve the problem for you. Or you could extend your project schedule if that is an option. A specific example of a constraint would be if a machine breaks down and ordering a new part will incur a 6 week delivery time. Solving the constraint can sometimes be more challenging than solving the original problem. The nice thing about real constraints is the clarity they provide to the situation. You know exactly what is standing in the way of your success. You can focus all your energy in a direction that will clearly have an impact on resolving the problem.

2. Lack of Clarity

Problems are often wrapped up in all sorts of irrelevant information. Things that seem like they may be important but aren't. This weekend I will be sitting in the back yard studying for my Project Management Professional (PMP) exam. 4 hours to answer 200 questions. The practice exams indicate that most of the questions contain a lot of irrelevant information. They do that because that is the way things usually are in real life project management situations. They want to make sure you can filter out irrelevant information to focus on the real problem. A little trick I learned for the exam is to always read the last sentence of every question first. In many cases that is all you really need to read. The first few sentences seem like they may be relevant, but as soon as you read the last

sentence you realize they aren't. It saves a lot of time and confusion to read the last sentence first.

Real life on the other hand is usually missing that last sentence. You need to figure out what it is. Going through the problem solving techniques in the previous section can help tremendously in this regard. Root cause analysis and asking good questions like "what am I really trying to accomplish here" are particularly good techniques for filtering out irrelevant information. If a problem seems too complicated, you may need to find ways to simplify it, to decompose it. There may be several problems that you need to decompose and work on separately. The key is understanding that things are not always as they first appear. Make sure you are solving the real problem. Don't get sidetracked into chasing something that has no relationship to your original Vision!

3. Mindset Malfunctions

These come in all shapes and sizes. Look up *cognitive bias* in wikipedia and you will find a huge list of things that can unconsciously influence how you approach a problem (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cognitive_biases). For example:

Confirmation Bias - Easily accepting things that confirm your own thinking and easily rejecting things that don't.

Status Quo Bias - Tendency to want things to stay the same, even when circumstances clearly dictate change is necessary.

Reactance Bias - Doing the opposite of what is suggested just to resist perceived attempts to control you.

A cognitive bias will predispose you to see problems and solutions in a particular way that may be far from reality. You may have some preconceived notion about what you should do, even when there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary freely available if you could just open your eyes and see it.

An important cognitive bias to consider for business owners is **prior investment bias**. This is when you have traveled so far down a particular path that giving up becomes very difficult because of what you have already sunk into the project. Sunk

costs should be ignored when making business decisions. Try making each decision as if you were just starting out. Would it still make sense? Getting too attached to an idea or direction is a form of mindset malfunction. You may end up making decisions that simply don't make sense based on where you are now.

Another mindset malfunction to be aware of in the Digital Age is having blinders on because of the influence of a particular person or group of people (group think). Perhaps you have purchased an information product that has you convinced the path to riches is some loophole of a tactic to get the search engines to send more visitors to your website. You may be completely convinced and devote huge amounts of time to it. There may be entire online communities discussing the tactic on a daily basis. These tactics sometimes work well, for awhile. However, if you aren't creating something of real value for those blog visitors, you are building your business on a foundation of sand. Have you been wondering why I am attempting to reboot my life with this book after having had many Digital Age ventures in the past? (Hint: you just read part of reason in this paragraph.)

Lastly, here is one more that I may be just making up. I don't see it in the wikipedia list at time of writing. That is: **Heard It All Before Bias**. It is one I have certainly suffered from at times. It is the discounting of ideas because you have heard them before. You may deem them to be unoriginal or somehow less valuable, even though they may be exactly what you need to be concentrating on at that moment. For example, the idea that *you should eat healthier and get more sleep & exercise* is not original, in the same way that many of the ideas in this book are not original. That doesn't mean you shouldn't consider doing them if you want to solve some problems in your life. Find the right combination of ideas that make sense in your situation. Even if none of the individual ideas are original, the combination of those ideas may be original and life changing for you!

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

7. Team Build

"Light is the task where many share the toil." - Homer

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." - African proverb

We started this book off talking about super heroes and super powers. What if you could choose only one super power? What would it be? Fictional super heroes often have just one super power. They may be super fast like **The Flash**. Perhaps you also get things done fast. Do enough things fast and chances are you aren't doing any of them well. Doing them both fast and well would be 2 super powers.

So what is the One super power that trumps them all? It is the power to manage teams effectively. If you can do that you can accomplish pretty much anything. Nobody does anything epic completely on their own. Jobs had Wozniak and McCartney had Lennon and Harrison and Ringo and they all had countless unsung heroes helping them along the way. Doing things yourself may be necessary in the beginning. However, when the time comes, be ready to start building a team.

My Team Building Experience

My own team building experience ranges from managing teams within large organizations, to forming a partnership and taking on new consultants in my consulting business, to hiring virtual assistants to help me grow my Digital Age ventures. In every case I accomplished far more than I could have come close to accomplishing on my own. In every case I made far more money than it cost me to maintain the teams.

When Should You Start to Build a Team?

If you want help you usually have to pay for it. At what point in the process should you start to pay for help? It depends on how well defined your Plan is. Do you have enough tasks ready to go in your PURR Hopper? Maybe you are looking for help to sustain existing income streams that require ongoing attention. How well defined and organized are your sustainment processes? Let's say you want to outsource customer service issues. Do you already have a ticketing system like Zendesk

setup on your website? If not you may want to outsource the task of setting up Zendesk (see section 7.2 on Outsourcing Tasks). With that done you can go ahead and outsource the day to day customer service activities to a part time virtual assistant (see section 7.3 on Virtual Teams).

The timing also depends on what you can afford to invest, as well as your risk tolerance. This was discussed earlier in the book. Some people thrive on risk. You may be one of them. I have friends that have sold startup companies for millions of dollars. Their risk tolerance is higher. They were able to sell investors on their ideas. Their ultimate rewards were higher. That's not the case for everyone. They went through many stressful moments along the way. I have great respect for the path they took, but it wasn't for me. My risk tolerance is lower. I tend to build things more slowly and fund growth based on cash flow, so the business proves itself every step of the way.

Think about it and choose a strategy that makes sense for you. The following chapters on Team Building will give you plenty of food for thought.

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

7.1. Team Building Options (Team Build)

Are you ready to fire yourself from some of your daily tasks? Have you started to generate some cash flow to support team building? Or is your risk tolerance high enough and your Vision powerful enough that investing more into your project makes sense for you? If so, the time has come to discuss the various Team Building options you have to choose from.

Team Building vs. Outsourcing

There are many ways to build a team. Outsourcing is one option that has a negative sound to it for many people. It brings to mind large corporations outsourcing local jobs overseas. You may decide you want to work with local people face to face for that reason. This is a personal preference totally in your control. However, this book will focus more on outsourcing to virtual workers in remote locations, whether that be in your home country or overseas. There are many benefits to doing so, especially when it comes to ramping up your Digital Age ventures. These benefits will become apparent as you read on.

I have outsourced work to the Philippines and to the United States. The Philippines is a good alternative because they typically speak and write very good English. The obvious advantage of working with people overseas is the cost savings to you. At time of writing you can get a good full-time English-speaking General Virtual Assistant (GVA) in the Philippines for around \$500 per month. Paying them can be a simple matter of sending them cash via PayPal according to an agreed upon schedule.

Perhaps less well known is the incredible work ethic and skills you will find in overseas locations. The virtual marketplace is literally transforming lives in many countries. The workers there are highly motivated to acquire skills and do a great job. In many cases it is the one way they have to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. It used to be that the only option to improve their standard of living was to immigrate to another country and start over. The Digital Age provides an unprecedented opportunity to put everyone on an equal footing regardless of where they live.

My virtual assistant from the Philippines is among the most motivated and effective team members I have ever worked with. I learned things about his culture and how he and his family went around house to house helping neighbor's dig their way out of a typhoon that hit their area. I was able to relate in a personal way to the news stories about the devastation. Those were a few days that he couldn't work on my projects. He seemed to just disappear for a few days because they had lost Internet connectivity. However, this experience motivated me even more to give him a bonus at Christmas time. These are relationships that can have a big effect on your life and your view of the world.

Direct and Indirect Outsourcing

Your team doesn't necessarily have to be people you hire and pay directly. For example, if you write a book and only sell it through services like Amazon, they take care of the customer service for you. It is only if you choose to sell the book from your own website that you have to deal with customer service issues.

There are pros and cons to allowing a service like Amazon take care of it all for you. On the con side it means the people that buy your books are Amazon's customer, not your customer. You work hard to build a relationship with your readers, but it is Amazon that gets to tell them about similar books they may also like to buy, not you. You can get some of those readers back on *your team* by giving them a good enough reason to visit your website and join your email list. I'm sure you have noticed by now that I have been trying to give you lots of good reasons to join my email newsletter. To accomplish that I must spend a lot of time working on projects that provide value to you at no cost to you. This is referred to in the industry as list building. Even so, I know that many of you won't join my list, while Amazon gets 100% of the readers that buy this book from their site on their list.

On the other hand, Amazon can add tremendous value. They have an impressive ability to point people who have read other similar books to your book (or product if you are selling physical products on Amazon using their fulfillment services). If you are just starting out it would be unwise to ignore them and strike out completely on your own.

Which way you go depends on your situation, and it effects the type of outsourcing you choose. In the example above, direct outsourcing would be to pay a virtual assistant to handle your customer service issues. Indirect outsourcing would be to work with a service like Amazon and let them handle it.

Paying for Services not People

Amazon is an example of a marketplace or platform that includes certain services like customer relations as part of the package. However, there are also many specialized online services available that can help you out. They can eliminate some of your need to hire and manage virtual assistants, freelancers, or employees.

For example, services like Paypal can help you take payments from your customers without the need to setup your own merchant accounts or payment processing pages. With a Paypal business account you can send orders from your website to Paypal to process credit card payments from customers even if they do not have a Paypal account. I have used this approach on a couple of my websites. For now, just be aware that many of your needs can be handled by online services for a small fee. In this example, you don't need to pay anyone to setup the payment processing on your website. Just join PayPal and follow their instructions. We will cover other similar services in the upcoming Tools and Techniques section.

What Tasks Should You Outsource?

Consider outsourcing tasks you have no idea how to do and have no desire or time to do or learn. For example, building an e-commerce website or preparing your yearly tax return. These are the kinds of tasks that people will often outsource to others. Even if you are good at these things you may still want to outsource them. If you want to be a successful Digital Age entrepreneur and you are a good computer programmer, should you really be spending your days on computer programming tasks? It depends on personal preference, how much money you have to spend, and the speed with which you want to grow your business.

Also consider building virtual teams for repetitive tasks. For

example, if you have your own daily or weekly podcast you could outsource all of the repetitive work. Podcasts may require editing to remove awkward moments or add a fancy intro with music to the beginning of each episode. The finished product must then be uploaded to a podcast hosting service like Libsyn for download distribution to your listeners. Podcasts will typically have show notes with a summary of the podcast and any links that may have been mentioned in the podcast. You may want a summary of each episode complete with the show notes uploaded to your blog. There is work involved to find and schedule guests for your podcast. All of these things could be outsourced to a virtual assistant, so all you have to do is show up and start talking.

If your brand is a lot about who you are, there are certain things you probably shouldn't outsource. If you are writing a book, it probably makes sense to write it yourself. Others disagree. Lots of famous people get help writing their biographies for example. Best selling fiction author James Patterson has a team of co-writers and publishes many books every year. He has fans that read everything he produces. He has more than enough positive cash flow in his business to support a writing team to help him achieve his vision for each book, while he oversees and directs their creation. For a first time author this probably wouldn't make sense. What tasks should be outsourced depends a lot on personal preference and where you are at in your journey.

There isn't much that you couldn't pay someone to do for you. The question is should you? When it comes to managing your projects day to day, you should probably do that yourself, at least in the beginning. However, as things progress you may be able to outsource this to a trusted virtual assistant that reports back to you on a regular basis. So there really are no definitive answers to what you should outsource. However, the sooner you do so in the situations where it makes sense for you, the sooner you will begin to leverage your time far beyond the number of hours you have in a day.

Digging Deeper to Find Things to Outsource

A good way to dig deeper into finding things to outsource is to record every little thing you do for a full week along with how long each one takes. Include things you can think of that you

do every year or every month, but may not do in that particular week. They don't necessarily have to be related to your business. You can outsource tasks from your personal life. This will give you more time to work on your business. For example, you could outsource your gift shopping for a celebration like Christmas to a virtual assistant. They could do all the research to come up with the perfect gift for everyone on your list, complete with a link to the cheapest place to buy it online. Their research would be based on criteria you provide. For example: "I need a gift for a six year old boy that loves animals."

Review all the tasks you wrote down after the week is over. Ask yourself some hard questions about each one. Is it really the best use of your time? Could someone do it better than you? If someone else can do some of your current tasks, and that allows you to work on the more strategic aspects of your profitable business, then by all means fire yourself and get someone else to do those tasks. In many cases they will be able to do them better than you, which is a hard thing for most of us to accept at first. This is especially true when it comes to maintaining existing profitable passive income streams. Things like customer service if you have a product you sell. Things like promoting your product or service or website. Things like managing your social media presence. There is an entire industry of virtual assistants that specialize in these types of things. The more you can delegate those tasks to others, the more time you have to work on developing your next passive income stream.

Outsource Tasks or Build Virtual Teams?

You may decide to outsource individual tasks one at a time. You may decide to build a full or part time team to work with you on a daily basis. This depends on the stage you are at with your business, and how much work you have to outsource. The next sections on Outsourcing Tasks (7.2) and Virtual Teams (7.3) will cover these options in more detail.

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

7.2. Outsourcing Tasks (Team Build)

Earlier in this book we discussed the different Income Stream Classes. Advantages and disadvantages were presented for each income stream class. Consulting or contract work was presented as one of the income stream classes for you to consider in order to diversify your income stream portfolio. You were directed to services listed at **PurrPassiveIncome.com/freelance** to find clients for your freelance work.

Now those same services are places you can go to find people to help you complete your tasks. In fact, being a *job poster* has much more upside than being a *job bidder*. For example, with the right idea you can get someone to build a unique website for you relatively cheaply. You can then use it to generate passive income and perhaps sell it for a tidy profit eventually. The freelance services listed at **PurrPassiveIncome.com/freelance** deal with thousands of jobs every month, and have freelancers with every imaginable skill. I have found some very good freelancers this way. There are some tremendous advantages to posting jobs on the good freelancer sites, compared to just finding someone on your own or through a classified ads site. We will explore some of those advantages now.

Benefit from Competition and Transparency

With the well established freelance sites you can expect many people to bid on your jobs. You benefit from the competitive bidding these sites offer. The good sites are also completely transparent. That means you can see details of other jobs the freelancers have worked on, including reviews they have received and an overall rating of their past performance. Many freelancers will post examples of their previous work for you to review. The transparency also works in your favor because the freelancer knows you will be allowed to leave a review on their profile after they finish your job. One poor review can destroy their business. They are highly motivated to do whatever it takes to make you happy. Reviews are so important that freelancers that are just starting out will sometimes bid very low just to start getting jobs and good reviews attached to their profiles. You can get some excellent deals if you are willing to give someone new a chance to prove themselves. On the other

hand, if you want someone with an excellent track record you will usually have to pay more. You can also see what country the freelancer comes from. If you want only US or Canadian or UK freelancers, or only freelancers with a particular language as their first language, you can make those choices.

Posting Your Job

First of all, look at jobs posted on the freelance sites that are similar to what you are interested in. This will give you a good idea about the kinds of things to include in your job postings. Include as many details as you can think of to make sure what you are looking for is very clear to freelancers that are thinking about bidding on your job. A good strategy is to ask a specific question near the bottom of your job description. People that answer that question in their bids are the ones that took the time to read your entire job posting. Those that don't are probably just bidding on hundreds of jobs without reading them. Including a question in your job posting is a good way to shortlist the responses to only the ones that are serious about wanting to work with you.

Choosing the Right Candidate

If you used the "ask a question" technique described above you already have a pretty good shortlist. Reviewing their bid price, profiles, reviews, and previous work will help you narrow it down more. Choosing the cheapest freelancer is not always the best way to go. This can depend on how much you can afford. If you are looking for the absolute best person to do a large job for you, consider posting a smaller job first, and hire more than one person to do it.

This way you can compare their results side by side to get a feeling for how it would be to work with them on a larger job. When you post your larger job later, you will have the ability to invite freelancers you have previous experience with to bid on it. The good freelance services will also allow you to message the freelancers before you make your decision, so you have a chance to ask them more questions about their skills and experience. These are the kinds of tools that are built-in to good freelancer sites to help you choose a freelancer that is best for you.

Paying the Freelancer

The good freelance sites have built-in escrow services to handle paying the freelancer for you after you are satisfied with their work. You will often have to pay a certain percentage up front to get the freelancer to begin working on your project. This could be quite risky if you were working with someone from a classified ads site because there is very little accountability in those situations. With a good freelancer site the chances of someone skipping off with your money and not doing the work is unlikely.

Again, it would destroy their business if they did that. You also have someone on your side in case anything goes wrong. In cases of a dispute you can open a case with the freelance site and they will arbitrate the dispute to find a fair resolution. In short, all precautions you should be taking when it comes to payments are built into the service. In most cases it is a simple matter of paying the freelance service, who in turn pays the freelancer once you are satisfied with the work.

You can find a list of good freelance sites, including the one I have the most experience with here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/freelance

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

7.3. Build a Virtual Team (Team Build)

Have you identified many tasks or repetitive tasks that you need help with? Then it is time to consider building your own full or part time virtual team. Posting all of this work as individual tasks to the freelance sites would probably not make sense. Much better to hire people that you can develop a relationship with. People that come to understand your needs very well. People that you may come to trust as much or perhaps even more than your own family!

Finding Virtual Assistants - Downsides of Freelancer Sites

Can you find virtual assistants from the freelancer sites? Certainly there are lots of very high quality people there. You may even have developed a relationship with some of them if they worked on your individual tasks leading up to this point. However, there are some downsides to going this route. Freelancer sites can have exclusivity periods of up to 24 months in my experience. This means by using their service to find a freelancer you are promising to pay them their fees to work with that freelancer for 24 months. They get a percentage of every dollar you pay the freelancer. Buying your way out of this obligation can cost thousands of dollars. The other downside is the freelancers often make their living from the freelancer sites. They will be taking on projects for other people at the same time as they work on your projects. They aren't typically in a position to become fully dedicated members of your team. They won't necessarily be able to respond to your needs on short notice. None of these things are serious drawbacks when you are looking for people to do one-time tasks for you. However, when you want team members to work with you on a daily basis for an extended period of time, there are better options.

Classified Ads Sites

In the last section I listed reasons why these sites can be risky when compared to all the benefits of the freelancer sites. That is all true when outsourcing one-time tasks. However, there are other things to consider when you are looking for long-term virtual assistants. For one thing, it would be nice if you didn't have to pay a fee to a 3rd party service every time you pay

your Virtual Assistant (VA). For long term contracts these fees can really add up. With classified ad sites you don't pay anything other than what you negotiate with your VA. Another thing to consider is you can give your VA a couple of small tasks to see if they are any good. Make it clear these tasks could lead to long term work on your team. You could even mention you will be trying out several VA's to see which one you like the best. This gives them added incentive to do a good job for you, which may not be there if you were just giving them a single one-time task. I used a classified ads site to get my VA from the Philippines that I mentioned earlier. I found him on the Philippines version of Craigslist. Then I used some of the techniques in the upcoming Train and Manage section (7.4) to help him become an effective member of my team. Besides Craigslist, another good site to get help with your blog is Jobs.Problogger.Net.

Virtual Staff Finder Services

These are services that charge a one-time fee to help you find a virtual assistant that fits your needs. They will typically conduct background checks and interviews on your behalf. They may setup online testing to evaluate the skills of the applicants. After they present you with some alternatives they may setup some Skype sessions so you can interview the candidates yourself. The advantage here is once you find the perfect VA they work for you directly. You don't pay ongoing fees. The end result is similar to using classified ads sites. The difference is you are paying someone to help you find the perfect candidate for your needs. They typically know certain markets like the Philippines very well. They will have guidelines to help you understand how much you should be paying and so on. You can find more details on Virtual Staff Finder services here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/virtual

VA Temp Agencies

Some virtual assistant services are essentially temp agencies. They are renting out some of their own employees to you. These employees work for the agency, not for you. Their success is not necessarily tied to your success. If your business fails they will be assigned to another account typically without any interruption to their paychecks. It is unlikely you will

develop the same kind of close relationship with them as you would if you took the time to find your own dedicated resources. There can be some advantages to this type of relationship. Like if one person becomes unavailable they may be able to quickly assign someone new to your account. This can save you time and inconvenience if one of your VAs moves on. I have personally never gone this route, but it may fit your circumstances.

Types of Virtual Assistants

Just as you and I can't do everything well, don't expect to find a single VA that can do everything. To a certain extent you can train them to do specific tasks for you. However, bear in mind that certain specialized tasks may require a specialized VA. Although you could break this down into many categories, at a high level you can think about VA's as being either General or Specialized:

General VA - a general VA or GVA can do pretty much anything that you can explain clearly and can be learned fairly easily. They can do all kinds of administrative tasks and will often have some experience with more specialized tasks. For example, they may be able to manage content additions to your blog and they may have some basic graphic design experience. However, don't expect them to be able to build complex websites or design professional book covers or marketing campaigns. Don't expect them to do your accounting work or provide legal advice. However, a good GVA could eventually help you to manage your projects and assign tasks from your PURR Hopper to other virtual assistants.

Specialized VA - as the name implies a specialized VA specializes in a particular area. They may be able to build complex websites or they may be experts in managing multiple social media channels to promote your business. Perhaps they have lots of experience organizing successful product launches or in running a top notch customer service center. You will spend less time explaining how to do things, they already know how. You just need to be clear about what you want. Expect to pay more for a specialized virtual assistant.

Start to think in terms of hiring people for roles rather than tasks. Think about writing job descriptions you want filled

rather than a list of specific tasks you have in mind at the moment. You could start out with a GVA that helps you with some basic organizational or research tasks. Then as your business grows you may take on another GVA. Then perhaps one or more specialized VAs to act in specific roles you define for your business. A good rule of thumb is to not plan too far ahead. Bring on more VAs when you have a clear role to fill. They don't all have to be long-term hires. Some can be just for a particular phase of your project. If the first GVA you hire is very good and becomes a trusted part of your business, they can help you manage the VAs you bring in and out as needed.

