



THE
**SIDE HUSTLE
SHOW**



with Nick Loper | SideHustleNation.com

Episode 47:

Building a \$4260 per Month Kindle Publishing Business, with Nicklas Kingo

<http://www.sidehustlenation.com/episode47>

Nick: This is the Side Hustle Show with Nick Loper, episode 47 "Building a \$4,000 per Month Kindle Publishing Business."

Intro: Welcome to the Side Hustle Show, where aspiring entrepreneurs learn how to turn their side hustle dreams into reality. Because your 9-to-5 may make you a living, but your 5-to-9 makes you alive. And now your host, Nick Loper.

Nick: Hi everybody, Nick Loper here, and welcome to the Side Hustle Show. What is going on? This is episode 47 "Building a \$4000 per Month Kindle Publishing Business. My guess is Nicklas Kingo, male model turned Amazon publishing magnate. Now we are going to try to keep the Zoolander jokes to a minimum here, but Nick, first reached out to me about how he was listening to The Side Hustle Show, and it made his day while he was working, and flattery will get you the attention of your humble podcast host every time.

But it turns out that he has a pretty sweet side hustle going on, building a portfolio of Kindle titles and outsourcing most of the writing. Now willing to share the details of how it works, here on the show. So I am happy to have him on. The links in the show notes page shows a picture of Nicklas, who is very pretty, in a Northern European kind of way if you're into that sort of thing. I am comfortable admitting that (laughter), at sidehustlenation.com/episode47.

Before we get into it, a couple quick shouts for new five-star iTunes reviews, one coming in from Flaypo, says that "I love the side hustle and what you do from 5 to 9 will make you alive.

Start doing something that you enjoy on the side and it makes a huge difference in your psyche and in your life. I love it." Thank you so much for that.

The second one is from SnoopySnoopPoopDog, who I think just uses that username to see if I would read it on the air. (Laughter) Says, "It is an informational and inspirational podcast. I listen to it on the way home from the daily grind and I dream my way out of the rat race." Thank you for that; keep them coming. And with that, let's get Nicklas on the line.

Hey guys, you're going to notice some intermittent audio distortion on Nicklas his side during the call. I am really sorry for that and hopefully the hook of his message and the quality of his content shines through despite the poor connection we had.

Nick: Hey Nicklas, welcome to the Side Hustle show.

Nicklas: Hi Nick, thank you.

Nick: Thanks for coming on, so for everybody, Nicklas is a traveler, model, in the Kindle author on the unique mission to find a full-time income from his book royalties before he even start University in the fall. Now I have a feeling this call is going to be really eye opening or just kind of put me in my place for not selling as many books as he is doing. So, Nicklas, walk me down this transition from being a model, traveling the world, to becoming an author. How did you get started down this path?

Nicklas: Well I just started blogging when I was on the road, because I was kind of bored when I wasn't casting, so I entered blogging and then I six months later got introduced to Kindle publishing and I just decided to compile all of my blog post into being sort of a memoir. And I just use that as a vessel to learn Amazon Kindle publishing, because I figured that I had to really something; I couldn't just, I had to put something together to get a vessel to learn the ropes and really sad because it is sort of a memoir, it's called 'Runway Memoirs'.

Nick: You've got a memoir, how old are you? (Laughter)

Nicklas: Well, it is only like 40 pages, yeah definitely.

Nick: Okay, so your first book is a compilation of blog posts and it is just about your experience doing traveling and doing the modeling thing. I understand that you have God, because you have publishing income numbers on your site last month, was like \$1500 or something. Was that all from that one title?

Nicklas: Oh no, definitely not. That title doesn't sell anything at all, but that title probably makes me like five bucks a month if that.

Nick: Okay, well I have had some bus as well. That is good to know. So let's talk about kind of that initial, "hey, I published" and what is next? Like what made you say that there was still some kind of opportunity in this platform?

Nicklas: Yeah, I think that I stumbled (inaudible 6:58) by 25 concept site, and so I was looking at all of his interviews and he was interviewing this guy called Ty who is making something like \$30,000 a month from releasing books. And he was talking about how his daughter at 14 was outsourcing like the vampire novels, like she was hiring people to write vampire novels. And she was making really good money from that, and so