I will maintain a page on my blog that lists various options for finding VAs to work with you in your business:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/virtual

I will update it from time to time as I learn more about the various services that are out there. I will include at least one good Virtual Staff Finder service I know of that comes highly recommended.

As you can probably guess from previous chapters in this book on MVP (Minimum Viable Plan), that page does not exist on my blog yet as I write these words! You may be thinking why don't I hire a VA to create that page for me? Two reasons. One is I don't know yet if anyone will ever read this book. I like to fund VAs from cash flow as much as possible. Two is I have created lots of websites and adding a page won't take me long when the time comes, and I like having control over the process. However, if things take off I may have to give up some control and let others do this kind of work for me. Again, the right timing to bring on VAs is a personal preference and can depend on many factors. Only you can decide when it is right for you!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

7.4. Train and Manage (Team Build)

So you have yourself a VA or three. Time to sit on the beach and sip pina coladas, right? Not so fast. You still need to come up with things for your VA team to work on to achieve your Vision. You still need to take responsibility for the direction of your business. You need to train and manage your team to get the results you are looking for. This isn't about outsourcing absolutely everything. Having a remote workforce requires some Project Management skills like those you have been learning here. Done correctly this is about multiplying your efforts far beyond what you could achieve by yourself, and maybe working a bit less yourself in the bargain.

For example, after you have it all up and running you can continue to make money while going on longer vacations. You may just check in on your business once in awhile to see how things are going. I have logged in to check on my passive income streams from as far afield as China. No matter where you are, you can check in with your team (and your tribe) from a laptop, tablet, or smart phone. Before having the freedom to do all that, you will need to train your team and setup your systems to work on things while you are away.

VA Training

Training your VA to do tasks according to your specifications could be as simple as crafting detailed email messages. You may also want to consider some of the ways outlined below that involve software tools. However you choose to communicate, it is important to understand you will only get back what you want if you are clear about what you want.

Let's go back to our earlier example of having your VA do your holiday gift shopping. One of the items we identified was: *"I need a gift for a six year old boy that loves animals."* If that is all you tell your VA you may get back the name of one toy as a suggestion. If what you really want is in-depth research on product safety with product options and comparison price shopping you may be disappointed and feel your VA isn't very good. However, the real problem is you didn't train them to understand the job you wanted done. Of all the excellent qualities a good VA can have, mind reading isn't usually one of them!

A more complete description of what you want may look something like this:

1. Five gift ideas for each person on the list with three of them priced between \$50 and \$100. Organize in a spreadsheet. (To be very clear you may want to provide the spreadsheet program and format you want them to use.)
2. Three links to competing e-commerce sales pages for each gift idea. Indicate the lowest price option by making that link green. Where possible make sure at least one link is to a Canadian .ca site so I can avoid border delays and extra charges (if you live in Canada for example).
3. Links to consumer reports and un-biased reviews for each gift idea.

How much more likely are you to get great results from your VA now? It doesn't take that long to be super clear about what you are looking for. Compare that to the many hours of research it will take your VA to come up with the results. Compare that to the results you may have got in previous years where you were busy and rushed through it all yourself. Your family and friends may see you going from zero to hero in the gift buying department, all with less effort on your part than ever before! Imagine how many projects of this size you could get done each and every month by a GVA that costs you just \$500 per month (the Philippine GVA example mentioned earlier). The time you would have spent on these projects can now be redirected to your money making Digital Age ventures.

How much you need to train your VA of course depends on their experience. If you specifically hired someone that has experience with Zendesk to manage your customer service, you shouldn't have to train them on how to use ZenDesk. Or if they do need some training you may not have to provide that training yourself. Services like Zendesk and many others provide lots of training that your VA can access. You just need to make sure they know about it and make it clear what training you expect them to complete.

Using Technology to Train Your VA

A great way to train your VA to do specific tasks in the Digital Age is to create screen capture images and videos. For images I have used various graphics packages and screen capture software like SnagIt. For videos I have used Camtasia Studio. I uploaded the videos to a private page on one of my websites and sent the link to my VA. You wouldn't need your own website. You can upload video to your private Youtube channel or upload it to a service like Dropbox. Nowadays there are completely free online services that will let you create and share screen capture videos. For the latest on what is available, with an emphasis on free alternatives, visit our software page:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/software

Last but not least don't forget you can talk to your VA directly! Live video calling is made easy and completely free in the Digital Age with services like Skype. With the right calling plan you can even consider using the telephone. I know in the Digital Age there is a tendency to want to manage everything from your computer. This works well in most cases, but old fashioned voice to voice contact can still be very effective for many things!

VA Management

Every good project management plan includes a communication plan. You need to plan your communications to build an effective and highly motivated team. How will your team members know what they should be doing and what they should be doing next? How will they report their progress back to you? How often will you check in with them personally over and above routine progress reports?

Answering these questions before you conduct a single interview with a prospective team member will set you up for a successful and productive relationship with your team. For example, here is how I setup my communications with my VA from the Philippines that worked on my investment sites:

1. I sent him emails to describe the daily tasks.
2. The first thing he did when starting work each day was send

me an email to say he was starting work, along with what he planned to accomplish that day.

3. Upon completion every day he would send me an email outlining what he accomplished, complete with links to areas of my blog and user forums that he had contributed to as the forum moderator.

4. Every 2 weeks he would send me an invoice with a summary of his hours worked and tasks completed each day. (I was paying him by the hour since I didn't have enough work to keep him busy full time.)

5. I paid him via Paypal and sent him an email after each payment to make sure he received it (even though Paypal would have notified him also).

This approach worked well for the situation we were in. I used a similar approach with some VAs from the US, where they were writing unique articles for some of my other blogs. We never did get together on Skype, although that would have been a good idea. I think a weekly or bi-weekly Skype call would go far in building the relationship, especially if you are taking on full-time long-term virtual assistants.

Lately I have been working with various online project management tools to manage teams in my professional career (my current day job). These are getting better and better every day. For a listing of the latest tools I like please visit the software page:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/software

As with everything else you will be doing to reboot your life and livelihood, you may not get it all right the first time. Team building is no different. Try some things and see what works for you!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

8. Measure

"We cannot change what we are not aware of, and once we are aware, we cannot help but change." - **Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook**

"What gets measured gets done, what gets measured and fed back gets done well." - **John E. Jones**

Getting Out of Prison

Imagine you are in a prison trying to tunnel your way out to freedom. You know how far it is from your prison cell to the forest beyond the fence. How long will it take you to get there? There is only one way to know. You have to measure your progress and compare it to how far you have to go. Without even thinking about it you would immediately develop metrics in your head to figure it out. One metric might be inches or centimeters per day. Your rate of progress metric. You might set a goal of 1 inch of tunnel dug per day. Another metric might be % complete. You might set a milestone of 50% complete and celebrate on the day you achieve it by taking a night off from digging.

Maybe the prison is your current life. You want to escape. Nobody is guarding the prison doors, but the way out is complicated. You need to do some planning. You need to have a Vision for where you will be when you *get out*. You want to make sure you don't tunnel from one prison to another one. Like quitting a hated job then feeling like a slave to a new business that brings you no joy.

Metrics to the Rescue

The Measure step is only meaningful when you combine it with the other steps in the PURR Power Wheel™. It is only useful if you develop the right metrics that support the right Vision and the right Plan. It should also take into account managing your risk, the investments you make in yourself and so on around the PURR Power Wheel™.

We first started discussing your success metrics way back in the Vision section. Success Metrics are part of the Vision section because your Vision should include your definition of

success. Your success metrics help you define that. You may want to revisit chapter 1.4 now to refresh your memory about metrics. You should have already thought about the metrics for your project when you get to this point in the wheel. If not, take some time to develop them now. Re-read chapter 1.4 in the **PURR Power Wheel™** section if you need to. You can also add to or modify your success metrics as your project progresses. The point of this section is to make sure you take the time in every Spin to measure and track them. You need to know if you are making progress or not.

Spin Review Revisited

The time to do this is at the Spin Review control point we discussed in the Manage section. Ideally that happens a couple of days before the end of each Spin. You can also track your metrics everyday if you want to. However, it is during the Spin Review in every Spin that you evaluate if your metrics warrant continuing the project, or a course correction, or a complete reboot of your direction. It is important enough to warrant its own place on the PURR Power Wheel™ (it is Step 8 on the wheel). This ensures it will be a focus of your attention at least once per Spin.

Tracking Your Progress with Metrics

Progress tracking with metrics is a simple matter of calculating your metrics and recording them from time to time. This allows you to see your progress. Create a simple table with your metrics listed horizontally and the review dates listed vertically. Here is a simple format for tracking metrics:

Tracking Success Metrics

DATE	METRIC 1 (actual)	METRIC 1 (target)	METRIC 2 (actual)	METRIC 2 (target)
2015-09-02	value	value	value	value
2015-09-30	value	value	value	value
2015-10-28	value	value	value	value

If you do this using spreadsheet software you can easily graph

the results to see your progress over time. If not, you can do your graphs the old fashioned way with pencil and paper, or just view the results in the table to get a feeling for how you are progressing.

Beyond success metrics, here are some other important things to measure and document:

1. Project schedule compared to the milestone dates you developed earlier.
2. Project costs compared to your budget projections.
3. Project scope compared to what you planned in the beginning.
4. Project risks compared to what you identified in your Risk Log.
5. Benefits realized and lessons learned so far.

You should also *measure* how things are feeling as best you can. Are you getting closer to the Vision you defined in the Vision chapter? Does that Vision still make sense based on what you know now? Can you think of a better one? Can you expand on the one you have now to make it bigger and better? Can you think of smart ways to achieve your Vision faster? Do you need help to get there? Is the time right to build a team?

You can also take some time to review recently completed SMART PURR Tasks. Did the tasks accomplish what you intended? Do you need to refine them or break them down into smaller tasks? Can you identify additional tasks at this point?

List any and all variances from what you had planned. What corrective actions can you take to get things back on track? If you don't see steady growth and good progress over time, start thinking about making some changes to your approach.

Definition of Success

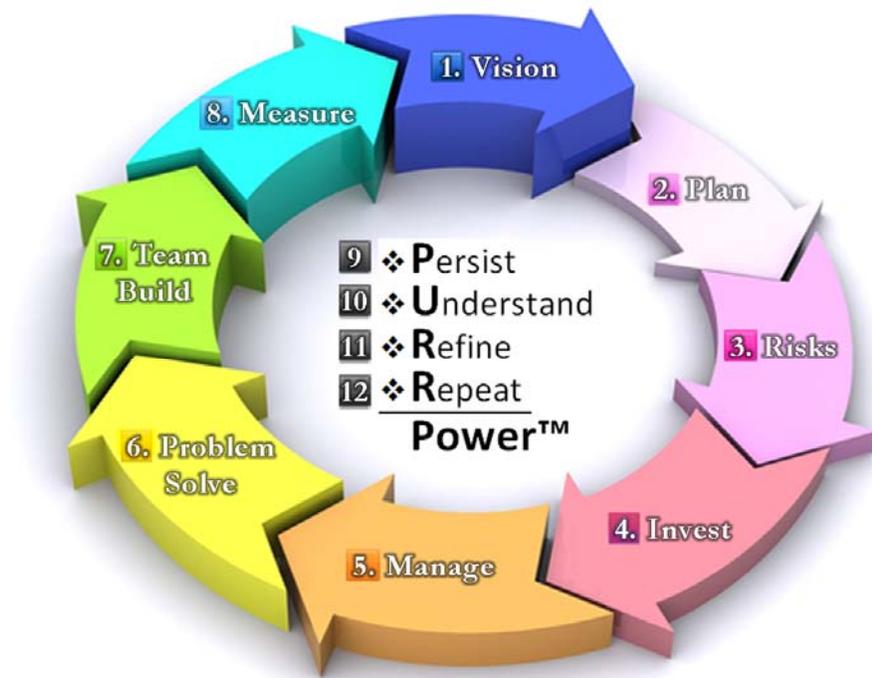
I have talked a bit about success in this book, but what is it really? In the context of the **PURR Passive Income Power™ System**, success is the attainment of your Vision as defined by

the specific goals and metrics you developed for yourself. The Measure step is where you find out if you are succeeding or not. If you are not succeeding, Refine your strategy and Spin the wheel again. If you do succeed, think even bigger and Spin the wheel again.

Think of the PURR Power Wheel™ as the wheel of life. You go around and around and make improvements every time. Then when you get to the end of your life you will have a sense of a life well lived, rather than a sense of *running out of time*.

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

9. Persist



"Whatever you want in life, other people are going to want it too. Believe in yourself enough to accept the idea that you have an equal right to it." - Diane Sawyer

Congratulations. You've made it through the first 8 Steps in the PURR Power Wheel™! The first 8 Steps are represented in the arrows on the wheel. Now you are moving into the center of the wheel for the remaining Steps. The first of those is **Persist**. Let's get started.

Persistence in Children

What would you tell a small child that fell down while trying to learn how to walk? How about this:

"Walking is really hard. Crawling works pretty well. By starting low down on the floor you will never hurt yourself by falling. You can even get up and down stairs by crawling. And you are

good at it. Better to stick to what you are good at. I think you should forget about this whole walking thing."

Would you ever give that kind of advice to your child? I hope not. If you took that kind of approach with a child it may not be long before the social workers were knocking on your door. Children need to be taught persistence. They need to learn the only way to get good at something is to never give up. The correct advice for a child learning how to walk is universally understood by all:

"Good try, you almost did it! Let's try again!"

Persistence in Adults

Now compare that with what you tell yourself in difficult situations. Do you end up convincing yourself that crawling isn't so bad after all? Or do you keep trying until you succeed? Just like walking, the things that seem impossible in the beginning become part of a skill set you take for granted later. Everything is easy when you know how. If you don't know how, it isn't easy. You need to be persistent!

Persistence in Sports

The world of Sports has lots of great examples of persistence. Sports is the ultimate in reality television. You can follow the participants through their entire careers and beyond. You can learn some great lessons about what works and what doesn't over a lifetime of effort.

Take the pro golfer Phil Mickelson as an example. He came in second place at major tournaments for years before he ever won. Some people said he didn't have what it takes to be a winner. I remember watching Phil during those years and feeling bad for the guy. He seemed like such a nice guy, but he would never win.

Much more important than what I thought about the situation is what Phil thought. He would always go in to the post tournament media interviews with a positive attitude. When asked how it felt to lose once again he would point out that he beat everyone out there except one guy. He felt pretty good about that. He said he would learn from this and expected to

win plenty of majors in his career. If you know anything about golf, you know Phil won a lot of majors.

Overnight Success?

Just like Phil, very few successful people became successful overnight. They say to be the best at anything you need to do it for 10,000 hours. Olympic gold medalists have typically spent at least that amount of time practicing. The thing is you don't need to be the best at something to make a good living from it. Especially if you work on *connection ideas* like we discussed in the Vision chapter. But you do need to be persistent and put in your time. You will make mistakes. You will fall down sometimes before you learn to walk and then to run. We all do.

Make Mistakes

The important thing is not to be afraid of making mistakes. I know I will make some mistakes when I launch this book. In the self-publishing community there are competing strategies for how to go about it. I am already thinking about my second and third book. Probably shorter books that take less time to write than this one. I plan to learn from mistakes I haven't made yet to do a better job on my next books. The only way I can learn is to try. You can only read so much about how to do things. Eventually you have to try it yourself and see. The sooner the better. You will always get another chance to do it better next time. Even with all the mistakes you are likely to make, you will still be light years ahead of where you would be if you did nothing!

In my case I can say I have fallen down a lot, even after I learned how to walk! I have also had what I often think of as small successes. I keep trying, and those small successes add up to a decent living. I enjoy my life and have a great home life. So on that level you could argue that overall this is success. But I have never hit what I would consider to be a *home run*, and I would like to. So I keep trying.

Young or Old - It Doesn't Matter!

I am 54 years old as I write these words. I take heart in the many stories of famous people that found great success later in life. Nelson Mandela became South Africa's oldest president at

74, after a lifelong struggle including prison time. Charles Darwin wrote the "Origin of Species" when he was 50. Julia Child started writing her cookbooks at 49. Harlan (Colonel) Sanders started Kentucky Fried Chicken in his 60's. Ray Kroc started MacDonald's in his 50's. Laura Ingalls Wilder was 65 when she wrote *Little House on the Prairie*. Frank McCourt wrote *Angela's Ashes* when he was 66 (and won the Pulitzer Prize). Since we have been talking about Super Heroes in this book, let's not forget Stan Lee. He started the Marvel Universe of super heroes like Spiderman and the Fantastic Four when he was 44.

There are lots of good reasons to persist at any age. We shouldn't forget the many wonder kids who had amazing success at a young age. Like Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook. His success didn't happen overnight either. There were plenty of growing pains along the way, but he got through them at a young age. I heard the story of Mark Messick the other day. A 16 year old that has been a published author for years already. He gets a lot of things done everyday, so he is now writing about productivity. At times he kept his age secret because he didn't think people would take him seriously. He is a good writer and makes some pretty good money doing it. It turns out people do take him seriously. His young age actually opens certain doors for him now when promoting his business that would be more difficult to open later in life. People have an innate tendency to want to help young people with big ideas. *Clearly age is not a barrier to entry or success in the Digital Age, whether you are young or old!*

Beyond Persistence

"Never let your persistence and passion turn into stubbornness and ignorance." - **Anthony J. D'Angelo**

This section is about persistence. However, keep in mind that **Persist** is only the first part of the PURR acronym we have been discussing throughout this book.

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat

Unlike other books, I am not going to say that persistence trumps all. I believe persistence alone can cause you to stubbornly hang on to things long after it makes sense to do so.

Like hanging on for dear life to a job or livelihood in a dying industry.

Instead, I believe that **PURR** trumps all. You need to persist, but you also need to follow a system with built-in processes and control points that allow you to better understand what is really going on. To be on constant lookout for new doors that are opening for you. To walk through those open doors to find out what is on the other side. Then based on that understanding Refine your approach. Repeat these steps in an iterative cycle to Spin your way to higher and higher levels. In short, use an iterative strategy like the PURR Power Wheel™ presented in this book!

Feed Your PURR Muscle

As you practice the steps in the wheel you will be developing your PURR muscle. Just like the muscles in your body, it takes effort to develop your PURR muscle. The nature of that effort is defined in this book. Just like the physical exercise you must do to maintain a healthy body and strong muscles. The PURR Passive Income Power™ system outlines the mental exercises you must do to maintain your PURR muscle.

Persistence is a very important part of the equation. However, consider applying that persistence to growing your PURR muscle. Unlike being persistent at a single thing that may not be the optimum path for you, persistently developing your PURR muscle implies optimizing your path every step of the way.

What Not To Do

This book goes into great detail on what to do to develop your PURR muscle. It goes into far less detail on what not to do. For the most part you already know what is on your "not to do" list. It can vary from person to person. It comes down to certain natural impulses that would give satisfaction to your present self at the expense of your future self. Like going out partying on a Friday night and lazing around the house for the rest of the weekend. Like losing your temper with people you need to work with to meet your objectives. Like focusing too much on taking credit at the expense of team harmony and results. Like jumping around from idea to idea without giving any of them a

real chance of succeeding. Like talking big and producing small. Or thinking small when you are capable of more. Think about what impulses you could gain more control over. Think about it in terms of strengthening your PURR muscle in order to achieve your life Vision!

Be persistent. Feed your PURR muscle. Starve your impulses!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

10. Understand

"Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." - Winston Churchill

What lessons have you learned from your most recent Spin? Remember, the Understand Step is located in the center of the PURR Power Wheel™. It comes up as part of every Spin and should be kept in mind during all of the other steps as well. Think about what you learn along the way and start writing it down in a *Lessons Learned* document. This is a key part of making intelligent course corrections. Strategies that worked for others may not work for you. You may learn something new that could lead to an even better strategy. Writing all this down can stimulate your mind to see things you wouldn't see otherwise. Your lessons learned could lead to a completely new idea or strategy.

At a minimum you do this as part of the Spin Review control point we discussed in the Manage chapter (5.2), a couple of days before the end of each Spin. Here is a recap of the Understand portion of the Spin Review:

Spin lessons learned. Review the last Spin and record what went right and what could have been improved on through better planning, more resources, more knowledge and skill etc. If you have stakeholders or advisers on the project besides yourself, give them a demo or presentation summarizing your accomplishments in the last Spin. Record their feedback and consider it for your next Spin.

Full wheel review. Review and update all the outputs you produced previously from other Steps in the PURR Power Wheel™. For example, an output to the Risks section (Step 3) is the Risk Log. Don't forget the outputs from your Vision exercises. Things that may have seemed impossible before may seem possible now. You may come up with some completely new ideas and perhaps even a new Vision at this stage. All those previous outputs are inputs to the Spin Review process. Make adjustments as necessary now that you know more. These adjustments should be reflected in the tasks you select for your next Spin. Intelligent course corrections can only happen when you review your original course on a regular basis, and apply your new Understanding!

Your world is only as big as your understanding of it. Work at making connections in your mind to integrate seemingly separate ideas into a deeper Understanding. Some of the most successful people in the world are simply good at making connections that nobody else sees. Steve Jobs connected the idea of computer fonts with lessons he learned in a college calligraphy class. Nobody had ever done that before. You need to Understand some things to make connections like that, and turn them into something useful for the world. Never cease to strive for a greater understanding of the world around you, especially as it relates to your Digital Age ventures!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

11. Refine

"The whole of science is nothing more than a refinement of everyday thinking." - Albert Einstein

Small Refinements

Refinements can be big or small. Even small refinements can have a big impact. My earlier example of switching from MS Word to Scrivener to write this book is one example of that. It is an example of a small refinement because it doesn't change anything fundamental about my Vision or Purpose or overall strategy. However, it does change my day to day experience of writing this book and makes me more organized and productive.

Another example of small refinements is the a/b split testing process we discussed earlier in the Problem Solve section (section VII chapter 6.2). This is the way to continuously improve your landing pages, ads, lead magnets and more.

Large Refinements

Larger refinements will change aspects of your overall strategy and daily activities. They may or may not change aspects of your ultimate Vision and Purpose as you defined them for yourself back in chapter 1.3. In Silicon Valley this is referred to as a **pivot**. You start out doing one thing. It fails or has limited success, so you change things up and leverage what you already have to do something else. That is a pivot. It is about learning from recent history to make sure your next move is always better than your last move.

A Famous Refinement

Perhaps the most famous pivot of all time was Twitter. It started off as a podcasting company called Odeo. It was 2006 and the time was not quite right for podcasting to take off. Or perhaps they just weren't positioned to do well in that space. The story goes that an all day brainstorming session led them to the idea of Twitter. They went from failing at one thing to succeeding in such a massive way that I don't need to waste words here explaining to you what Twitter is. You already know. Unless you are reading this 100 years from now and

Twitter no longer exists. In that case check your history books, or whatever you have by then that has replaced books. Trust me, it was big.

Pivot Culture

Twitter is far from the only story of a successful pivot. Silicon Valley is so full of them that the pivot has become part of the startup culture. It recognizes the fact that nobody really knows what will work and what won't. It recognizes that finding out if something will work or not is quicker and easier than ever before. The Digital Age provides all the analytical tools you need. For example, Google Analytics is the free tool we discussed earlier that you can install on your blog to track what people are interested in and what they could care less about.

The pivot completely changes the game away from achieving goals at any cost. It evolves us into developing systems that can be adapted to take you in directions you could never have predicted when you started out. PURR Passive Income Power™ is just such an adaptive system. The PURR success metrics you developed for your project are the keys to understanding when it is time to pivot, and when it is time to stay the course.

Spin Review & Problem Solving Techniques Revisited

The Spin Review is the time to consider potential pivots. Chapter 5.2 in section VII described this process in detail. Also, don't forget to consider all of the techniques described thus far to help you decide if you need to pivot or not. For example, the Problem Solving step (section VII chapter 6) contains techniques like brainstorming to get to the bottom of problems and potential solutions. The solutions you come up with may involve a pivot of some kind.

Odeo used brainstorming to understand and develop their Twitter pivot idea. Brainstorming is just one of the techniques listed in our Problem Solving Techniques chapter (6.2). Review that section now and think about ways to analyze your current situation with potential pivots in mind. In this context *goal oriented* can be seen as stubbornly ignoring the evidence. Take the time to really Understand what all your success metric data and other lessons learned mean. Your goals can be changed when and if it makes sense to do so. Think focus balanced with

flexibility. This is an important key to succeeding in the Digital Age.

Pivot & Scope

Thinking back to the Project Management Triangle, a pivot is really just another name for changing the scope of your project. Completely changing the direction of your business like Odeo did with Twitter is a big pivot that completely changed the scope of the project they were working on. On the other hand, understanding that a particular form of advertising will never be profitable for your existing product or service can lead to a smaller refinement or change in scope.

For example, if you have been trying for months to make your Google Adwords campaigns profitable, it may be time to Refine your marketing strategy. Would Facebook ads work better? Do you need to start looking into advanced techniques like re-targeting? How about creating an affiliate program and letting your affiliates figure out how to reach your customer, while you just focus on creating a good product? Would going directly to where your prospective customers hangout and becoming part of those communities work better? For example, if you sell saltwater aquariums, are there Facebook groups or other free forums where saltwater aquarium enthusiasts hangout? Why not go there and become part of the conversation? The upcoming Tools and Techniques section will expand on these ideas. The time is coming for you to become fully fluent in Digital Age techniques!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

12. Repeat

"Any idea, plan, or purpose may be placed in the mind through repetition of thought." - **Napoleon Hill**

The Wheel

Repetition can apply to various levels of your journey. From the **PURR Power Wheel™** perspective, you will continue Spinning the wheel and repeating the Steps outlined in the wheel for each Spin. This will help you to manage your projects effectively and clarify your Vision, Purpose and Plan. Your mind will become laser focused on making progress in ways that make sense for you.

Thoughts

As the quote at the top of this chapter suggests, repetition of thought is an important aspect of succeeding at anything. Repeat low quality thoughts in your mind and you will get low quality results. Repeat powerful thoughts like the ones being suggested throughout this book, and get powerful results. Where your mind goes your body will follow! To change your outer world you must first change the inner world of your everyday thoughts.

Tactics

You will discover tactics along the way that work for you. Find ways to repeat them. Like if you are getting good results from creating 3 blog posts or 3 podcast episodes per week, then keep repeating that every week. Repetitive tactics are generally great candidates for outsourcing. By outsourcing all or part of those successful repetitive tactics you can spend more of your time creating your next income stream.

Income Streams

After you create one good income stream, repeat the process to create another one. Each income stream will of course have some unique elements to it. However, when it comes to things like product creation and tactics for marketing those products, you will find there are specific elements of the process you can repeat. More generally, the Steps in the PURR Power Wheel™

can certainly be repeated as a means to develop your next income stream. Every time you go through the process it will be a little bit easier because you will get better at repeating the basic steps in ways that work for you. The upcoming Tools and Techniques section will get you started with some more specific things you can get good at and repeatedly apply to generating multiple income streams. Any mistakes you make along the way will contribute to your ability to do it better the next time around!

Habits

"We are what we repeatedly do, excellence then is not an act, but a habit." - **Aristotle**

Yet another level of repetition falls under the category of good habits. Like if you find you are most productive between 6 and 8 a.m. in the mornings, repeat the habit of getting up to work at that time, day to day and project to project. Like if eating a very light meal in the evenings makes you more alert in the mornings. Or if exercising in the late afternoon gives you more energy to work in the evenings. Whatever good habits you develop when making one project successful, repeat them on the next project.

Repetition = Success

Many of the most successful people in the world got that way by constant repetition. A great golfer practices their swing hundreds of thousands of times to become great. Football players talk about practice as *taking their reps*. They learn from each repetition to build on what works, and discard what doesn't. In the same way, as you get more experience managing projects you will want to repeat what works on your next project, and discard what doesn't.

Is Repetition Boring?

Some people feel repetition is boring. In some cases it certainly is. From a Flow perspective, some repetitive tasks become too easy for you, so you find them boring. The solution? Outsource it if you find it boring! On the other hand, some repetitive tasks can put you into Flow. Like if you enjoy playing the piano, chances are you enjoy the repetition required to master a piece

of music on the piano. In the same way, some repetitive tasks in business can be enjoyable. Like when I was making \$13,000 per month running Adwords campaigns. Much of that work was repetitive, but the fact that I needed to adapt and be somewhat creative with each repetition made it enjoyable. The good results I was getting at the time added to the enjoyment.

What about Creativity?

You will need to find a balance that works for you. Some people are only happy if they are doing new things everyday. However, if you want to make a living from your efforts, this needs to be balanced with finding approaches that work for you and repeating them, rather than constantly trying new things. Again, the aspects you find boring can be outsourced, preferably after you have already proven they are effective in your situation. You can also challenge yourself to find creative aspects to repetitive tasks, like with your a/b split testing efforts. If you can achieve that then chances are you won't be too bothered by the fact that some of those tasks are repetitive.

Power of Repetition

This section described a few important levels where repetition can help you make more money in the Digital Age. You may be able to think of more.

Consider re-reading **The Flow Factor** (chapter 2.1) for ideas on ways to design tasks that put you into Flow. This will help you to get the most out of repetitive tasks. For some people just having some suitable music in the background can help tremendously with organizing their minds in a way that puts them into Flow when dealing with repetitive tasks. I read some research once that said classical baroque music is ideal for putting your mind into flow. No lyrics, just a particular beat that is said to affect brain waves in a positive way. I tried it a few times and it seems to work pretty well. It may not be your cup tea. Other people find they are more productive when working in complete silence, like in a library. Find what works for you!

The bottom line is that many successful people have found great success from developing repetitive processes for themselves. They developed their own *secret recipe* for success

through repetition. Whether that be a golf swing or an investment strategy or a business tactic. In upcoming **Success Story #2** you will learn that an important key to developing that particular million dollar online business was delivering at least one new video per week to their Youtube channel. This particular form of repetition built trust and engagement with their audience. Getting very good at things requires some repetition. In most cases it requires a lot of repetition. Find ways to make it fun for yourself and reap the power of repetition! For example, I just created this short chapter by repeating the word *repetition* at least 15 times, and it was kind of fun!

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

VIII. Tools and Techniques

"We shall neither fail nor falter; we shall not weaken or tire...give us the tools and we will finish the job." - **Winston Churchill**

That quote is as much for me right now as it is for you. I've been working on this book for over a year now. I need a little inspiration to make it to the finish line. I'm trying not to *weaken or tire*. I'm using vacation time to take the morning off work today to make progress on the book. I have all the tools I need to finish the job. If Churchill could persevere to make it through the second world war, with bombs falling on London, surely I can do this!

In the same way, it takes perseverance to make the Digital Age tools and techniques you are about to learn work. You will need to strengthen your PURR Muscle. You will need to dig deep to find what motivates you to continue. Motivational quotes may help, but ultimately you will need to find it within yourself. If you have been working on the exercises in this book, I hope that process has begun to take shape inside you!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

i. The Promised Technique (Tools and Techniques)

Before we get into the more standard Digital Age techniques, let's review what I would consider to be a more advanced technique. Earlier in the book when we were discussing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, I included the following aside:

Aside: PURR Passive Income Power™ has something in common with Maslow's Hierarchy. See if you can spot it as you read through the book. Later on I will explain it in the Tools and Techniques section. It is a little known but highly effective way to distinguish yourself and add value for people. It could very well spark your imagination to create something great in your own area of interest.

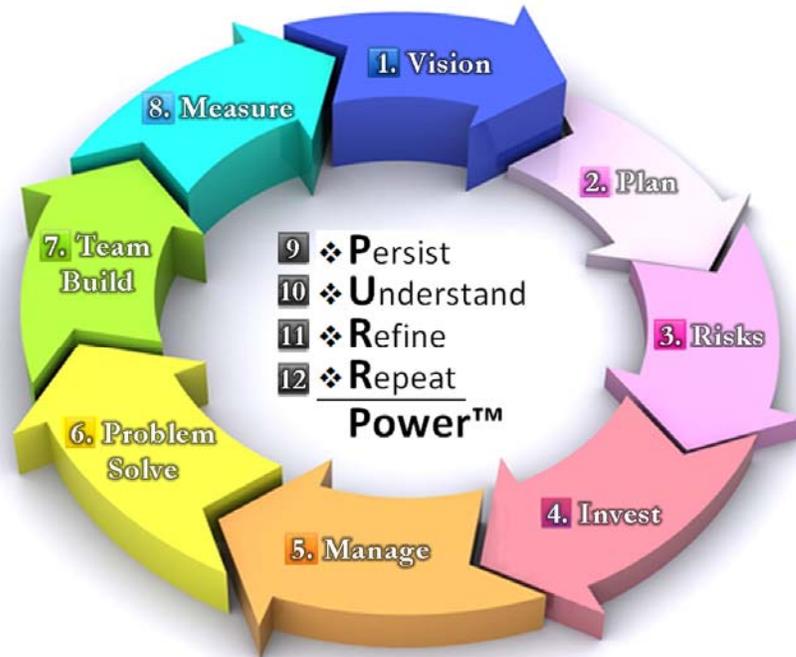
This is especially relevant if you are focusing on the Teacher, Coach, or Creator business models as described back in section IV, Choose Your Strategy. However, it is something to consider when developing a brand of any kind.

So what does PURR Passive Income Power™ have in common with Maslow's Hierarchy? How can you duplicate it in your own business? Here are my thoughts on it. You can decide if it is something you can use in your situation.

Single Graphic

The most obvious similarity is the single graphic that defines the idea or technique. Maslow's hierarchy is represented in a triangle with some words at different levels in the triangle. The PURR Passive Income Power™ steps are represented in the PURR Power Wheel™. Creating a unique graphic like that to summarize your ideas at a glance distinguishes you from the crowd. It also gives your readers an easy way to connect with complex ideas. It helps them to learn and organize the ideas in their minds. If it works for them, there is a good chance they would recommend it to a friend. They may not think to recommend you as a person, but they may recommend the graphic or the publication the graphic is associated with, which leads back to you. These are referrals people offering generic (unbranded) advice are unlikely to ever get. It can lead to the kind of sustainable traffic that can keep an income stream going for many years.

Here is the **PURR Power Wheel™** graphic again to refresh your memory:



Branded Keywords

This technique is especially effective if you create your own brand related to the ideas in the graphic. This gives you a unique combination of words that is easy for word of mouth referrals to find in search engines. While others create titles that focus entirely on popular keywords, why not inject a unique element? Anyone that searches on **PURR** and **passive income** or **power** is very likely to find me and my ideas, just as anyone searching on **maslow** and **hierarchy** will easily locate that entire body of knowledge. It is still good to include some popular keywords like **passive income**, which helps to generate some keyword driven traffic, and better describes what the ideas are all about. However, to have a chance of *going viral*, it helps to have something unique that drives word of mouth traffic back to you and only you.

As I am writing this, "**PURR passive income**" is a completely useless keyword. My job is to make it worth something by creating something people will tell their friends about. The keyword search aspect of this strategy will do nothing for me in the short term. It won't get any readers to this book in the beginning. For that I will need to rely on the more traditional Digital Age tools and techniques we will discuss later in this section. However, as a longer term strategy it opens up the possibility of generating sustainable passive income, as your unique keyword phrases and ideas will (hopefully) spread through word of mouth. It also forces you to make sure you are adding something unique to the world, rather than embarking on a "*me too*" business. Doing this costs nothing other than a bit of time and effort added to your initial planning.

The Curiosity Factor

Another possible benefit of doing this is what I think of as the *curiosity factor*. Entrepreneur and best selling author Seth Godin says the meaning of something like a book title shouldn't be immediately obvious. He writes business books with titles like *Purple Cow*. To paraphrase the podcast interview I listened to, he was talking about doing this as a means to ensure you are creating something innovative and unique.

I remember thinking at the time that a title like that would also make me curious. I might be more tempted to click through to learn more about it. Although I have no data to back it up, this is part of my thinking with the title PURR Passive Income Power™. If people are curious what PURR stands for they may click through to use the free *Look Inside* feature on Amazon to find out. I reveal what PURR stands for just before the first sentence in the book. If you are reading these words the curiosity factor may have contributed to getting you here. Is this a good tactic? I have no idea. Sometimes you just have to go with your gut and try some things!

Brilliant Brainstorming Tool

Before I wrote a single word of this book, I created the **PURR Power Wheel™** graphic. I was just doodling with pen and paper. I saw some potential so I purchased a stock image of some arrows in a circle. This cost me a few dollars at one of the many *stock photo* sites you can find on the internet (search

Google on *stock photos* to find them). I started up Photoshop and added some text to each of the arrows. This established the first 8 Steps of the wheel.

I decided to add 4 more Steps to the center of the wheel, and **PURR** was born. Not the most brilliant idea ever conceived by a long shot. But it inspired me to write a few words. And then a few more words. I began listening to podcasts of successful writers to better understand what is involved in writing and self-publishing a book. They said things like breaking grammar rules is okay if you do it on purpose and it contributes to a conversational tone. I thought breaking some rules could be fun if it would help me find a voice to base a book on. Rules like not starting sentences with the words **and** or **but**. I've broken both of those rules in this paragraph alone. This was the kind of brainstorming and following of random thoughts that led me to where I am now. It all started with some doodling with pen and paper that resulted in the PURR Power Wheel™.

Before you can inspire anyone else you must first find something that inspires you. Starting with a graphic like the ones described here can be a good starting point. If the graphic you develop takes you to a next step and then a next step, you may be on to something that "*has legs*." Can you think of anyone your ideas could help? Find a way to help them. Then whatever your ideas are, you will need an effective way to communicate them if you want to be successful. Starting with a powerful graphic that may resonate with a particular audience can be a good way to go about it.

Your Turn

Get out a pen or pencil and paper. Old fashioned I know. For many of you pencil and paper may be easier to brainstorm graphical ideas with. If you are very good with graphics software maybe you can skip this step.

Now, think of a subject you know something about. Perhaps it is something that took you a long time to learn because all the information on the subject was scattered. Maybe nobody has yet created a simple graphic to explain it at a high level. Or maybe you could do it better or different in some way to appeal to a different audience, or just to grab some market share for yourself.

How would you condense the ideas into a single graphic? Start by summarizing the ideas with the least number of words and letters possible. 10 of the 12 Steps on the PURR Power Wheel™ are just one word. Now, are the ideas circular and repetitive like the PURR Wheel? Or do they build up from a base where you need the lower levels to support the higher levels, like in Maslow's triangle graphic? Can they be represented as different quadrants in a square? Are the ideas more linear so that you could represent them in a series of arrows lined up one after the other, leading to a solution? Is there some well known type of image that may make sense for the ideas, like the side view of a house with words inside the rooms? Get creative and use some of the ideas you generated in your Vision Exercises to come up with subject areas or themes that could work well with this approach.

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler." - **Albert Einstein**

What if you can't think of a way to condense your ideas at a high level into a simple graphic? Although perhaps not as powerful as a simple graphic for the technique being described here, consider the longer form "infographics" that are popular these days. Search **infographics** on the internet to come up with all kinds of examples. Or think about summarizing a complex procedure into a simple pamphlet or short eBook. Although these are somewhat different techniques than the one being described here, the same brainstorming session could lead you to them. However, start by thinking about the simple graphic idea. This forces you to get down to the very essence of your message. It will add clarity for you and for your audience. Do your best. Then consider Einstein's famous quote about making things as simple as possible but not simpler. Be open to other ways to communicate your message as simply and with as much clarity as possible.

To complete the *simple as possible* discussion, you can also consider your logo at this point. Your logo needs to be small enough that it can identify you in a Twitter feed. This is typically much more abstract than what we have been discussing here. Think about the Starbucks Coffee mermaid logo. They use it in their Twitter feed. You may be able to use the work you have done in this chapter to inspire a logo that

clearly identifies your business. If you are building a personal brand, or even if you aren't, you may prefer to use a photo of yourself in your business related Twitter feed. People may relate more to a real person than to a logo on Twitter. However, from a branding perspective, a logo can be used effectively in other areas, like on your products and blog.

In my case as I write these words, I have very few ideas about a good logo for the blog and (perhaps) the Twitter feed that will eventually be used for this book. I'm thinking about a roaring lion to build off of the more conventional meaning of the word PURR and to imply the courage needed to succeed. That would be a direct result of the PURR acronym that evolved out of my *single graphic* doodling sessions. I really have no idea if that is a good idea. I have to ponder that one some more. In the end your logo doesn't have to be a great idea. If you were starting a coffee company would you really land on a mermaid for your logo and consider it a good idea? Sure there is a nice story behind it, but it has nothing to do with coffee. It is only recognizable because Starbucks built a great company behind the logo. A logo needs to be attractive and recognizable. It doesn't necessarily need to reflect the ideas in the *single graphic* we have been discussing here. However, it is worth considering ways to tie it all together.

Tap into Your Bank Account of Knowledge

Think of the things you know as a bank account of knowledge that you have been making deposits to your entire life. If you keep it all to yourself it is like never taking a withdrawal from that bank account. Packaging some of it up to share with others allows you to cash in on all the hard work it took you to gain that knowledge in the first place. Just as I am trying to give all my best ideas to you, give your best ideas to others. There are people at stages in their lives where they may need the knowledge you have more than you do. Find great ways to communicate that knowledge, and give it to them!

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

ii. Digital Age Techniques (Tools and Techniques)

Selling in the Digital Age has some unique elements and unprecedented opportunities. It gives you the ability to really connect with and develop a long term relationship with your customers. That is why you often hear the term *customer base* replaced with the term *tribe* in the Digital Age.

This section will cover some important techniques for taking full advantage of the tools you have for success in the Digital Age. Don't worry too much about the nuts and bolts of how to do these things yet. Focus on understanding the value of the techniques presented. The upcoming section on **Digital Age Tools** will go into more detail on tools you can use to apply the techniques. First things first. You need to develop a powerful *why* in your mind that gives you the motivation to move on to the *how*.

Trading Free for Attention

Before you can sell anything you must first get people's attention. Attention equals opportunity. It is the most precious commodity of all in the Digital Age. There is more competition than ever for people's attention. One of the best ways to get someone's attention is to give them something worthwhile for free. This is sometimes called the freemium model. It works well as a means to get people into your sales funnel. In some cases it is the only way to get any serious traction with your business. When faced with many choices, people tend to choose the free ones.

For example, what do Google, Facebook, and Youtube all have in common? Their main offerings are all free for you and I to use. This has allowed them to build billion dollar businesses from ads they display on their sites. You can do the same thing on a smaller scale by offering something of value for free. Something like useful content on your blog that attracts visitors to your blog. Then just like Google and Facebook, you can place ads on your blog to generate income.

Others talk about this in terms of *moving the free line*. This means taking stock of everything you have to offer or recommend, and making more of it freely available to your tribe. If you are just starting out, this may mean creating

something that you can offer for free in return for people's email addresses. Once you have their email addresses you own a very small part of their attention for as long as you continue to add value to their lives, and not a moment longer. We will discuss managing email lists in more detail later. This is a starting point from which to build. Before you can accumulate wealth and lasting success in the Digital Age, you must first accumulate attention.

Another example is the top software I am currently recommending for tracking your PURR Passive Income Power™ Spins. It is completely free, unless you upload a lot of large files to their site (**PurrPassiveIncome.com/software**). The freemium model works for them because they now have all kinds of people like me recommending them, and a small percentage of people will pay for their more advanced membership. Freemium works for them and for countless other businesses in the Digital Age.

Why do I recommend this free software option for managing your Spins? There are paid options out there, and I could probably get a decent commission from recommending some of them. Besides seeing it as an opportunity to build trust with you, effective task tracking is a big part of the PURR Passive Income Power™ system. I want to remove as many impediments for you as possible so that you can succeed, for your sake and for mine. I won't sit here and pretend that this is all for you and there is nothing in it for me. Similar to **market share**, the more people doing the PURR Passive Income Power™ program, the greater my **attention share**. If you aren't making progress then you will never be in a position to learn more advanced strategies that I may have to offer or recommend from time to time.

It is important that you think the same way when developing your own business strategy. You only succeed if your tribe succeeds. Remove as many impediments to their success as possible. However, at some point you need to sell them something. As with all relationships, online business is a two-way street. There needs to be give and take on both sides. If there isn't, it all comes crashing down sooner or later. Nobody can work completely free for long, just as nobody can expect to pay nothing and still achieve anything worthwhile in their lives. Investing in yourself is necessary for success in the Digital Age.

Building Trust

Once you have people's attention, the next most important thing is building trust. Offering high quality resources for free is one way to do that. Transparency is also very important. By way of example, I made a point in the preceding paragraph of pointing out what's in it for me. I did this to be transparent and to make it abundantly clear how you can adopt similar approaches for your own benefit. Another example of transparency relates to links you provide on your blog that may result in commissions for you. This should be made clear to your readers. One way to do it is to add a disclaimer in your blog footer, so that it automatically shows up on every post and page on your blog. It could read something like this:

"From time to time this website will recommend products we feel are worthy of your time and attention. Unless otherwise stated, you should assume all links are affiliate links from which we may earn a commission if you click through and purchase something from another website."

Yet another way to build trust is tell a bit of your personal story, so that people get to know you. Be open and honest, and maybe even a little bit humble. Don't pretend to be something you are not, but don't be afraid to hint at how you are qualified to help your tribe either. Find the tribe that resonates with who you are and where you are at in your journey. You will never be able to please everyone, so you may as well focus on pleasing the people that know, like and trust the real you. It doesn't matter if there are more advanced people in your field. They may be so advanced they can no longer relate to beginners. This means you may be in a better position to teach the basics than they are. Target the tribe needing the level of help you can provide. Sometimes the best teachers are the ones that are just a few steps ahead of where you are.

Making Money from Freemium

Free offers generate word of mouth. Word of mouth grows small things into big things very fast in the Digital Age. One tweet or post from an influencer can reach over a million people. A small percentage of those visitors will go on to do something that results in income for you. That could be a click

or a purchase of some kind. In the Digital Age, a small percentage of big is much bigger than a big percentage of small. That is what drives the freemium model. If you want to get paid for everything you offer or recommend, chances are you will remain small.

Okay, so how will you make money if you give things away for free and recommend free products or services to your tribe? For one thing, the free way of doing things is often time consuming or simply not as good as paid options. In many cases it makes complete sense to pay for things. It accelerates progress and expands reach. If people trust you to point out the pros and cons of the various paid options, then some of them will eventually buy one of your products, or click on your affiliate link to buy from someone else (resulting in a commission for you).

Does Anyone Care if You Make Money?

Do people that know, like and trust you care if you make money or not? Probably not. Perhaps a small percentage of them will recognize that all the free help is only possible if the helper gets paid occasionally. Then they may click on your affiliate links to support you if they are planning to buy something anyway. Perhaps to reward you for your hard work, or perhaps as insurance to make sure you are still around to help them in the future. More likely they just want what they want. They want the best product or service to solve their problem. You are just one of the voices they are listening to. They don't care what link they click on. The point is if they trust you there is a chance they will be on your site or reading your email when the time comes to buy. And if they trust you they may recommend you to their friends. Not because they want to help you, but because they want to help their friends. To succeed you need to become someone or something that friends care enough about to recommend to friends. That is when things start to turn into a real business. That is when you begin to consistently make more money in the Digital Age. That is when this becomes a new life and livelihood. What comes next are tricks of the trade to make a living from doing that.

Affiliate Marketing

If you are reading this book from start to finish you have

already heard me discuss this one quite a bit. Time now to put it into perspective and discuss the details of how it actually works. A key point here is that you don't ever need to create products of your own to be successful.

Consider the most basic form of affiliate marketing. Start a blog that focuses on something you are passionate or knowledgeable about. Include your affiliate links on the blog. A blog is a good way to earn your first income from Digital Age ventures. It will also form the basis of your online platform. From there you can launch more advanced strategies later on. In this scenario everything you create, like helpful blog posts, is offered free to your tribe. You are the teacher or reporter or entertainer. You make your money on commissions when your tribe clicks on your affiliate links to go from your *affiliate site* to other sites, where they can consider buying a product or service.

You work hard to provide useful information free of charge to your blog visitors. You deserve to be compensated for it. **If you decide not to monetize your blog, others will.** Keep in mind Google only exists because people like you are producing valuable content. Their search results are essentially small snippets of other people's websites. They use your content on their website, and benefit from placing ads beside that content to the tune of billions of dollars per year in ad revenue. If you don't want to work for Google for free, consider ways like affiliate marketing to monetize your efforts!

Google has so many people working for them for free because they have become the trusted source for folks looking for information. Become the trusted source for your tribe and they won't need Google anymore, they may go straight to your blog for information on that topic. To achieve that and replace Google for them, you will need to provide them with more than just your excellent content. Providing links from your blog to other related content, with some of those links being affiliate links, will go a long way to replacing Google in the minds of your tribe. A logical next step for people after they understand something is to shop around for ways to integrate that new understanding into their lives through products and services. People go through an information gathering phase before they get to the buying phase. Google understands that and makes billions of dollars because of it. You should understand it too, and organize your blog accordingly!

Let's use salt water aquariums as an example. Get salt water aquarium enthusiasts interested in visiting your blog. (See the upcoming **Getting Traffic** chapter for more on this.) Write useful articles about taking care of an aquarium. Create blog posts about every salt water fish that people like to have in their aquariums. When searching the internet for details about that particular fish, people may find your blog. From this perspective Google plays an important role introducing people to your website, and should be compensated for that by placing ads next to their search results. Do a good enough job with your blog and this becomes an introduction service only, as people come to rely more on your blog for answers and recommendations. While on your blog they may click on your affiliate links to go to another site to purchase how-to guides, or an aquarium, or filters, or other supplies they need. You can simply place your affiliate links within or beside your useful blog posts. Or you can add even more value to your visitors by writing reviews of products, pointing out the pros and cons of the various choices. You can add free services to your blog, like a user forum so visitors can discuss issues with each other. Give your tribe reasons to come back to your blog again and again. When the time comes for your visitors to buy something, they may click on one of your affiliate links, resulting in a commission for you.

How do you get a commission? By joining an affiliate program and getting your own unique affiliate link that links to a product sales page on another website. The affiliate link is provided to you in your affiliate dashboard at the affiliate site where you signed up. There is some extra information attached to the end of the link that identifies it as your link. This means you get credit for sales for a length of time set out in the affiliate agreement, like 30 days or 60 days. This is typically done by setting a *cookie* on the computer where the link was clicked, although there are other ways too and you really don't need to know the technical details of how it works. Your affiliate dashboard will track how many sales you have made. You can go there any time to see your sales numbers. You will receive checks in the mail or perhaps direct deposits in your bank or PayPal account depending on the affiliate program you joined and the choices you make.

Here is a page listing some places you can go to signup for

affiliate programs in virtually any niche imaginable:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/affiliateprograms

You format the affiliate link on your blog to display an image or descriptive text like [Saltwater Aquariums](#). The actual affiliate link is long and ugly and is only used as the target of the link. If you are new to setting up links on websites there are countless resources you can find on the internet to show you how. Remember, not knowing how to handle small details like this is not a barrier to success in the Digital Age. A simple Google search will result in hundreds of pages willing to help with these small details. Blog software like Wordpress makes setting up links even easier. For that reason, I think it is better to use this as an example of a detail you can work out on your own rather than clutter this book with too many details. Most important for you at this point is to learn the concepts without getting too bogged down in every detail. It is important to develop some confidence that you can work out these small details when the time comes!

Choosing Your Niche

As an addendum to this section, be sure to check out this list of 659 profitable niches:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/659free

A key here is how "niche" you want to get. This is debatable and can vary depending on your area of interest. Why just salt water aquariums? You could argue it is because anyone interested in them is more likely to visit your site than a site that discusses both fresh and salt water aquariums. They may feel you understand their needs better. Can you narrow it down more? I heard about someone once that was doing very well with a site that focused exclusively on caring for a particular type of fish. An entire website about that fish may receive more search engine traffic related to that fish than a site that has articles about every fish, especially if the name of the fish is in the domain name of your website. However, you may recall my earlier example of a fitness site I ran once that focused on too narrow of a niche to make much money. (Recall that it maxed out at \$2000 per year). Choosing your niche is a judgment call

that you can experiment with as you learn more about what works for you. Keep the following points in mind.

A key factor in choosing your niche in the very beginning is understanding how popular it is and how much competition there is. For this you can use *keyword planning tools* that will be mentioned again in the upcoming **Digital Age Tools** section. These tools provide data to help you understand how many people are searching on particular keyword phrases. They also help you understand the competition by showing the number of search results from a search engine search on those keywords. With this kind of data you can develop your own metrics to compare keywords in various niches or within a niche. For example, you may think about the number of monthly searches divided by the number of search results for each keyword phrase. A high number would indicate more potential visitors with less competition for those visitors. The higher the number the better.

Profit potential of the niche is also an important consideration. This was discussed in great detail earlier in the book in section VII Chapter 2.3. As a quick recap, focusing on your favorite hobby where there are no good affiliate programs related to that hobby is probably not the best choice. That earlier chapter gave some ideas on how to research profit potential for a niche.

To put it all into the project management terms we discussed earlier, what we are talking about here is scope. One of the course corrections you need to consider when going through your Spins is whether or not you should expand or contract your scope. If you are too general perhaps nobody will care. If you are too narrow perhaps the tribe you attract will be too small. You learn by doing.

Managing Your Scope

Recall the earlier discussion about pivoting. This is a perfect example. You can start your first Spin where your scope is to be the best at offering information about saltwater aquariums and related salt water fish. After a few months you discover from your Google Analytics that a certain page is getting over 50% of your overall website traffic, and generating the most income. Based on this data you can consider modifying your scope based on what is working for you. For example, you may

want to focus more on your conversion strategy for that page with some a/b split testing, or start to create more pages or blog posts similar to the one that is working, or create a new blog that specializes in that topic.

If you do decide to create another more specialized blog it could link to and act as a feeder site to your main saltwater aquarium site. This would represent more of an expanding of scope than a full pivot. You could end up with an entire network of related sites that feed into your main saltwater aquarium site. Or you may decide a website with a much larger scope like pet care makes sense for you. Your saltwater aquarium site could feed into that site. An even larger pivot that goes beyond affiliate marketing may be to create your own e-commerce site that sells aquariums or pet supplies. Or you could source products from China and sell them on Amazon, and point your tribe to those products.

This could give you the sales boost you need to get your products ranking higher on Amazon, which will lead to more sales beyond your existing tribe. That is one way the *attention share* you develop from your initial blog and email list can set the stage for greater success with more advanced strategies. You could also consider creating your own products. These could be products like video courses you create and sell on your own blog, or on sites like Udemy. Or they could be books like the one you are reading now. Or free products like a Youtube channel related to saltwater aquariums and fish care that lead viewers to your blog. This can support engagement with your other products and affiliate offers, as well as your email newsletter signup page. Put your own spin on it all and make it unique to you. Hopefully you are beginning to see how understanding all of the various options available in the Digital Age can feed your imagination and lead you in new directions as you learn more about what works for you. All of the business models discussed earlier in section IV can be considered when the time comes to expand your scope.

Your Platform

Imagine the hub and spokes of an old wagon wheel. Your platform is the hub. It is your home base, the ultimate place you want everyone to visit. It should consist of things that you own and have complete control over. Everything else you do,

like social media, are the spokes that point back to the hub.

Is a Youtube channel a hub that you should focus on? Certainly you want people to go there and watch your videos. Does it fit the criteria just described above? No it doesn't. You don't own YouTube. You don't control Youtube. The rules could change overnight and there is nothing you can do about it. What if someday Youtube decides they no longer approve of what you are doing? Or if the Youtube search algorithm changes and your videos no longer show up high enough in the results to get views. I can tell you from first hand experience that these kinds of things can and do happen. Treating external sites as your hub is like building a sand castle at the beach. No matter how impressive the castle becomes, a big wave can roll in and wash it away at a moments notice.

Youtube should ideally be treated as a spoke in a viable long term business, not a hub. It can be a very powerful spoke that generates massive traffic to your blog and your brand. Upcoming Success Story #2 attests to that fact. It is a real life story of how Youtube is a key driver of 7 figures in profits per year for one couple that created their business from the comfort of their own home. Youtube is a spoke because every video should have a link to your blog below the video in the video description. It is a spoke because you can mention your product or blog in the video itself. If you have a unique brand name as outlined in the preceding Promised Technique chapter and in Success Story #2, you can just mention it briefly in the video and your video viewers will find you. One thing Google is very good at is making sure they have a search result for every unique keyword out there. If you have a unique brand name and blog to go with it, then the chances of you coming up as number 1 in a Google search for that name are very, very good.

Spokes Point to Your Hub (Platform)

Other examples of spokes would be your Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or other social media presence. Or unique articles you write and get published on reputable websites. Podcasts or other types of interviews you do. Search engine traffic. Paid advertising. Speaking engagements. Visitors coming from books you write. Anything you can think of to get visitors to your blog. That's not to say you should spread yourself so thin

that you try and do all of these things at once. Start with the one that makes the most sense for your business, keeping in mind where your ideal tribe members would hang out. Get good at one of them at a time, then decide if you need or can manage more spokes as you move forward with your business.

Just as all roads led to Rome during the Roman Empire, all your spokes must lead to your platform. The entry point for this is your blog. However, even though you own your blog and have much more control over it than you do over your spokes, a blog can still lose its traffic sources. The spokes can dry up, like getting de-indexed from Google if you aren't careful with your back linking strategy (more on that later). If you have good brand recognition by then your blog will still be valuable. People will still find you. You could start over with a new domain name for your blog and brand to get a fresh start with Google, if Google was an important spoke for you. If you have a diverse and healthy set of spokes, your business can survive the temporary or even permanent loss of one spoke.

The Center Piece of Your Platform

However, as important as your blog is, it is not the center piece of your platform. The center piece is your **email list** (e.g. subscribers to your newsletter). This is the one thing that you own that is completely in your control. Build up your list while your spokes are firing on all cylinders. It is the one thing that can survive long term if you treat your subscribers right and build a following of true fans. If one day all of your spokes dry up, you will still have access to your tribe via your email list. Even if your spokes don't dry up, your email list can be your best source of income and drive more advanced strategies like product launches. Unlike the *organic reach* of platforms like Facebook, your emails will go to every subscriber on your list every time you send an email. You could spend years getting thousands of people to *Like* you on Facebook in hopes that these people will see everything you post on Facebook. The reality is only a very small percentage of your followers will see your posts (your organic reach). To reach all of them you must pay for Facebook ads targeted at your followers. This isn't necessarily a bad idea. However, with your email list each and every email you send will be sent to every subscriber on your list every time, without the need to spend money on ads.

An important point here is to work hard for your subscribers so they know, like, and trust you. To accomplish that you can't hard sell your list with every email. Most emails should be about helping them for free and establishing a good relationship. Help people to learn something or feel something with every email you send to your list. Above all, try not to be boring! Soft selling your products at the bottom of those emails may be okay. Perhaps in the form of gentle reminders of what you have to offer with links to your offer pages. But emails dedicated exclusively to promoting a product should be few and far between. One exception could be product launch sequences, but even these will provide plenty of free education along the way if done well. The true size of your tribe isn't the number of email addresses on your list. It is the number of people that open and read the emails you send. Deviate from the guidelines just mentioned and that percentage will go down over time. Consider it a law similar to the law of gravity.

Would you rather have a list of 1000 where 50% of your subscribers open your emails, or a list of 10,000 where only 5% of them open your emails? (Note: the email marketing services we will be discussing later allow you to measure open rates.) You are getting the same number of opens in either case (500). However, with the list of 10,000 it will have cost you much more to obtain those subscribers. There will probably be lots of people that actively dislike you, since you will have been *weighed and measured and found wanting* by 95% of them. You will be squandering your potential. Consider also in which scenario people would be more likely to recommend you to their friends. If only 5% of the people even bother to open your emails, chances are nobody is very excited about what you have to offer. Word of mouth is the gift that keeps on giving. It is the only way to get new subscribers for free. Put some effort into nurturing your list and you will benefit for many years to come.

Getting New Subscribers on Your List

Getting new people on your list is all about offering them something useful, free, and relevant in exchange for their email addresses. This is referred to as a *lead magnet*. The more relevant it is to the reason your visitors found you in the first place the better. An advanced strategy would be to offer a different lead magnet on all the blog posts on your site. Make it

relevant to the blog post content they are reading and opt-in rates to your list will soar. For example, you could offer a PDF report that goes into more detail on the subject of a blog post. It would be a natural progression for someone that reads the page to go on to download the PDF report, which would include entering their email address.

Having just one lead magnet for your entire blog can also work well. This is much easier to do as you would place just the one signup form in your sidebar so that it automatically shows up on every page of your blog. You could also add it to the end of each blog post so that there is an obvious Call to Action (CTA) as visitors finish reading your content. It would be the same sign up form everywhere on your blog.

For example, on my investing blog I offered a 7 day "mini-course" on a particular form of investing. My sidebar briefly described what they would get on each day of the course. When they signed up for my list (and mini course) they would get a new installment in their email inbox every day for 7 days. These were *auto-responder* emails that my email marketing service sent out automatically at one day intervals to each new subscriber. (More on email marketing services coming up in the Digital Age Tools section.)

I set those emails up once and the entire process was completely automated after that. The emails had links back to my blog for much of the course content, which of course contained affiliate links. I was getting over 20 new subscribers per day (from free organic SEO traffic, more on that in the next chapter), and ended up with thousands of subscribers overall. This is relatively small compared to what is possible. However, when I participated in high end investment course product launches as an affiliate I typically received \$700 per sale. This made emailing my list very profitable at times, even though the list was relatively small.

Lead magnets can be almost anything that your tribe would find useful and relevant. The cynical among you may see this as offering a bribe. But really, why would anyone want to take the time to follow you unless they get something out of it? If they like what you offer then they may eventually come to know, like and trust you. You may earn some of their attention for years to come!

Examples of lead magnets could be the first couple of chapters of your book, or a helpful PDF report or ebook they can download or receive attached to their welcome email. The more this report is able to solve a burning issue for your tribe, the better your opt-in rates will be. Like stopping a dog from barking all the time, or potty training a puppy. This can be especially powerful if the report is about a hardship you went through personally and solved somehow. Or do some serious research into a topic and share what you learned in a concise format. Your sign up page could list the top 5 things they will learn if they download your report.

You can also offer access to exclusive content or special deals you advertise as being only available to subscribers. Like a recipe site that reserves some of the new recipes for email subscribers only (see upcoming Success Story #1). Re-purposing content you already have created can also work, like *"my top 20 blog posts (or recipes, or tips) of all time"* in PDF format. This saves your subscribers time searching your entire blog for your best stuff. Or you could turn some of your written content into audio or video format for your subscribers.

Other techniques that can work very well is to offer an inspirational quote of the day or week delivered directly to your subscribers inbox. People love quotes, and may especially appreciate an inspirational quote that arrives in their inbox just when they need it the most. Or you can offer your list as a way for them to keep up to date on all your latest blog posts by sending them weekly summaries of your new content.

If your blog is more conducive to selling physical products, then your lead magnet could be about how to make good use of those products. Something like *"my top 10 blender recipes"* if you are recommending blenders with your affiliate links. A golf site that discusses or sells golf equipment could offer a PDF download on *"how I shaved 10 strokes off my golf game."* Or you could offer buying guides to summarize the pros and cons of various golf equipment brands and models. Come up with something that would interest your tribe, so you can connect with them via email for years to come!

Is a lead magnet absolutely necessary in every situation? I would say no. For example, if you are sending pre-sold traffic to

your landing page, a lead magnet could distract from the main goal of getting people to subscribe. If they already see the value of subscribing, a lead magnet that doesn't resonate with them may do more harm than good. The **PurrPassiveIncome.com/join** link I have been sharing with you in this book may be an example of that. If I have been giving you enough good reasons to join, that page may do better without a lead magnet.

The conversion rate of that landing page will tell me if that is the case or not. I could do some split testing with and without a lead magnet when I have time. However, from a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) perspective, I will begin without a lead magnet. If the conversion rate is high, my time may be better spent elsewhere. On the other hand, if I were to do some Facebook advertising to a *squeeze page*, where that traffic knows nothing about me in advance, I believe a lead magnet would be necessary. Perhaps I could offer them a free chapter of the book. This is the topic of our next section.

Squeeze Pages and Paid Traffic

Once you have your lead magnet strategy figured out, you may want to setup an optimized "*squeeze page*" that you can send paid traffic to. This is simply a page that has no sidebar or links of any kind that take you away from that page (e.g. **PurrPassiveIncome.com/join** is a squeeze page). It presents the case for signing up for your list, and nothing else. That is the only action you offer to visitors of that page. This is the type of *landing page* you would send paid traffic to once you know your average lifetime value per subscriber (or sooner if you have the budget to test some things out).

The more you nurture your list and the more you have to offer on the *back end*, the higher the lifetime value per subscriber will be. The back end is all the targeted and relevant offers you have planned that you can logically offer to your list and make money from over time. The higher the lifetime value per subscriber the more you can afford to pay for paid advertising like Facebook ads. Once you get to this level you will want to engage in a/b split testing (described earlier) to optimize your ads and landing pages to get the most out of your ad spend. You might test the effect of adding video to your squeeze page, or different lead magnets, or different layouts or colors or

words on the page.

Do You Always Need to Build a List?

If your strategy is to import products from China to sell directly on Amazon then perhaps not, although upcoming Success Story #3 is about some innovative ways to do both. In general, if affiliate marketing is part of your strategy, then focusing on your list is a better strategy than sending your hard earned traffic directly to an affiliate offer, or even to an offer page for your own product. Here are some reasons why:

- 1.** Sending visitors directly to an offer page gives you only one chance to get paid. People don't usually buy the first time they see a product offered. It has been said people have to hear about a product 7 times before they are ready to buy. If it is an affiliate offer this may take longer than the *affiliate cookie duration* mentioned earlier. Plus, the buyer may click on someone else's affiliate link before they buy which means you won't get credit for introducing the customer in the first place. (Affiliate programs are typically based on *last affiliate in wins*, although there are some exceptions to that rule.)
- 2.** Many of the sites you point your affiliate links to have their own list building initiatives. Sending your traffic to those sites is like spending your own time and money to build someone else's list.
- 3.** You don't get a chance to build a tribe of followers that know, like and trust you. Without that you have no means to ever contact those people again with more offers in the coming years.
- 4.** On first contact, most people are more likely to provide an email address for a compelling (free) lead magnet than they are to spend money on a product. Once they sign up for your list you can always mention an offer to them in that first auto-responder email in case they are *in the mood for buying* at that moment. With automated email marketing services like the ones we will cover in the upcoming Digital Age Tools section, they will get your first email immediately after they sign up to your list.
- 5.** Paid advertising rates are competitive and dominated by

experienced advertisers with an established back end strategy of offers leading to a higher lifetime value per customer or subscriber. By sending paid traffic directly to an affiliate offer you do not have any back end strategy at all. Without that you won't be able to afford the advertising rates, because the lifetime value of your customers will be much lower than your competition.

6. You are competing with many other affiliate marketers promoting the same products without building any long term value for yourself. It is just a crap shoot at that point. You may be profitable for a while, but it is not a viable long term strategy. Be patient and build a relationship with your tribe before you try and sell them things!

Moving On

This intent of this chapter was to introduce you to Digital Age Techniques without getting sidetracked with details of all the tools you can use to get things done. The upcoming Digital Age Tools section will introduce you to tools that make implementing the techniques discussed here relatively easy. But first, let's talk a bit about how to get visitors to your blog (traffic).

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

iii. Getting Traffic (Tools and Techniques)

Time to discuss some tactics for getting visitors to your affiliate blog, or any other offer you are considering at this stage. This is typically referred to as *getting traffic*. However, always keep in mind that traffic is real people with real problems they are trying to solve. It's not all about numbers. The quality of the traffic is very important. Some traffic sources work better than others depending on what you are promoting. For instance, paid traffic sources may not lead to a profit for a basic affiliate site, but can be very profitable for more advanced Digital Age strategies.

Here are **12 tactics** for getting traffic:

1. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

This first of the 12 tactics listed here is mentioned first because it is typically the first one people consider when looking for so called *free traffic* to affiliate sites. That is Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which targets the *organic results* on large search engines like Google and Bing/Yahoo. This is not to be confused with the paid ads you see surrounding the organic results, which will be discussed under tactic #6 below.

SEO can work very well. I made a lot of money with this technique at times. However, it can be very time consuming, so you can't really call it free. At a minimum you need to create blog pages for many keywords and keyword variations to get search engine traffic for those keywords. You will also get SEO traffic to each page for *long tail keywords*, especially if your content is completely unique on the internet. That is longer unique keyword phrases (containing 4 or more words) that are not searched for often, but the combination of many of them can add up to a good amount of traffic.

You will see these long tail keywords show up in your Google or Clicky Analytics reports as keywords you are getting traffic from that you didn't explicitly target (note: clicky.com also offers a very good analytics package that I quite like). Some strategies advocate targeting many long tail keywords because they have less competition. However, even in this case you will still get traffic for other long or even longer tail keywords that you didn't plan for.

Note: The term *long tail keyword* actually comes from the statistics term *long-tailed distribution*. However, for all practical purposes keywords that fit that definition are invariably longer phrases as well. That is why the term long tail keyword has come to mean, for most people, keyword phrases that contain 4 or more words.

Depending on how you go about it, SEO can be unreliable. You can go from hero to zero in a heartbeat. Google and other search engines are constantly trying to improve their *search algorithm* in order to show only the highest quality sites. They are always trying to weed out folks that are, in their eyes, attempting to *game the system*.

The *panda* and *penguin* Google algorithm updates rendered many SEO tactics obsolete. The panda update lowered the rankings of low quality or "thin sites", while the penguin update penalized sites that were artificially boosting their rankings by creating low quality links pointing back to the sites (back links). What constitutes quality in both cases is debatable in theory, but in reality if Google doesn't approve of what you are doing you should probably consider adjusting your definition of quality (more on how to do that below). These updates forced many people, like me, back to the drawing board with their Digital Age ventures.

At the most basic level, SEO relies on keywords embedded in your blog posts and web pages that match keywords people are typing into the search engines. If all goes well this will result in a link to a page on your blog showing up in the Search Engine Result Pages (SERPs). A keyword is simply a phrase you want to be noticed for. Like saltwater aquariums or buy saltwater aquarium.

In the early days you could simply repeat keywords you wanted to be noticed for many times in your blog pages. This is referred to as *keyword stuffing*. It is akin to begging for attention, and doesn't work anymore. Simple as that. It still makes sense to have your main keyword in the title of your page, and perhaps once or twice in the body of your page. These steps are referred to as *on-page optimization*. There are countless opinions on how to go about this. Much of what you

will find on the Internet is out of date. The search engines get smarter by the day. They are learning how to distinguish pages that are helpful on a subject, versus pages that are simply trying to get attention.

Although it makes sense to consider on-page optimization, what you have just read here may be enough. That is, make sure each page clearly identifies what it is about by placing the main keyword in the title of the page. Then make sure your page is written for real people (not for bots) and offers something of value on the subject. The value doesn't have to be earth-shattering, but do try and avoid the *\$4 keyword articles* that people often pay for that simply group some random or completely obvious ideas around a keyword. I'm not saying this never works, just saying those articles don't offer much value to the world, which Google is getting better and better at recognizing.

How can they recognize it? By applying machine learning to their algorithm and through much greater uptake of their Google Chrome browser. They know better than ever the behavior of your visitors, like how long they are staying on your site. For example, if a searcher clicks back to the search results immediately after visiting your page, then the quality of your page is low in Google's eyes (let's call this the *click back rate*). Although nobody can say exactly how the Google algorithm works, this is almost certainly a factor. Even if it isn't a factor, this is not the type of user behavior that is going to lead to anything good for you. So the more important question may be: *how can you recognize it?*

Analyzing Bounce Rate to Optimize SEO

When Google Analytics is installed on your site, it has the ability to track the user journey throughout your entire site. Bounce rate is defined as the *percentage of single-page sessions*. It is a metric you can see in your Google Analytics dashboard. You can also view the time visitors are spending on your pages. Although not directly tied to the click back rate just discussed, these 2 things together can be a good indicator. Depending on the type of website you have, they can also be a good indicator of visitor satisfaction. Satisfying your visitors is important for more reasons than optimizing your SEO of course. However, since satisfying your visitors is a concern

shared by Google, we will discuss relating technical indicators like bounce rate to visitor satisfaction here.

You can improve your bounce rate by doing things like adding compelling images to the top of your blog posts. We discussed finding free images that you can use with attribution earlier in the book (e.g. from sites like Flickr and Wikimedia). This will keep visitors interested in staying on your blog longer and engaging more with your content. You can also check your analytics to see which of your pages have a lower bounce rate and try to understand why. Then improve your other pages along the same lines. Content quality is of course an important consideration. So if you are going to pay freelancers or virtual assistants to write articles for your blog, which can be a very good way to scale your business, consider the quality of the articles in addition to the cost.

The podcast attached to **Success Story #7** contains a lot of lessons learned from bounce rate analysis over many years. Listen to that podcast to learn the importance of layout and the presence and positioning of images. You will learn not to include too many affiliate links on a single page, as Google will notice this and consider the page to be spammy. How many is too many is up for debate and can change with later algorithm updates. As a rule of thumb for pages that discuss multiple product alternatives, consider keeping it below 10 per page for a page containing between 600 to 1000 words of content. Don't be too shy about including affiliate links. The more often your visitors click on your affiliate links to continue their journey, the lower your click back rate will be. The same thing applies to any helpful (non-affiliate) links you provide your visitors, or any process you can engage them in that keeps them from returning to the search engine results pages. Like purchasing one of your products, joining your list, or providing easy access to related content on your blog. Improving in these areas should improve your SEO rankings over time. You will have to invest some time to learn what works for you.

Note for Wordpress bloggers: Giving visitors easy access to your other relevant blog posts can be as simple as installing a "*similar posts*" plugin to Wordpress (which can be easily found in a Google search). This will automatically add links to your related blog posts to the bottom of each post on your blog.

Many of these types of plugins are completely free as is the Wordpress software itself. There are also many Wordpress themes that are free and can give your blog any kind of look and feel you can imagine. At its heart Wordpress is a powerful Content Management System (CMS), which does not have to look like a blog at all. That is why it has been reported that 18.9% of the entire internet is powered by Wordpress. The combination of free and a large community of people to help you out along the way with free plugins, themes, and training is hard to ignore. The following link will get you up and running with your Wordpress blog in under 5 minutes:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/start

Off-Page SEO Optimization

This is where things get a bit trickier. This is where Google tries to gauge how useful or important your blog is based on how other websites on the internet interact with it. Prior to the penguin and panda Google algorithm updates, people were finding success by writing junk articles and posting them on any site that would have them. They did this to get back links pointing back to their websites from those articles. Google considered each back link a vote in their favor. People would pay for services that would use various tactics to automate the generation of junk back links. Many of those services went out of business as Google detected what they were doing. The approach these services were taking went from *magic bullet* to *poison pill* for their customer's websites, virtually overnight.

Prior to panda and penguin, back links were SEO gold and it didn't matter much where they came from. The more back links you had the higher your blog pages ranked in Google searches. People were creating their own private blog networks (PBNs) with all the blogs linking back to their *money sites*. This is essentially *voting for yourself*, which Google understandably wanted to discount in their algorithm. I used the PBN technique myself until one of the Google algorithm updates caused all my blogs to be de-indexed overnight. Not only the blogs but the sites those blogs pointed to. From hero to zero. In a heartbeat. From good money to no money. Setting up a PBN took a lot of time and effort. It involved getting different IP addresses for

each blog and other time consuming and expensive activities. Wiped out overnight. Another example of Google kicking my ass and forcing me to do something more worthwhile with my life.

All this doesn't mean you should ignore SEO as a traffic source. Just don't rely on it exclusively. Consider viewing it as bonus traffic as part of a larger *traffic plan*. Or do your best with it, but don't get too focused on it to the detriment of other tactics. Future proof your business by using your SEO traffic to build your list. If back linking is part of your SEO plan, be very careful where you are getting those back links from. If the back links are from credible websites that do well in the Google search results themselves for keywords you are interested in, and have a reason to exist beyond providing back links, chances are those back links will be helpful.

For my time and money I probably won't be bothering much with explicit back linking tactics anymore, although I am happy to get any back links I can "organically." That is, back links that come from people that decide to link to your site because it offers something of value. This is what Google is looking for. Don't worry about the quality of the sites that are linking to you on their own initiative. There is nothing you can do about it and overall there are likely to be more good links than bad ones when you are getting those links based on the merit of your content. Google considers your entire back link profile, so don't be too concerned about one or two bad links that you have no control over. Don't fall into the trap of stressing out over things you can't control. There are other ways to get traffic, and if your SEO traffic dries up you can always get a fresh start by creating a new blog with a different domain name.

I'm not alone when it comes to not focusing on back link building anymore. In upcoming **Success Story #7** you will learn how Claire Smith is doing very well with SEO, while not spending any time at all on explicit back linking. Success story #7 reveals Claire's approach to using keyword tools to compare popularity versus competition for keywords. With her strategy of no back links she finds she goes up in the SERPs when Google comes out with an algorithm change, as newly penalized sites drop out. Rather than dreading algorithm changes she can look forward to them instead. She can sleep well at night!

More Competitive Keywords

However, if you want to rank in the search engines for very competitive keywords, you will need to have some good back links. One *white hat* way to do this on your own initiative is to contact authority sites and see if they will link to you because your site adds value to their community. Many top sites have a resources page where they link to helpful websites or blogs that their community would be interested in. Just email the webmaster of those sites and ask to be included on that page, and perhaps suggest ways you can help them out in some way too. I got a very powerful backlink for my audio books e-commerce site using this technique once. I just sent a polite email explaining why I thought my site would be of value to their tribe.

Aside: Keep in mind that sending one individual email to a website that has their contact info on their website is not spam by any definition I am aware of. When you are in business you should expect people to contact you. That is how business has always been done and it is no different in the Digital Age. As long as those emails are crafted one at a time and sent by a real person. On the other hand, bots that harvest email addresses from websites and send these kinds of emails to thousands of sites on your behalf are another matter entirely. I would recommend avoiding software and services that engage in such activities!

The same logic holds true if you put your contact email on your own blog. You can expect to get unsolicited emails that you should not confuse with spam. Businesses that want to sell you things like SEO services will contact you, which after reading this chapter you may choose to ignore. You may also receive emails from other webmasters in your niche. These can sometimes lead to helpful collaborations between your sites.

Another great *white hat* technique I heard about recently is getting your site accepted by Google News. To do this your site needs to have very high quality content and you have to work hard to get accepted. People are finding that when they do get accepted they not only get more traffic from Google News directly, but they also get good back links without ever

contacting those webmasters directly. Your site becomes a trusted source that other sites link to. The Google News tactic is also a good example of the kinds of new ideas that we will all come across as we get more and more into Digital Age ventures. It is a new idea to me that I heard about this week. Others may have heard of it before. It all depends on where you are at and where you came from. The more exposure you have to new ideas the more likely you will come across ones that can help you in your business. I plan to write about new ideas I come across in my newsletter to keep you up to date (PurrPassiveIncome.com/join).

Okay, back to the competitive keywords discussion. No matter how you look at it, ranking for competitive keywords is hard work and time consuming, with no guarantee of results. Not short term results and especially not long term results. Google results change all the time. Maintaining a top 3 ranking for a competitive keyword takes ongoing effort. This is a game that some people are very good at and are willing to play. There are many others that feel this is the only way to get traffic, but struggle with it, achieving only sporadic and temporary wins. When considering traffic tactics you need to consider the opportunity cost. Spending too much time on one tactic may mean you don't have time to consider others. To avoid or get off of the SEO treadmill, consider the perspective of SEO simply being bonus traffic. Writing good unique content using some of the guidelines discussed above will get you some SEO traffic. Then consider other traffic tactics, like the remaining traffic tactics in this list.

2. Write and self-publish a book.

As you may have guessed by now this is my current favorite tactic for getting quality traffic. Why? If the book is any good there is a chance people that get to your site from within the book will already know, like and trust you. Not everyone that reads the book will like you of course, but the ones that bother to click through to your website are at least willing to give you a chance. They may already be pre-sold on the idea that your website is worth their time and attention. *Pre-sold* traffic is by far the most valuable traffic there is. 100 pre-sold visitors can be worth more than 1000 or perhaps even 10,000 visitors you get from other channels like SEO. Plus, they may recommend both your book and your blog to their friends. That is the

multiplier effect of word of mouth traffic that makes all the effort worthwhile.

A book can also position you as an expert in your field, which can open doors like invitations for paid speaking engagements. The various channels and formats for distributing your book (discussed way back in the Digital Age Basics section as examples of income streams) offer diversification in a way that SEO does not. You don't have all your eggs in one vulnerable basket. You get to take advantage of powerful platforms like Amazon to market your book. If your book is profitable after paying for the few things you need to publish a book, like a good cover image, then the website traffic you get from the book can break the basic rule I mentioned earlier of no traffic being completely free. Although writing a good book does take time, if it is profitable on its own then the website traffic it generates is a bonus that is essentially free. Keep in mind in the eBook era the book you write doesn't have to be nearly as long as this one is turning out to be!

3. Viral Videos

Upcoming **Success Story #2** of Alex and Mimi Ikonn makes the potential for this free traffic tactic abundantly clear. You first heard about them earlier when we discussed their Youtube channel leading to 7 figures income in the first year and 7 figures profit in their second year. The term viral simply refers to the exponential rate at which interesting videos get shared. This can result in tremendous amounts of traffic back to your website from video sites like Youtube. Again, unlike SEO, if the videos are good, this traffic will be pre-sold traffic. People will be visiting your blog because they are looking for more from you, rather than SEO searchers that are browsing around looking at many different sites on a subject.

Youtube is the biggest video sharing site, but you can experiment with other video sharing sites as well. This can help you can get even more traffic from the videos you work hard to create. There may be other video sharing sites besides Youtube where your particular tribe is more likely to hang out. Videos are a great way to diversify your traffic sources beyond SEO. However, creating good videos takes time and an investment in some decent equipment. As with all of these traffic tactics, you will have to decide where it makes the most sense for you to

focus. To get good at videos you may need to concentrate on it exclusively for a while.

4. Articles for Big Traffic Sites

This one is about thinking bigger than what many internet marketing courses typically recommend (especially older courses that may still be out there). They talk about creating bland keyword optimized articles to post on hundreds of article directory sites or so called *web 2.0* sites that accept articles posted from the public. This tactic did work for me in the past, but I would caution against it now for the reasons mentioned earlier related to the Google search algorithm changes.

Many people used automated software to post these kinds of articles to many sites, which degraded the effectiveness of the strategy over time. Especially once Google caught on and changed their algorithm to discount these sites and sites that were using them for back links. Pleasing Google was really the only reason for that tactic, because the chances of a real person finding you from an article posted to most article directory sites or spammy web 2.0 sites are slim to none. I'm not saying this will definitely not work. There may be some new variations of this strategy out there where this does still work (at least for now). I'm just saying be careful about where you get your back links from. For my time and money I would consider a slightly more advanced version of this basic strategy.

For example, doing guest posts on other people's blogs in your niche can still be a very good idea, both for exposure and for back links. This tactic can yield good results if the blogs you are guest posting to are doing well in the SERPs, and have their own sizeable tribe that you would be gaining access to. This takes some work to find and contact appropriate blogs in your niche to offer them exclusive articles to use on their site. Some sites love to allow guest posts with unique content because those posts contribute to the SEO traffic of their site and it gives their followers fresh new content without any effort or expense on their part.

An extension to this is if you can get your articles accepted at big social sites like LinkedIn, which was starting to accept articles from some of their members as I was writing this book.

Linkedin is in a completely different league from the old web 2.0 sites. It could get you in front of many career focused individuals that frequent the site. However, thinking even bigger has advantages.

Why not try and write articles that are good enough to get accepted to high traffic sites that your friends and family may have heard of? Like the Huffington Post or Entrepreneur Magazine or any large publication in your niche. Sites that would provide unimpeachable and powerful back links. Google knows exactly how popular and informative these sites are and values their links accordingly. One back link from an *authority site* is worth many, many links from smaller sites. More importantly, your article would get read by thousands of real people that would potentially be pre-sold by your article before they ever land on your blog or book sales page. For me this is the real reason to consider this tactic. Any SEO benefits it provides would simply be a bonus.

These large sites need good new content everyday. Providing it for them in a way that points back to you and your blog is a form of *content marketing*. Go to the sites and read some of the articles posted there to get an idea of what they are looking for. Notice the kinds of writers that are writing for those sites and what they are including in their bio to get readers back to their own blog, website, or book.

Write an article and pitch it to the editors. I know from others that I follow that this tactic is working very well for some people. *Why not you?* At this stage in my journey I am saying *why not me?* Because I haven't tried this yet, but plan to as a means to promote this book and my PurrPassiveIncome.com blog. When I get to that stage of my journey I will share what I learn about pitching large publications in my email newsletter (**PurrPassiveIncome.com/join**).

When I get articles posted to these sites you will be the first to know about them and exactly what steps I took, including the pitch emails I send to editors to get the articles published. Keep in mind this is a free tactic that can also result in some direct income for you, as some large publications will pay you for good articles. This is one area where you and I can learn together as we move forward with our Digital Age ventures!

5. Social Networking Sites

It is no secret that social media is a great way to connect with people for free. How to do it effectively for a business is another matter altogether. Every social media platform has its own written and unwritten rules. Talking about business on Facebook is going against the grain of what people are there for. Doing the same thing on LinkedIn is expected. Posting to either of those sites 5 or more times a day would probably be seen as spam. Doing the same thing on Twitter is probably necessary to get seen in the massive Twitter feeds most people are viewing. I see big news publications posting the exact same tweets in my feed at different times on the same day and it doesn't bother me. It is simply how things are done on Twitter.

One thing that is unlikely to work for long on any platform is posting only self promotional or sales content repeatedly. You need to post things that are useful or at least interesting with no immediate obvious gain to yourself, more often than not. That is what the *social* in social media means. If you don't people will tune you out, unfollow you, or do whatever it takes to avoid you. Social media is about building relationships, not about direct selling. How long would you stay friends with someone that tried to sell you something every time you met them for lunch? I would guess not long. This means the goal of your social media campaigns should be more about establishing relationships. This is where the squeeze page tactic discussed earlier can work well. Offering something useful for free (your lead magnet) to get people on your list is a good way to start a long term relationship.

How you go about this would be different depending on the platform you are focusing on. What works on Pinterest may not work on Instagram. Tactics for individual platforms can vary according to your niche. Try and get good at one of them at a time, assuming social media is the best starting point for you and your business. If you spread yourself too thin you will get nowhere. I plan to focus on paid advertising and perhaps articles on LinkedIn when I start to promote this book. That is my plan at the moment, but it could change as I learn more about what works for me (**PURR** = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat).

6. Paid Advertising

There are all kinds of paid options for promoting your squeeze pages and other offers. From keyword-based Pay Per Click (PPC) search engine marketing like Google Adwords to demographic-driven advertising like Facebook. For authors there are many book-related sites that will promote your book via emails to their large subscriber base (e.g. bookbub.com). My experience with Google Adwords tells me that is probably not a viable alternative for a low priced product like this book considering the relatively expensive keywords I would need to target. However, with a strong back end sales funnel of other offers you never know. I will need to determine the lifetime value of my book customers before deciding if I want to give Google Adwords a try. There are countless places you can advertise, with new ones popping up all the time. Each one is a different channel that you can consider for promoting your Digital Age venture. Focus on one at a time and master it before moving on to others.

Just be sure to start out slow and keep within a reasonable budget. Paid ads can be a good way to try some things out to see if there is any interest before spending time on free tactics like SEO, which take longer to develop. You could launch a \$5/day campaign on Facebook and get some statistically significant results to evaluate your overall strategy. Don't expect to be profitable with your first ad. Paid advertising is a process of refining your ads and landing pages and offers with a/b split testing to find something you can make profitable over time. It took a while for me to get to \$18,000 revenue per month for a \$5000 per month Google Adwords spend (my Google Adwords experience mentioned at the beginning of this book). Think of your early attempts as gathering data that you can use to refine your process. Even if you can't make paid ads profitable for your business, the data you gather can be invaluable. This type of data can help you to refine your process and identify keywords or target markets that resonate with what you have to offer.

Benefits come before features. When crafting paid ads always focus on benefits first. I'm certainly not the first person to say this, although I did learn the truth of it the hard way from split testing many ads. Ad platforms like Google Adwords and Facebook will typically give you very little space to get your

message across. If you only have room for two short sentences make the first one about benefits, and the second one about features. For example, if I were running an ad to promote this book I might say something like this: *Make money doing work you love. 12 Steps to Success in the Digital Age.*

The first sentence is about making money and being happy, which are benefits. The second sentence is about the 12 Steps in the **PURR Power Wheel™** and the focus on Digital Age ventures, which are features of the system. This concept applies beyond just paid ads of course, although you could argue it is more important to get it right when you are paying for ads.

The great thing about paid ads is they can give you reliable traffic that you can ramp up or down like toggling a switch. When you find an ad channel and tactic that yields \$2 or more in sales for every \$1 in ad costs you are in business. If you can do that then you may not need to worry much about time consuming free tactics like SEO. If you can't do that then paid advertising may not be appropriate long term as a tactic that supports your current strategy.

Each business model and strategy is different. The depth of your back end offers may need to be improved before paid ads make sense for your situation. If all you have to offer is a \$9 ebook then it may be hard to make paid ads work. If you tack on other products and affiliate offers to your back end that you can offer to your email list, the economics of paid advertising can shift dramatically. Find what works for you and make improvements over time. If paid ads don't make sense for you now, consider trying again in a year when you have your business more developed. It can be a great way to scale your business very quickly and make more money in the Digital Age.

7. Optimizing for Specific Search Engines like Amazon

Many big websites have their own internal search engines, like Youtube and Amazon. Depending on your business model they can be more important than Google or Bing/Yahoo for you. They have their own rules. For example, unlike Google, a big part of Amazon's algorithm is based on customer reviews and sales numbers. This is true whether you are selling books or physical products on Amazon. The more you sell and the better

your reviews the higher you rank in their search results. They want to make money so they show people what is popular and selling well. Consistent sales over time are said to be more effective than a big bang sales event. This means you may want to space out your ad campaigns or segment your list so you don't email everyone at once about your new product or special deal. These are the kinds of things you need to learn about specific search platforms to optimize your presence there.

If you are selling a book then optimizing for Amazon is an indirect way of getting traffic to your blog (as long as you remember to mention your blog in your book). In general, if there is a particular search engine that makes sense for your business, learn as much as you can about it. Read and learn about the platform and experiment yourself to learn what works. Always pick the next thing that you think is most likely to work for your business. Get good at that one thing before moving on to the next thing. Unless you can afford an army of talented virtual assistants, don't heed advice that says you need to be everywhere. You don't. What you need is to get good at one thing at a time. Once you know how it works chances are you can find ways to automate or outsource the processes to keep it working for you as you move on to the next thing. The economics of outsourcing shift dramatically if you only outsource things that you know for a fact are bringing you results! (More on that in the upcoming Team Build chapter.)

8. Content Recommendation Platforms

This is a paid service that I put in a different category than standard Pay Per Click (PPC) services because of the unique way that it drives traffic to your blog. It is also a tactic that is not as well known as other paid advertising alternatives, and is much cheaper in my experience (although the traffic is less targeted).

A content recommendation platform such as **Outbrain** will place your ads at the bottom of articles on news sites and other high traffic sites. They may show up under a heading that says something like: *Also on the Web*. This is a variation of the content marketing strategy described above in tactic #4, which was about providing articles for other sites that point readers back to your site. In this case you place your articles directly on

your own blog and pay to get traffic to those articles.

With Outbrain you can pay to promote certain pages on your blog to a wide audience, as long as those pages contain some interesting content (e.g. not product pages from an e-commerce store). You will come up with compelling headlines and perhaps thumbnail images to encourage people to click through and visit your blog. I have used this technique to get traffic to my blogs and it works pretty well. It's like turning on a "traffic tap." It taps into the millions of people that are simply browsing interesting content on large popular websites on a daily basis.

This tactic may be of particular interest if you have a media mogul style website or blog where you are targeting a general interest audience. (Refer back to the Choose Your Strategy section for more details on the media mogul business model.) However, the strategy is also used by folks trying to attract a specific audience related to products or services that everyone may need at some point in their lives (e.g. home security systems).

Make sure you have some interesting content on your blog and you can tap into this very large audience of voracious readers. And of course make sure that the signup form for your email list is in one or two prominent places on your blog post! If you are paying for traffic you will want to get something out of it besides a one-time visitor. However, be sure to read the rules for whatever platform you are using.

For example, in my experience Outbrain does not allow you to have affiliate links on the blog posts you promote with them. I don't want to comment definitively on that here as rules can change. Just be sure you know what the rules are for whatever platform you want to use by reading their terms of service. Keep in mind getting new people on your list can be much more profitable long term than sending them to affiliate offers immediately, so restrictions like no affiliate links shouldn't concern you too much if you have a good email list and back end strategy.

9. Link Bait

Link bait is often thought of as an SEO tactic. However, its

usefulness and implementation can go well beyond SEO. That's why it is separated out as a standalone tactic here. For example, it can work well in combination with the content recommendation platforms just discussed, create buzz on social networks, and drive word of mouth traffic. The link bait tactic involves creating special pages on your site that can generate buzz. These are pages that people would tend to want to link to from their sites and tell their friends about. They can be particularly helpful blog posts like the "Top 10 Ways to _____." They can be pages with a strong opinion or even something a little bit shocking or controversial. For example, you could publicly disagree with a famous person.

Link bait is really anything that people in your niche would have a hard time NOT clicking on. A related technique that can work very well is called **news jacking**. That is finding ways to associate your brand with something that is trending in the news or in popular culture. A great example of this is when Michelle Phan did a video on her Youtube makeup channel to show how to do makeup like Lady Gaga. The story goes that this catapulted her to success virtually overnight. Her Youtube channel now has over 8 million subscribers!

Blog owners will sometimes post monthly income reports showing how much money the blog is generating each month broken down by income stream. These tend to be very popular and generate buzz in the "make money online" community. Whatever niche you are in, write something that would be sure to generate some discussion with your tribe. Then consider using a content recommendation platform like Outbrain to get the word out about your new blog post. You can also use your social media channels to generate some initial buzz. Or you could talk about it on a podcast, the topic of our next tactic. If it is a good link bait page it could take on a life of its own long after you stop promoting it. People might start mentioning it to their friends and to followers on their social networks.

Along the way people may start linking to your link bait blog post from their websites, the original goal of this tactic. This could raise that page up in the SERPs and enhance the overall SEO profile of your blog. Back links that you get to your blog from the link bait tactic tend to be very helpful. This is exactly the kind of thing Google had in mind when their algorithm started to count back links to rank sites. Done well these are

back links based on other people finding your blog post helpful or interesting. This is considered a form of white hat link building.

10. Podcasts

Podcasts are an entire ecosystem that you can tap into once you start to have some success. As mentioned earlier, they are completely free and available to anyone with a smartphone, which is almost everyone these days. Popular podcasts can generate many thousands of downloads per episode. Podcasts that specialize in your niche can give you better and more targeted exposure than doing an interview on big radio or television networks. Similar to the big traffic websites mentioned earlier, podcasters need fresh new content all the time. Pitch them your story and see if they would be interested in doing an interview with you. You can find podcasts by searching on your niche keywords in iTunes or in a podcast player on your phone. You can also find them and position yourself so that radio shows and podcasts come to you by joining services like *RadioGuestList.com*.

The way it works is podcasters will ask their guests at the end of the podcast where the listeners can learn more about them. That is when you can mention your blog or book or whatever you want to promote. This is essentially your payment for appearing on the podcast. The podcaster also *gets paid* because they satisfy their listeners with fresh new content. Not only that, the people they interview will generally tell their own tribe about the interview, which generates even more listeners to their podcast. Everybody wins. The podcaster, the listener, the guest. This technique can generate some very good free traffic for your blog. You will see (and hear) this technique in action in the upcoming success stories section. Each Success Story will be based on a podcast interview that you can listen to before or after reading the Success Story.

11. Affiliate Armies

When you are starting out, affiliate marketing is a way for you to generate some income from your blog and later from your email list. When you get to more advanced strategies, like creating your own products or membership sites for example, then you can consider the other side of affiliate marketing. That

is signing up an army of affiliates to promote your offers and paying them a commission. This can be an extremely powerful way to get qualified traffic to your offers. People that have spent years building up their email lists are on the lookout for ways to monetize their lists. Create something that would resonate with their audience and have them promote it to their email subscribers. The people on their list already know, like, and trust them. There is no better channel to introduce your products to than that.

Although I have dabbled in getting affiliates for my own products, some of my biggest paydays came from promoting other people's products to my lists. I'm talking about making thousands of dollars in a single day after sending an email to my subscribers. The product owners had many affiliates and therefore made much more than that. I can tell you from experience that list owners are very interested in finding good products to promote to their lists.

However, you do need to convince potential affiliates your product is worthy of their time and attention. There is nothing worse for a list owner than promoting something that goes nowhere. Beyond making no money it tends to destroy trust with their tribe. To get big time affiliates you will need to provide them with metrics, like your conversion rates in campaigns that you have done on your own before approaching them. This is an advanced strategy that can be like the holy grail of getting traffic after you have an established product and sales funnel that converts.

If you think you are at that point, you can use affiliate networks like those described in the next section to setup and manage your affiliate program. You may get some affiliates just by being part of those networks. Then consider contacting some of the heavy hitters in your niche to see if they would be interested in promoting your products for an affiliate commission. If you are ready for this you will already know who they are. Chances are you will have already been promoting their products to your list prior to developing your own products!

12. Community Building

PURR Passive Income Power™ talks a lot about building a

community with your blog and email list. These are powerful techniques for all the reasons mentioned in other sections of this book. However, building communities that go beyond a blog and list of email subscribers can be a great way to generate traffic. My idea of creating a new social network (LifeRebooter.com) for people wanting to reboot their lives with Digital Age ventures is an example, although it is still just an idea as I am writing these words. You can imagine how a site like that could generate traffic for this book if it had ads for the book on the site. The main motivation always needs to be what is good for the community, or it won't work. However, create a vibrant community like that and you control the ads that go on it. I have created user forums in various niches in the past that had the effect of driving traffic to my offers.

One downside of this tactic is the need to tirelessly work to keep spammers away who are only there to promote their own offers without providing any value to the community. Much of this can be automated, but don't think this is about setting up sites that will operate on auto-pilot at no cost to you. Providing a decent service like that to people for free takes time, money and effort. In my case I hired virtual assistants to help out with moderating the forums. The win-win here is folks get access to a useful service for free, while you can generate traffic to offers that you customize for that community. If you do it right the community benefits from these customized ads that point to offers that can help them out with the journey they are on.

Yet another level of community building would be if your ideas resonate with people on a large scale. In this case perhaps people will start to organize meetup groups in their cities using sites like meetup.com to organize events related to your ideas. This is something you may be able to encourage, but it would largely happen on its own if you are promoting ideas that resonate with people in a big way. For example, some very successful diet and exercise programs can inspire this type of response from their tribe. At that point you would have large scale word of mouth working to promote your brand to a wider audience.

So there you have it. 12 tactics for generating traffic for your offers. The next section on Digital Age Tools will focus on tools you can take advantage of to make these tactics come to life!

iv. Digital Age Tools (Tools and Techniques)

There are many excellent tools you can use to drive your Digital Age strategy forward. Each category of tool has a number of competing products or services. You have heard about some of these earlier in the book. This section will focus on summarizing and describing the categories, and will name some of the top products and services at time of writing.

The individual products and services tend to come and go, and there are always new and often better ones emerging. For that reason, in-depth details of individual products and services will be reserved for the blog (links below). The blog pages can be kept up to date over time and a book cannot. Although I could update future versions of the book, I cannot change the book you have in your hands now.

Below you will find explanations of each category. These explanations will not be on the blog. The content of this book is separate and unique from the blog. Read this entire section to get a good overview and understanding of how each category of tool can help you with your business. Then go to the blog to review details and links to individual products and services using the following link:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/tools

If you have been paying attention up to this point you will realize there are other reasons I am doing it this way. These are things to keep in mind for your own business. A blog page can help build a list and be kept up to date with affiliate links. So of course I would like to give you reasons to visit my blog. At time of writing I also know certain types of affiliate links are not allowed in Kindle books, such as Amazon Associates Program affiliate links. I don't know what the future holds. Therefore I choose not to include any affiliate links in this book at all. All links in this book go to my blog.

A side benefit to this is I think it raises the stature of a book somewhat if it isn't riddled with affiliate links, which is a common tactic of folks trying to make a quick buck rather than build a relationship with their readers. Those folks often do not reveal that the links in their books are affiliate links that they stand to profit from by recommending them to their readers.

Again, I believe being completely transparent about what you are doing is a key factor in building a tribe that will follow you in the Digital Age. Of course you need to balance that somewhat with not going overboard explaining things all the time, which can detract from your message. In the case of this book, I think a few longer explanations like this one about how the money is being made are warranted. After all, the main theme of this book is to help you make money in the Digital Age. The spirit of these points are worth considering when building your own business, whether or not that business includes writing a book.

Email Marketing Services

These are services that can help you to build and manage the all-important "list" that we have been discussing. This is the center piece of your platform, the one thing you own that is immune to outside factors like search algorithm changes and changing rules or costs on ad platforms. If you are going to have a list, you need a service to help you with it. Here's why:

I tried to do it on my own with my first online business (the fitness membership site). Since I was a programmer and had created the membership site myself from scratch, it seemed logical to do this myself also. It didn't take long to realize that an email marketing service is well worth the money you pay for it. For example, after awhile I started getting "bounce backs" from emails I sent out to my list. These are people that signed up with an email address that they later abandoned. Every time I sent an email to my list I would have to manually remove the bounce back email addresses from the list to prepare for the next email I would send. This was very time consuming and no fun. An email marketing service automates this for you.

I also had to work with my web hosting company to explain why I was sending so many emails from my account, and make adjustments to satisfy them. Email marketing services specialize in this, there is no explaining to do or adjustments to make. Email marketing services also work hard on "deliverability." This means they work with big email providers like Hotmail and Yahoo to assure them that emails coming from their domains are not spam, because they have their own initiatives to guard against sending unsolicited emails that do not conform to the CAN-SPAM act. If they got blacklisted by the

big email providers like Hotmail and Yahoo it would destroy their business, so they are vigilant and proactive about conformance and deliverability. That is good news for you and your business.

Email marketing services also make it easy to add signup forms to your website and setup auto-responder series. These are a series of emails that automatically go out on a schedule to new subscribers to your list (like a 7 day course you may decide to include as part of your lead magnet). Email marketing services provide analytics that are invaluable for the kind of a/b split testing you will want to do to compare signup rates for different signup forms and lead magnets. You can download backups of your list in case you ever need or want to change providers. Having your own backups is important so that you are not depending too much on a single email marketing provider.

I could go on and on with more examples of what email marketing services provide, but this is probably enough to give you the general idea. It is always a good idea to check that the specific service you sign up for provides the features you are looking for. The above short list includes some features that are typically offered, but may not be offered by every service. The service that I have used over the years provides all these features and much more. I will review that service in detail on the blog.

I can tell you from experience that doing it on your own falls short on all counts. Unless you want to become an email marketing service provider yourself, there is no need to re-invent the wheel here. This is an example of outsourcing by taking advantage of existing services that already do one thing very well, so you don't have to.

Here is a list of some of the big players in this category:

Aweber, ConstantContact, Infusionsoft, GetResponse, MailChimp

Web Hosting, Domain Names, and Blogging Tools

Like email marketing services, web hosting is something you should not try to do yourself. Although in an effort to learn everything the hard way, I did try it in the beginning. In my

defense, this was a long time ago and things like this weren't as obvious as they are today. I think nowadays it is fairly common knowledge that you need to purchase web hosting to have a viable business, so I won't go into all the details about why here. Suffice it to say you need a reliable 24/7 web presence that you have full control over with a domain name that you own. This is virtual real estate that you can build up and sell for a profit at some point.

However, it is understandable that you may want to try things out for free to begin with, then transfer your website/blog to your own domain later. That option is covered in the free companion book to this one, found here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/659free

If you want to go straight to owning your own domain, go to the "Start your blog in under 5 minutes" process I mentioned earlier:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/start

When you follow those steps you will be asked to pay for the web hosting, and a domain name will be included in the package. Yes, web hosting for your own domain costs money, but when compared to the cost of starting any other type of business or setting up a storefront of any kind, it is an amazing bargain only made possible by the Digital Age. Also part of the 5 minute process is a one click install of Wordpress on your new domain. You just choose it as part of the web hosting signup process, and when you are done your new Wordpress site is setup and ready to go.

Wordpress is most well known as a blogging platform, but it is actually a very powerful (and free) Content Management System (CMS). With its theming approach to establishing your User Interface (UI), you can make a Wordpress site look and feel any way you like by installing a different theme. The web host I have selected for you has free Wordpress videos as part of the package that step you through common procedures like changing a Wordpress theme. A CMS like Wordpress is necessary so that you can add content to your website as easily as you create an email. No technical skills are required. Instead of clicking Send like you do with an email, you click Post to post

your new content to your blog.

You don't need to find web hosting in your own city or region. I live in Canada and use hosting services in the United States. The key is to find reliable hosting at a reasonable price. There are so many options and such a wide range in quality and services offered that I won't go into all the details here. I have researched and tried various services. Visit the blog to get started:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/start

Payment Processing Tools

If you want to sell products of any kind directly from your own blog you must consider various ways to collect the money. When I first started selling my own products (memberships to my fitness membership site) I thought I needed to get my own **merchant accounts** with the credit card companies. This was complicated then and is even more so today with the need for PCI DSS quarterly security screenings and security assessments among other things.

I won't go into the details of merchant accounts here, you can look it up online if you have the type of business that warrants the extra effort. Luckily for me, I discovered that **PayPal** could take credit card payments for my business using their merchant accounts (as well as directly via their own payment service which many of my customers preferred). This made things much easier and I was up and running pretty quickly. I still had to collect and remit sales taxes, but for the most part this made life a lot easier.

Later on I discovered **Clickbank**, first as an affiliate then later as a merchant when I sold an investment course from one of my websites through them. They specialize in a wide array of downloadable information products that offer high commissions to affiliates. They are setup as resellers where they buy your product and resell it to the customer each time an order is placed. This puts them into the category of Internet Retailer. By doing this they can take care of all the details for you like collecting taxes and remitting to 10,000 U.S. jurisdictions and 30+ VAT countries.

They are familiar with the kinds of sales spikes that are a normal part of product launches in the Digital Age, and won't freeze your account at the worst possible time due to security concerns. They also provide first line customer service, and their online marketplace attracted affiliates to promote my product. They took care of everything like online reporting and affiliate payments. My affiliates and I got paid every 2 weeks like clockwork, and we could see new sales come into our accounts in real time immediately after a customer finished their purchase. For all this they charged around 7% of the sale price compared to the 3% or so I paid to PayPal at the time. For comparison purposes, a large company with their own merchant accounts can probably negotiate their Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) down below 2%.

That gives you a basic idea of what to look for. Each payment processing service is a bit different. Read their terms of service and compare their value added services to decide which one will work best for you.

Some other competing services you may want to look into are:

Stripe, Selz, Gumroad, Braintree.

If you are setting up an E-commerce store you will want to get into shopping cart providers like the ones found here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/carts

The shopping cart providers integrate with payment processors and manage all the details for you.

Online Marketplaces

As mentioned earlier, there are plenty of ways to get paid for your own products without selling things directly from your own blog. This completely removes you from payment processing responsibilities, and as an added bonus marketplaces like Amazon can generate excellent traffic to your offers. You can and should still have your own blog. The difference is you link to your own products on these marketplaces from your blog posts, rather than to your own payment processing page. This way you still get whatever traffic you can generate via your blog and list, plus additional traffic the online marketplace can

generate for you.

These two channels can feed and support each other. By generating sales from your own blog and list you will rank higher on the marketplace site (e.g. the Amazon search algorithm). The higher you rank on a marketplace like Amazon the more you will build brand recognition which may eventually lead people to your blog. Whether you are selling your own eBook or importing products from China to sell on Amazon, online marketplaces can do a lot to help you sell your products.

Keep in mind as well that some of these selling platforms have their own affiliate programs, like the Amazon Associates Program. The better your product ranks at Amazon, the more likely it is that Amazon affiliates will want to promote your product. Yet another trick of the trade is to join the Amazon Associates program yourself and link to your own products from your blog using your own affiliate link. By doing this you will make money from anything the people clicking on your link purchase from Amazon for the next 24 hours, not just your own products.

Some big players in this category are:

Amazon, Udemy, Etsy, Ebay, Audible.

Affiliate Marketing Networks

There are plenty of highly respected companies that would love to have you mention them on your blog, and they are willing to pay you for the privilege. Depending on where you are at in your journey, it may make sense for you to deal with them directly by negotiating your own product placement deals. This involves writing blog posts where you highlight a company that fits perfectly with the topic of your blog post. For example, a blog post about yoga may feature photos of people wearing yoga clothing from a particular brand like Lululemon. The Merry Maker sisters in upcoming Success Story #1 have been very successful with this strategy.

However, when you are just starting out, this more advanced strategy is probably not the best use of your time and energy. Your time may be better spent instead finding quick and easy ways to promote relevant companies on your blog. One way to

do this is to join some of the larger Affiliate Networks such as:

CJ Affiliate by Conversant, Rakuten Linkshare, Shareasale, Clickbank, Amazon

Go here for more details and links:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/affiliateprograms

Again, the names and players tend to change over time. CJ Affiliate used to be called Commission Junction. Rakuten Linkshare changed their name to the Rakuten Affiliate Network. However, there are plenty of resources on the internet that still refer to them as Linkshare, which is why I mention that name here. It can be hard to keep up, which is why I always refer you to the blog for more up to date information.

The key point here is these large affiliate networks exist and you can gain access to commissions from highly respected companies by joining those networks. They give you access to affiliate links for hundreds of companies in every imaginable niche and thousands of products all in one place. They are transparent marketplaces that show you metrics on how well a particular affiliate program is performing so you can choose the best performing programs for your blog. They provide you with an affiliate dashboard so you can see how well you are doing, and they pay you in a single reliable payment for all the affiliate programs you promote within their network.

Some Words of Caution

Don't confuse Affiliate Networks with CPA (Cost Per Action) Networks. Although there are some similarities and overlap, getting into CPA Networks can lead you into the dark side of this business if you aren't careful. Not every CPA offer falls into this category. Even some of the respected companies on the large Affiliate Networks will sometimes give you a CPA option for promoting their products. So not all CPA is bad. However, beware of offers like the ones that pay you \$30 or more just to get people to agree to accept a free bottle of some product or other. These very flashy sales pages have a history of hiding or describing in fine print the fact that the free bottle leads to very expensive recurring monthly deliveries of more bottles.

Promoting offers like this will get you banned for life from services like Google Adwords. It will alienate your tribe. It goes against all the principles being promoted in this book. Principles like treating your tribe the same as you would your friends and family, and building a long term business by building trust with your tribe. There are plenty of websites and courses promoting CPA marketing as the road to riches. If that sort of thing appeals to you, please don't join my list. You will get nothing out of it.

Contextual Advertising (Google AdSense)

An even easier way to monetize your website is to join the *Google AdSense* program (google.com/adsense). This is contextual advertising, which means you just paste your AdSense code into your blog and AdSense will automatically serve up ads that are related to your content. You may find some of the same advertisers showing up on your pages as the ones you find in the Affiliate Networks. The main differences are it is less effort on your part, and you get paid every time someone clicks on an ad on your blog. They don't have to actually buy something as with a standard affiliate offer. You get paid less per click than per sale, but it can still add up to more revenue for you. The AdSense program is also the way that Google pays you for ads you may choose to allow on your Youtube videos (Google owns Youtube).

Although there are competing contextual ad services to AdSense, I have never heard of one that comes close to AdSense in terms of revenue share paid out to blog owners. On the forums I have followed over the years, you typically hear about people trying these other services after they have been banned from AdSense, and being disappointed with the results. Your mileage may vary.

However, if you want to try contextual advertising, treat the AdSense program with respect. Read their terms of service and try not to break any of their rules. Wait until you have some good content and real traffic to your blog before signing up for AdSense. Don't promote shady offers on your site or engage in practices that Google would see as shady, such as arbitrage. Arbitrage is where you send cheap paid traffic to your site hoping you will make more money from AdSense clicks than you pay for the traffic.

Above all, don't click on the AdSense ads on your own websites. This is nothing short of stealing from your advertisers. Google has ways to detect all of these practices and will ban you without a second thought. Don't waste time trying to beat them at their own game. If you are offering something of value to a tribe and have a following, chances are Google AdSense will accept your blog into their network, but there are no guarantees.

The case against AdSense is it tends to send your hard earned traffic to another website before they have a chance to get to know you. Advanced strategies focus more on list building than AdSense, so that you can promote your own products or affiliate network products to your list over time. However, AdSense can be good for some blogs. Especially if you are in a niche that generates high payouts per click. Or if you just don't have the time and energy to think about list building, back end offers, and creating your own products. But if AdSense doesn't work out for you, don't worry about it. Actually don't waste too much time worrying about anything that doesn't work out for you. If you can't fix it, move on to the next thing (**PURR** = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!).

Project Management / Collaboration Tools

Whether you are working alone or in a team, the online project management and collaboration tools that are available today can help you tremendously. Much more versatile and helpful than a simple Excel spreadsheet, using a tool to manage your projects and teams is an excellent strategy. Especially since many of them are available for free. When it comes to managing your PURR Hopper and Spins, a tool is by far the best way to keep everything on track. You don't want to be confused about where you are at in the process or what you should be doing next.

Follow this link to the blog to learn how to use my top (free) choice for managing your PURR Passive Income Power™ journey:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/software

Here are some of the competitors in this space at time of

writing:

Trello, Asana, Basecamp, Slack

Analytics Tools

Analytics tools like *Google Analytics (google.com/analytics)* or *Clicky Analytics (clicky.com)* for your blog are invaluable for understanding what is working for you, where your blog traffic is coming from, and how people are interacting with your blog. As mentioned above, some email marketing services also provide their own analytics tools to measure things like email open rates and split tests for signup forms. This is an important category of tools to pay some attention to.

Assorted Productivity Tools

The intention of this section is not to overwhelm you with every possible Digital Age tool that is out there. There are a lot. For every imaginable purpose, and for plenty of purposes you can't imagine until the day comes when you need them.

The tools covered here are the most important when starting out. You can go far without going beyond these tools. However, when the time comes, you will want to know more about how to use each tool, and you will want to know about more tools. For that reason, I plan to make the Assorted Productivity Tools section on the blog a one stop shop for all of your needs. Many of these tools are completely free to use. It will evolve over time as I find time to add more and more content to it.

From *keyword planning tools* to e-commerce tools like *Shopify* to social media management tools like *Hootsuite* to integration tools like *IFTTT* and *Zapier* that connect everything together, I plan to cover it all on my blog eventually. You will find links to all the various categories of tools here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/tools

Okay, we have covered a lot of ground. Now let's pull it all together with some Success Stories.

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

IX. Success Stories

"You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with." - Jim Rohn

This section will summarize some impressive stories of people succeeding in the Digital Age. Spend some time with them here and benefit from their experience. You will recognize some of the strategies we discussed earlier in the book. These are not top secret strategies, nor are they unique to **PURR Passive Income Power™**. The truth is success in the Digital Age is about doing some basic things well.

This selection of success stories is the result of many hours listening to podcasts on my daily (walking) commutes. That's one way I like to spend time with successful folks that I would never run into otherwise. As in Jim Rohn's quote above, it improves my average of the 5 people I spend the most time with.

The bonus for you is that you will learn about some excellent podcasts as you read through the stories. These are free podcasts that you can listen to on your mobile phone. Some people may think I'm crazy to introduce you to my competitors. I prefer to think of the folks hosting these podcasts as my community. It is good for you to have other sources of information besides this book and my blog & newsletter (and **LifeRebooter.com** once I get that site up and running).

The truth is you will find other sources of information anyway. Plenty of those sources could steer you wrong in my experience and opinion. I would prefer to help you find some good ones that will inspire you to succeed, both here and in my email newsletter. If you haven't signed up for my free newsletter yet, you can do so here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/join

Please enjoy and benefit from these success stories and podcasts. You will find links to the actual podcast episodes and other links related to these success stories here:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/success

From there you can listen to real people talk about their successful Digital Age strategies in their own words. I will make the podcasts available from my blog as an alternative to getting setup to listen to them on your phone. I have noticed older episodes sometimes disappear from podcast feeds, so this should make it easier for you to find and listen to the specific episodes referenced below. Just go to the above link and click Play on each one.

For now, I hope you enjoy the short summaries of my selected success stories here. I will try to relate their experiences back to some of the principles we have been discussing together up to now in PURR Passive Income Power™.

Keep in mind that some of these success stories include advanced strategies that may not make sense for you when you are just starting out. However, they give you a good idea of the kinds of things you can consider working towards after you get your basic blog generating a little bit of income. You will notice all the success stories below involve a blog as part of their overall platform.

Remember that not knowing how to do certain things is no longer a barrier to success in the Digital Age. There are plenty of ways to learn how from the comfort of your own home when the time comes for you do so.

Success Story #1

Bloggng & List Building Success - The Merry Maker Sisters

Podcast Name: Six Figure Side Gig

Episode: 13 - Merry Maker Sisters - Creating a Huge, Loyal Following

Listen to Podcast: PurrPassiveIncome.com/success

If you are looking for inspiration, listen to this podcast episode. The Merry Maker Sisters (Emma and Carla Papas) bring a completely contagious energy and enthusiasm to it that can't help but rub off on you. That is just one of the reasons I am making this Success Story #1.

Another reason is that the Merry Maker Sisters took something that had deep meaning for them personally, and shared it with the world. If you aren't sure what that is for you, the **Vision** chapter of PURR Passive Income Power™ is there to help you figure it out. Emma and Carla were able to quit their government jobs and work on their blog full time. They get around 100,000 unique visitors to their blog each month. They make a good living from it doing work they love.

What is that work? The Paleo diet solved Emma's gluten intolerance issues and restored her health. The sisters are passionate about how it helped them and they want to help others experience the same success. They work on creating innovative paleo diet recipes and share them on their blog. Much of their days are spent cooking, uploading photos of their creations to their blog, and creating recipe books. They also have an email list, so they reserve some recipes exclusively for their list as incentive for people to join their list.

They started by sharing some of their recipe images on Instagram. Soon after that they started their blog. Instagram is great for garnering attention, but as you have learned throughout this book, it is your blog and email list that establish your platform and enable you to monetize your ideas.

The Merry Maker sisters have done a great job creating their platform and have never looked back. They continue to use Instagram as a key spoke to drive traffic back to their platform, but are careful not to link back to their blog with every Instagram post. It is important to blend in and be social with social networking tools like Instagram. At the same time, they are not shy about promoting their blog on Instagram from time to time.

Emma and Carla combine various strategies discussed earlier in this book to drive their business forward. They sell books directly from their blog. They have a similar book under a different title that they sell on *Amazon*. They use social media to drive traffic to their blog and email list. They work directly with brands like Lululemon to monetize blog posts. This is what is working for them. Other strategies we have discussed may work better for you. Or you may find your own unique strategies. These success stories are meant to get your creative juices flowing!

Although the Merry Maker sisters started out with an idea and a spontaneous approach, they say they are now getting more **project focused**. They will focus on a book project one day and on building up their Youtube channel another day. This may be the best reason of all that I am making this Success Story #1. I love that they are recognizing a project focus is the way to expand their business and take it to the next level. Take advantage of the project management methods presented in **PURR Passive Income Power™** to create and expand *your* online business!

Success Story #2

Driving Sales with YouTube (Luxy Hair)

Podcast Name: Ask Altucher

Episode: 272 - How to Make 7-Figures a Year on YouTube

Listen to Podcast: PurrPassiveIncome.com/success

How do you go from in-debt recent university graduate with no job to over 2.5 million subscribers on your Youtube channel and over a million dollars per year in profit?

That is just part of the story that Mimi and Alex Ikonn have to share. Listen to this upbeat podcast and pay close attention to this success story.

One thing I love about this success story is they took a real problem they were having, solved it, then went on to solve it for thousands of others. It was a month before their wedding. Mimi had splurged on some hair extensions because she wanted to look elegant on her wedding day. She tried them on and they looked awful.

They went online to see videos of others trying on better hair extensions. They saw the strong emotional reaction as the hair extensions transformed how the people looked and felt. They noticed that the good hair extensions sold in stores were very expensive. They had been reading the 4 Hour Work Week and were in the mindset of looking for opportunities.

So they went on to alibaba.com, the go-to site for finding suppliers in China. They found they could import hair extensions at a small fraction of what it cost to purchase similar products in stores. They found a supplier with great quality that allowed them to offer the products at a modest profit for themselves, while still offering a significant discount to customers over what the stores were charging. They ordered some product from the Chinese supplier to try selling them online. Alex says they started out with a simple Wordpress blog and Wordpress theme for their first website.

An interesting aspect of this success story is they used a soft sell approach. They never asked anyone to buy their products, which goes against the typical Call To Action (CTA) approach advocated by most marketers. Instead, they produced helpful Youtube videos from their own home. Mimi would teach ways to make hair look better by demonstrating innovative braids and such. At some point she would mention the things she was using and wearing in the video, including the style of hair extensions she was wearing that day.

A key reason why the soft sell approach worked for the Ikonns is they created a brand name and corresponding website. They used their website to sell the hair extensions they were importing from China under the *Luxy Hair* brand. So Mimi might say something in the video like "*I am wearing my 160g strawberry blonde Luxy Hair extensions.*" And that was all she would say about them. She would immediately move on to the main teaching topic of the day. In the YouTube video descriptions they include a link to their Luxy Hair website.

That link is important, but I think more important is they planted their unique brand name (Luxy Hair) in the minds of the viewers. Anyone typing *Luxy Hair* into a search engine will find their website and blog. This is where people go to purchase the hair extensions. In the PURR Passive Income Power™ terms we discussed earlier, it is the *hub* that their Youtube *spoke* points to. They don't ask anyone to buy anything in the Youtube videos. But if you want to look like Mimi in the video, chances are you would seek out the same hair extensions she was wearing.

This approach worked great for them and may work great for you too. However, remember one of the main themes of this

book. That is, what works for others may not work for you. One reason this worked for them is the charisma that Mimi brings to those videos, so that visitors want to be like her. If your products or personality don't inspire that kind of passion, then the tried and true Call To Action approach that we discussed earlier in PURR Passive Income Power™ may work better for you.

The CTA approach is also better suited to a situation where you have numerous different things you offer and want to call attention to. For example, in contrast to Luxy Hair where it is all about hair extensions, I have included numerous links to different things I want to call your attention to throughout this book. Whatever approach you choose, the key always is to make sure what you are sending your visitors to provides enough value that they feel like it was worth the journey to get there!

Were the Ikonns expecting to get over 2.5 million subscribers to their Youtube channel? No, their initial goal was to foster a community of 1000 people. Even that seemed like an outrageous goal in the beginning. This is the power of the Digital Age. Solve a problem for a few people, and the potential to scale it is virtually unlimited!

Here are some key points I got out of this podcast:

1. For some online businesses a Youtube channel may be more important than an email list, if you only have the time and energy to do one or the other. Yes, PURR Passive Income Power™ advocates the email list as all important for many reasons that make good sense for Digital Age ventures. Chances are it will make good sense for you too. However, I am not going to argue with the kind of success the Ikonns and others have achieved with their Youtube channel! But do keep in mind that for the Youtube channel to work the Ikonns consistently post 1 or 2 new videos per week so their subscribers keep coming back week after week. This is a great strategy if you can manage to keep people inspired enough to keep coming back. In contrast, with an email list you can send emails to your list at any time. It is push vs pull. You can decide if you want to do one or the other or both!

2. For visually appealing products use visual channels like

Youtube and Instagram (the Ikonns have expanded from Youtube to Instagram for that reason).

3. Products that make an emotional connection with people can be very powerful. They can create tremendous potential for growing a business exponentially.

4. Consistent action resonates with people, like putting out a new video every week around the same time so subscribers can look forward to the next one. Like network television shows that inspire a following of people that view every episode week after week.

5. Youtube videos should be good but they don't have to be perfect. Leaving some flaws in the videos make you look more human and easier to relate to than a big brand that makes everything perfect.

6. Although the Ikonns went straight to importing hair extensions from China to monetize their business, keep in mind you can start more slowly if you wish. For example, you can still create a branded blog about any type of product and start getting traffic to it before you bother with any monetization at all. Then when you do monetize you can start out promoting affiliate products to earn commissions. If that goes well and you develop traffic and a following, you can start importing your own physical products as the Ikonns did, and simply swap out the affiliate offers with your own offers after you have established your *proof of concept*. This can be a good approach if your strategy will be similar to the Ikonns' strategy. Success Story #3 below presents a different way to think about importing physical products that you will sell under your own brand name, using Amazon as a key strategic partner in your success.

So what happened to the Ikonns after they had all this success? After the initial excitement they found themselves in the south of France feeling rather bored and unhappy talking about how much fun it had been to grow the Luxy Hair business. This hit them on a deep emotional level. They had been striving for so long to achieve the *4 hour work week*. Now that they had finally achieved it they were miserable. They realized they were at their happiest when they had dreams and structure in their lives. They realized it was time to get back to

work!

If you are at the beginning of your Digital Age journey, take heart in this important aspect of this success story. You may have heard it before in one form or another (like earlier in this book), but it truly is the journey and not the destination that makes life worth living. Follow a process that yields small measurable progress everyday, like the one presented here in **PURR Passive Income Power™**, and enjoy the journey!

Success Story #3

E-Commerce using Fulfillment by Amazon (FBA)

Podcast Name: Smart Passive Income

Episode: 127 - Building a Successful E-Commerce Business and Private Labeling with Ryan and Daniel

Listen to Podcast: PurrPassiveIncome.com/success

Ryan and Daniel make over \$1,000,000 in revenue per month and their profit margin is over 50%. This may seem unbelievable to you. Once you read the details below on all the things they are doing well, these numbers will be much easier to believe. They have been at this a long time and have staff and processes to help them out. However, they both started out small. Daniel's first inventory order was less than \$300 and Ryan's was \$740.

Similar to Success Story #2, they source many of their products from China using sites like alibaba.com to find suppliers. Most of the suppliers on alibaba.com allow private labeling. This means they will package the products using your brand name. It is how Ryan and Daniel are able to offer physical products of their own without getting into the manufacturing business.

Another major key to their success is their use of Fulfillment by Amazon (FBA). This means they have the suppliers ship directly to Amazon warehouses. Amazon then ships the orders to the customers direct from their warehouses. Amazon also promotes the products on the Amazon website and manages the payment processing. In other words, all the really hard work is done by

the suppliers and by Amazon. That is why Daniel and Ryan call this an "*easy business*" that anyone can do on a small scale and produce a full time income relatively quickly. You just need to focus on what they call "*the fun stuff*", like marketing and relationship building with customers. With all the "*hard stuff*" being handled by others, Ryan and Daniel have been able to scale their business to \$1,000,000 in revenue per month.

Unlike the Luxy Hair example in Success Story #2, where the products had a strong emotional appeal, Ryan and Daniel sell everyday products. They distinguish their brands by offering above average packaging so that there is a wow factor in the customer experience upon receiving the products. This distinguishes them from typical products from China and promotes good reviews on Amazon, which is a key driver to their success. Reviewers will sometimes point out the nice packaging in their reviews. If a particular supplier cannot offer nice packaging they will often have the packaging created separately. They then ship the packaging and any inserts they want added to the packages to the supplier. The supplier puts it all together and ships to the Amazon warehouses ready to sell. Positioning themselves as a premium brand allows them to charge more, which they say in many cases results in more sales, not less.

The inserts they include in the packages further differentiates their business model. The inserts encourage customers to join their email list and join their loyalty program. They have weekly giveaway programs. The inserts offer value added digital products for free by going to their blog and joining their list. They consider this *asset building* to be critical to their long term success. They recognize that building a following via their email list and loyalty program insulates them in case selling on Amazon becomes more difficult in the future. They also sell their products from their own e-commerce sites. They use the *Shopify* e-commerce tool which integrates with FBA, so that the fulfillment is handled by Amazon in the same way regardless of where the customer buys from (visit the links page to learn more about *Shopify*: **PurrPassiveIncome.com/success**).

Ryan and Daniel create brands in markets where the customers would typically be interested in many different products. Selling to their existing customer base is a big part of their success. They create a strong relationship with their customers via their

email list. The product inserts and backend processes drive all of that. They call all this their **internal promotion engine**.

They also have an **external promotion engine** that brings new customers to their brands. This includes Amazon and Facebook ads, SEO, social media and Youtube. The kinds of things we discussed earlier in the PURR Passive Income Power™ book.

The starting point for it all is to look at markets that support multiple products, so that you can build a brand where buyers of one product will be interested in your other products. Research top sellers on amazon, put your data into excel, and narrow things down to find a niche that you think would work for you. Ryan and Daniel say the biggest mistake they see people making is getting excited and skimping on the research phase before they get started.

When dealing with potential suppliers they recommend getting on a Skype video call with them. Have them show you the products before you place an order or make final payment for the order. They usually get a physical sample as well. They give one example where the product looked great but gave off a bad odor that could only be noticed by having a physical sample. You can also ask for the suppliers address and tell them you plan to visit, to see if they are reputable enough to give you their address. However, keep in mind that alibaba.com has a rating system so it is relatively easy to weed out bad suppliers before you even get to this stage.

Although this business model has some unique challenges compared to dealing with strictly digital products, they say the potential is there to make a full time income from just one product. Get 20 or so good reviews for one product on Amazon and it may only take a handful of sales per day to make a full time income.

What I love about Ryan and Daniel's success story is they are doing well with physical products, while at the same time incorporating the principles of Digital Age ventures described here in **PURR Passive Income Power™**, like building a list to establish a long term asset and a long term business.

Success Story #4

Turning a Hobby Into a Full Time Income

Podcast Name: Smart Passive Income

Episode: 180 - Two Woodworkers and How They Make a Full Time Income From Their Craft

Listen to Podcast: PurrPassiveIncome.com/success

Listen to this podcast to learn how a guy with a 4 child family was able to follow his passion on the side for one year, then quit his job to do it full time.

David Picciuto and Bob Clagett both quit their jobs to pursue their woodworking hobby full time. They have completely separate woodworking related blogs. They help each other out more than they compete, and attribute this cooperation to helping build both their businesses. For example, early on one of them featured the others videos as part of his own "weekly roundup" style Youtube channel. This is an example of the Curator business model we discussed earlier in PURR Passive Income Power™. It resulted in more subscribers for both of them.

They have setup a **Mastermind Group** of 4 people all in similar niches. They meet every couple of weeks to discuss strategies and what is working for them. They find they are all focusing on different things at different times, so they all benefit from learning what the others are up to. Since they all have a somewhat different focus they feel they aren't really competing. One guy may be more focused on producing furniture while the other may be more focused on craft projects. One may be focused on improving his Youtube video quality one week while another may be more focused on improving his blog or getting more traffic. They also tend to get sponsorship deals from the same advertisers, so they can compare notes on the rates they are getting from the advertisers.

Here are 8 streams of income they are generating:

1. Youtube Ads (managed by Google Adsense)
2. Google Adsense on blog

3. Selling woodworking plans and patterns
4. Selling ad spots on blog
5. Video sponsorship deals
6. Affiliate marketing (mostly Amazon Associates program)
7. Patreon (patreon.com is a service that takes donations to support their work)
8. Merchandise sales (t-shirts & stickers)

The video sponsorship deals are especially interesting as the revenue is arranged before any work is done. This is the largest income source for both David and Bob. For this income stream you agree on a price with the sponsor before you start producing a particular woodworking video that will highlight the sponsor's products. The podcast explains how to handle these kinds of negotiations.

This success story and the next one are good examples of where the teacher business model described in **PURR Passive Income Power™** can take you.

Success Story #5

Teach What You Just Learned - The Scrivener Coach

Podcast Name: Smart Passive Income

Episode: 142 - How Paying Attention Paid Off For Joseph Michael, The Scrivener Coach

Listen to Podcast: PurrPassiveIncome.com/success

Like many people, Joseph Michael thought this *"make money online"* thing was just a scam. At the same time he and his wife were struggling to get out of debt and find the money to support having another child. At one point he found himself driving down the street after being turned down for his 3rd pizza delivery job. He was willing to do anything to make some extra money on the side. Not enough experience they said. It was one of those Hollywood moments where he lifted his gaze skyward and said something like: "c'mon, I'm trying here, what do I need to do?"

In desperation he started to do some internet searches on keywords like *"passive income."* Luckily he found some of the

better sites and podcasts like the one he is being interviewed on here. This gave him the motivation to start his own efficiency blog, something he knew a lot about from his day job. The blog was on general efficiency topics, and didn't do very well in the beginning. Then one day he was struggling to teach his daughter how to tie her shoes. He researched different approaches and eventually found one that worked immediately. He decided to write a post about it on his efficiency blog.

That one blog post now has over a half a million shares. His blog got a huge boost in traffic every year before the kids went back to school from that one blog post alone. He realized the big difference was that it solved a real problem for people, whereas the rest of his blog was more general in nature. This was an important lesson to learn. He would never have learned it if he hadn't started his first blog and just tried some things.

So what do you do if you like the idea of the teacher business model, but can't think of anything you know well enough to teach? What if you can't think of any "*real problems*" you can solve for people that could lead to income for you? You could do what Joseph Michael did and find or notice things folks around you are having problems with. Learn it, then teach it. As Joseph says, to be an expert you just need to know a bit more than the average person. If you have a *teachers heart* and like to help people, this business model could work for you.

This is what Joseph did with the Scrivener software I am using to write this book. Scrivener is extremely popular in the author community and is much better than typical word processors when it comes to researching, writing, and organizing a book. However, as I and many others have found out, there is a steep learning curve. Joseph found himself in the same boat when learning Scrivener to write an eBook to sell from his blog. He noticed others complaining about it on the internet. So he decided to pivot and focus on creating his *Learn Scrivener Fast* course. He knew from his own experience and research that it would solve a real problem for people. It is a series of short (3 or 4 minute) videos that help you get up and running with Scrivener. The videos also serve as a handy library that you can revisit whenever you forget how to do a particular task in Scrivener.

On the day of this podcast interview Joseph already had 3000 customers for *Learn Scrivener Fast*. He had already quit his day job to work on his new business full time. By popular request, he had already established an affiliate program so that many of the folks that had been complaining about the steep learning curve could recommend his course to their tribes. He was already getting requests to teach how to make a good video training course. People wanted to know what tools and process he used to create *Learn Scrivener Fast*. He had just uncovered another problem he could solve for people, and was already planning to create a new course on that topic. By the time you read this it may be available. Check the links for this story to find out the latest: **PurrPassiveIncome.com/success**

Another interesting aspect to this success story is how Joseph got traction with his *Learn Scrivener Fast* course. He did most of this in the beginning using Twitter, his favorite social media tool. The thing about Twitter is it gives you an unprecedented opportunity to connect with influencers that could change your life with a single tweet to their followers. These are people you couldn't connect with in a million years using email. They are too busy and get too many emails every day. For example, one of the people he noticed lamenting about the lack of a good Scrivener course in the beginning was an influencer by the name of Michael Hyatt. He was on record as saying he would pay for a good Scrivener course. So Joseph started following Michael on Twitter. Then one day Michael asked a question about Scrivener on Twitter. Joseph was able to answer him on Twitter. He got noticed by being a helpful part of the conversation. This led to an introduction and Michael's support for his course.

Now that *Learn Scrivener Fast* is more well known, Joseph's main source of new business comes from webinars. One of his affiliates will setup a webinar with their tribe and invite Joseph on to give them some Scrivener tips. At the end of the webinar they will of course mention the *Learn Scrivener Fast* course with an affiliate link pointing to the product. The webinar viewers win whether they buy the course or not because they get some excellent tips in the webinar for free. The affiliate wins because they make some affiliate income. Joseph wins because he gets new customers. Everyone wins!

This is a great example of how the "*make money online*" thing

is anything but a scam when done right. It required effort on Joseph's part to get to this point. He had to learn about blogging and acquire some of the skills emphasized in **PURR Passive Income Power™**. He spent lunch hours in his car recording training videos before he was in a position to quit his job. His family life and financial issues were strong motivators to drive him forward in his journey. It is all about how much you want it or need it, and how much your plan is actually serving to help other people!

Note: If you are thinking of doing a course that is teaching about another existing product, definitely listen to this podcast. Joseph actually contacted the Scrivener folks and got their blessing to build the course. The podcast host (Pat Flynn) had a different experience doing something similar. They have a good discussion on this topic, especially on the risk associated with including the brand name of the product (e.g. Scrivener) in the domain name of the website where you host your course.

Success Story #6

Profiting From eBooks - Steve (S.J.) Scott

Podcast Name: The James Altucher Show

Episode: 23 - How To Go From \$0-\$40,000 a Month Writing From Home

Listen to Podcast: PurrPassiveIncome.com/success

Habit books author Steve (S.J.) Scott makes tens of thousands of dollars every month. He started writing books in Feb 2012. He had his first five figure month in Dec 2013. In May 2014 he hit a high of \$65,643.53 from his book-based business (taken from his website where he publishes his monthly results). Steve will make passive income from these income streams for years to come, on top of whatever he can produce with future income streams.

Why is he so much more successful than most people selling eBooks on Amazon? Like every good "super hero", it has something to do with his origin story. Steve has hustled for years working on various ways to make income, what we call *income stream classes* in PURR Passive Income Power™. He

took on lots of part time jobs from temp agencies, like working as a DJ in the evenings. He also started lots of different kinds of internet businesses over the years. He learned a lot from those experiences that he now applies to his book-based business.

For example, one of his early internet businesses was importing Evil Eye jewelry from Turkey and selling it on eBay, as well as on his own e-commerce site. Initially he could import the jewelry at 1 or 2 dollars and sell them for \$15 or \$16 on eBay. This worked great until a competitor showed up and started selling the same jewelry on eBay for 1 or 2 dollars. At the time Steve didn't understand how this was possible. Since he could no longer compete on eBay, he gave up and just continued selling the jewelry from his own e-commerce site.

Later on he came to understand that his eBay competitor was selling the jewelry at cost as a loss leader in order to get access to the customers. The competitor had a strong *back end* of subsequent offers that they could offer to those customers. Offers like more expensive Evil Eye jewelry. As you know if you have read all of PURR Passive Income Power™ to this point, a well-planned back end strategy allows you to eat your competitors lunch. It enables you to do things like bid higher on ad platforms like Google Adwords and Facebook ads, because you don't need to make a profit on the initial sale.

How does this knowledge affect Steve's current book-based business? Again, if you have been reading PURR Passive Income Power™, you probably already know the answer. Steve promotes his email list by pointing people back to his blog every chance he gets. This allows him to promote his "back end" for years to come. He is by no means subtle doing exactly that in all his books. In fact he says he would be happy to give his books away for free just to get people on his list. He tried doing that, but found launching his books for 99 cents works better than free. Then he increases his price later after he gets some good reviews and good traction on the Amazon search engine.

Steve learned the importance of good habits from his hard work hustling with different income streams over the years. His books are mostly about good habits. He has written over 40 of them. Some are mini books at only 50 pages or so (which are of course less expensive to buy). They all have a strong *call to*

action to visit his blog and join his email list. Whenever he comes out with a new book he tells his list about it. This is a very powerful business model.

A key driver for Steve is having a catalog of related books on habits. This means there is a good chance that the buyer of one book would be interested in other books in his catalog. Looking into the future, Steve feels as he starts a family he may expand out to write about parenting habits or relationship habits. These types of books would fit into his habits catalog, and would fit with the current experiences in his life when that time comes.

Will you or I do as well as Steve when it comes to writing and profiting from eBooks? Probably not. The thing is Steve publishes a new book almost every month. He is a writing and researching machine. He is very good at Digital Age marketing strategies, like the ones outlined in **PURR Passive Income Power™**. So even though we may not do as well as him, his results illustrate self-publishing your own books is a viable way to make a living. As you may have realized by now, writing eBooks (and managing the blog/list business that goes with it) is currently my personal favorite Digital Age strategy!

Success Story #7

Making a Living from Affiliate Marketing

Podcast Name: Niche Pursuits

Episode: 57 - How Claire Smith Makes Over 5 Figures a Month with Niche Sites and NO Link Building

Listen to Podcast: PurrPassiveIncome.com/success

Note: This success story contains some jargon and concepts that assume you have read the rest of PURR Passive Income Power™ up to this point (or have some prior Digital Age business/marketing experience). If you have skipped ahead then you may want to go back to read the rest of the book to gain a fuller understanding.

Some Background

Making a full time living with no products of your own by building niche sites (e.g. blogs) was all the rage at one time. Lots of people did very well at it by building back links to their blogs, which rewarded them in the search engines. These were typically very small sites about a specific topic, sometimes as small as one page with a keyword-rich domain name (the one-page sites typically did better in Bing/Yahoo than in Google). People made money by including affiliate links on their niche site pages. This generated affiliate commissions for them.

We discussed some of this in the SEO section of the Getting Traffic chapter earlier in PURR Passive Income Power™. We also learned that a large number of these niche sites dropped out of Google's Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) virtually overnight. This happened because of changes in Google's search engine algorithm. Google no longer rewarded what they considered to be *spammy back links*. Many people went from full time income to no income overnight.

Claire's Strategy

So is the niche site strategy dead? No it isn't, and Claire Smith is out there proving it everyday. She went from being a dentist for 12 years to generating over 5 figures per month with her niche blogs. It probably helps that so many people have given up on this strategy. Claire's profits are coming mostly from the Amazon Associates affiliate program. She has sold over \$4.3 million dollars of Amazon products from her niche blogs.

How does she do it? Claire doesn't do any back link building at all, so she doesn't get into Google's bad books with dodgy back linking strategies. That means when Google changes their algorithm she typically benefits, as competitors with questionable back linking strategies drop out of the SERPs and she moves up. Although aggressive back linking can be risky, if you want to rank for very competitive keywords you need to have some back links. This is the *white hat* back linking we discussed in the Getting Traffic chapter of PURR Passive Income Power™.

However, Claire doesn't go after very competitive keywords. She goes after low competition "*long tail buying keywords*."

Keywords like: *"what is the best blender under \$200."* Not many people type that into a search engine each day, but there is a good chance the people that do are planning to buy something very soon. So Claire creates a blog post with that keyword in the title of the blog post (all search engine algorithms give a very high weighting to the titles of blog posts).

That blog post would typically be between 600 and 1000 words in length. It would review up to 5 blenders for sale on Amazon under \$200. In this context a review is essentially researching, summarizing, and comparing features between blenders. This is a form of curation as described in the earlier **Choose Your Strategy** section (business model #4). These are not sites that purchase and test out every product. As an affiliate you can think of yourself as an extension of a company's marketing department. Of course each review would include her Amazon affiliate link so that she receives a commission when visitors click through and buy a blender from Amazon. Even better, she gets a commission for everything the visitor buys from Amazon within 24 hours of clicking on one of her affiliate links. So if someone decides to buy a big screen TV in addition to that blender, her total commissions from that one visitor to her blog is considerably higher.

So how does Claire turn this into a full time income? In PURR Passive Income Power™ we talk about doing something like what Claire is doing to get your feet wet with Digital Age income streams. If you can make even one small commission you will begin to see the potential. From there if you can begin to generate one or two commissions per day you will start to get excited. From there you can build up to some of the more advanced strategies discussed in PURR Passive Income Power™. However, at no point do we want to give you the impression that you can create a single blog that focuses exclusively on affiliate commissions and make a full time income. Claire makes a full time income from this strategy because she has expanded it in several ways:

1. She has around 30 niche blogs focused on this strategy.
2. She does a lot of research on Amazon and with keyword planning tools before entering a niche.

3. She outsources the specific Amazon product research and blog post writing tasks to virtual assistants (refer back to the Team Build chapter in PURR Passive Income Power™ for details on finding and working with freelancers and virtual assistants).

You could say that Claire's advanced strategy is simply scaling up the entry level strategy we discuss in PURR Passive Income Power™. Rather than getting into other advanced strategies like the ones we have been discussing, like creating her own digital products or sourcing her own physical products, Claire has chosen to refine and expand on a strategy that worked well for her on a small scale. As far as I know she doesn't get into list building to develop a long term relationship with her blog visitors. As good as anyone is doing there is always room to improve, but you do have to pick your battles and focus on what works for you. Claire focuses on one strategy and is doing very well with it.

If you are just starting out, this may be the most important of all the Success Story podcasts listed here for you to listen to. Even if you don't want to take this strategy to the level Claire has, following her basic process will give you an excellent chance of finding some success with your first blog. This can be the spark you need to move on to more advanced strategies.

Truth be told, I have never heard a podcast that *gives away the farm* to the degree that this one does. Claire goes into so much detail on her process that I won't even attempt to describe it all here. Her process has been refined over years by paying close attention to Google analytics metrics like *bounce rate*, which was described in detail in our Getting Traffic chapter. So when Claire tells you where and how often you should include images in your posts, you can be sure that advice is based on what actually works to get you more traffic and more commissions. This one podcast could save you years of trial and error to refine your own process. She goes into everything from how to research a good niche to how to use keyword tools to find the right keywords to target for maximum success in the search engines without the need for back links.

Hint: it has to do with balancing the number of searches per

day for a keyword with the number of existing pages that are already targeting that keyword (yes, keyword planning tools can tell you all this and more).

Does Claire need to worry about more competition because she is "giving away the farm" on exactly how she is finding success? No. The internet is a very big place and there are so many niches out there and so many keywords to choose from that the chances you will compete with her head to head are very slim indeed. Even if you did end up competing on a particular keyword, so what? Claire targets thousands of keywords. Not only the keywords in her blog post titles but also the many "long tail random keywords" contained in her blog posts, which are full of original content that is unique on the internet. Once you install Google Analytics on your blog you will notice that a lot of your traffic comes from obscure keywords that you made no explicit effort to rank for. Above all, doing what Claire does is a lot of work. Most of the folks listening to the podcast are unlikely to even give it a try, let alone take it to the level that Claire has taken it.

I bring this up to relate back to a few points from PURR Passive Income Power™:

- 1.** Don't be shy about discussing your strategies with others. You are far more likely to learn something important than you are to give anything away that would affect your own success. If you are nervous about it you can discuss strategies without revealing the niche you are in. Notice that some of the success stories here talk about the exact niche they are in, while others focus more on their tactics and strategy without mentioning the specific niches they are in.
- 2.** All good strategies take effort to execute. It is extremely important to find something to work on that has some meaning for you beyond making money. It should make complete sense for you based on your own unique situation. If not you won't follow through when the going gets tough. PURR Passive Income Power™ goes into great detail on finding a business model and strategy that fits you like a glove, and inspires you to overcome all obstacles in your path.
- 3.** Claire's strategy is about working hard and making small

gains day after day that add up over time to establish multiple income streams that continue to generate passive income long after she has moved on to the next income stream (which in her case is starting another blog in another niche).

Motivation that comes from reading a book is temporary. Motivation that comes from embracing a process that leads to small gains every day gets renewed every day. It gives you a powerful direction that can change your daily life experience in ways nothing else can. You go from drifting to determined. We are all at our best when we aspire to do better, be better, and live better.

In chess they have a term called tempo. If you can get yourself in a position where you are always one move ahead of your opponent, you have tempo on your side. On the other hand, if you have lost the tempo you are always one move behind. Having tempo on your side feels great. That is what it feels like to be making measurable progress towards an inspiring goal every day. Embrace the techniques in **PURR Passive Income Power™** and get tempo on your side!

So what is the one thing all of these success stories have in common? You guessed it, a blog. It is the one thing anyone can do to get started on their Digital Age journey fast. It is the cornerstone of your online platform. It is where folks go to join your email list. It is the key to finding your footing in the Digital Age and making money doing work you love.

You can start your first blog in 5 minutes or less. Follow this link to learn how:

PurrPassiveIncome.com/start

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

X. Your Hero's Journey

"A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man." - **Joseph Campbell**

Joseph Campbell first described the Hero's Journey in 1949 as a common theme behind some of the most compelling stories in history, like the stories of Jesus, Buddha, Moses, Prometheus and others. The hero's journey includes elements of a call to adventure, overcoming challenges, revelation, and transformation (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monomyth).

You may recognize the Hero's Journey as a common theme in many modern day fictional stories. The protagonist sets out on a mission or quest of some sort, encounters many obstacles along the way, makes important discoveries that lead to a solution, and comes out of it all seeing the world in a completely new light (transformation). It is such a popular theme for stories because it is so closely aligned with what we are all trying to achieve in our own lives. We tend to sympathize with and root for the characters. Taking it one step further, seeing your own life in the context of a Hero's Journey can boost your internal motivation to succeed to another level.

It helps to frame your Vision in a way that you just can't get out of your head. Something so compelling to you personally that you wake up every day thinking about it. Framing your own story in this way can provide extra motivation that keeps you focused on tasks that will help you achieve your Vision. That doesn't mean you go around calling yourself a hero. The power comes from attaching extreme personal significance to your journey. In that context obstacles become challenges to be conquered, and the quest you have laid out for yourself drives you forward each and every day.

Good Stories Make Everything Better

Whether or not the Hero's Journey theme resonates with you, it is important to have a personal story that serves you. Good stories make everything better. For example, apple juice or wine tastes better at the orchard or vineyard where you just took the tour. Anything you have ever purchased has a story

that goes with it, and the best salesmen tell the best stories.

Good stories motivate buyers to buy and they can help you motivate yourself to execute on your Vision and Plan. On the other hand, bad stories will have the opposite effect. This may sound obvious, but a large part of the population walks around everyday with stories that don't serve them. Stories about why they are stuck where they are or why nothing good ever happens to them. Think about the inner story you tell yourself everyday. It may be very subtle, perhaps just a pervasive feeling you have. Is it a good story or a bad story, or simply a story that has room for improvement? If you want to change your life, find ways to improve your story.

Consider the following lyrics from Rachel Platten's **Fight Song**:

*"Like a small boat
On the ocean
Sending big waves
Into motion
Like how a single word
Can make a heart open
I might only have one match
But I can make an explosion...
And I don't really care if nobody else believes
'Cause I've still got a lot of fight left in me"*

Let that inspire you to find powerful stories for yourself that support your Vision. I love the part about *turning one match into an explosion*. I feel this book is my *one match*. I believe it contains critical information for anyone experiencing job loss or job dissatisfaction. Whether or not it turns into an explosion will depend on if I did a good enough job conveying that information to you. On whether or not it inspires you to tell your friends and family about the book. Not to help me, but to help them.

In the same way, it is time now for you to create something. Make it something friends will tell friends about to help each other out. For that to happen the thing you create doesn't necessarily have to be inspiring. It simply has to be useful.

Develop a Vision that allows you to feel like you are on your own personal hero's journey. Think like a Super Hero! Let that

inspire you to take action each and every day. This can transform feelings of being constantly behind the eight ball, to feelings of making daily progress towards worthwhile goals. That can make all the difference.

PURR = **P**ersist, **U**nderstand, **R**efine, **R**epeat!

XI. Conclusion

*"I've been grinding so long, been trying this shit for years
And I got nothing to show, just climbing this rope right here
And if there's a man upstairs, he kept bringing me rain
But I've been sending up prayers and something's changed
I think I finally found my hallelujah
I've been waiting for this moment all my life
Now all my dreams are coming true, yeah
I've been waiting for this moment
Feels good to be alive right about now" - Andy Grammer*
lyrics to "Good To Be Alive (Hallelujah)"

Persist

Understand

Refine

Repeat

PURR Power

If you **Persist** you will learn new things. The more you learn the deeper you will **Understand**. Deeper understanding leads to better ways to **Refine** your strategy. So your next move is always better than your last move. The more times you **Repeat** the process, the further up the metaphorical mountain you will travel. The better your Vision will become. The better your results will be. The sooner you will feel like Andy Grammer does in the song quote above.

If you need a bit of motivation along the way, listen to Andy's song and to Rachel Platten's Fight Song mentioned earlier. Hearing them is more powerful than reading the lyrics, especially with earphones on. If these songs don't do it for you, find something similar that inspires you to build up your PURR muscle!

I encourage you to reach for the stars and build something great that has deep meaning for you. Pour your heart out trying your best to help others. Then you will find an audience and a Digital Age venture to withstand the test of time.

Not everyone will love you or what you have to offer. That's okay. Speak to those that do and be fearless about not concerning yourself with those that don't. Be authentic and the people that resonate with who you are and what you have to

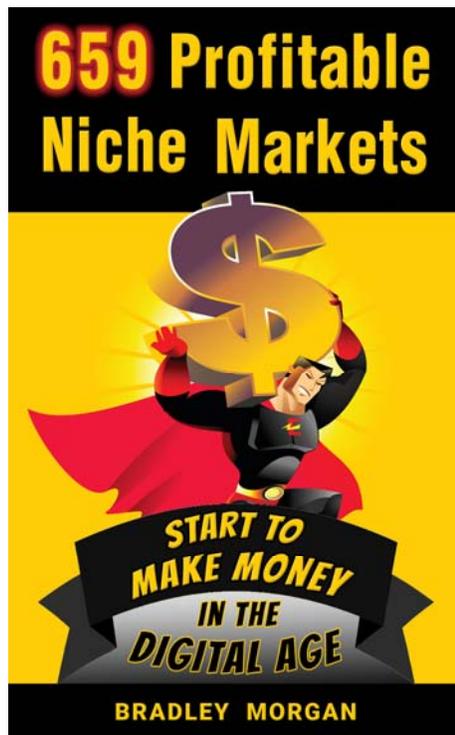
offer will become your tribe. *Better to be bold and become a beacon of light to some, rather than ignored by all!*

"In the end, we only regret the chances we didn't take." -
Lewis Carroll

What comes next? Here are a few suggestions:

Grab a free copy of the companion book to PURR Passive Income Power™

As a way of thanking you for your purchase, I'm offering a free eBook that's exclusive to my book and blog readers. In 659 Profitable Niche Markets, you will find the perfect companion to PURR Passive Income Power™:



<http://www.purrpassiveincome.com/659free>

Please write a review for the book.

I would be eternally grateful if you would take a moment to leave a review for **PURR Passive Income Power™** on Amazon! Follow this link to learn how easy it is to leave a review:

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Lastly, I would love it if you let me know how things go on your PURR Passive Income Power™ projects. Just reply to any email from the newsletter and I will see your words. I will keep it completely private unless I get your permission to do otherwise.

For example, if I ever start a podcast perhaps I can interview you about your story. If your project includes a blog, I can include your success story on my website with a link to your blog. Just give me permission to do so in your email and include your website details, preferably with a head-shot photo of yourself. It would be a coveted **one-way link** for you that the search engines love. This means I link to you but you don't link back to me. The search engines will see it as an impartial vote for your site, which is a long standing positive factor in the search algorithms.

Okay, time to stop typing. I hope you enjoyed reading the book as much as I enjoyed writing it!

Sincerely yours,
Bradley Morgan

PURR = Persist, Understand, Refine, Repeat!

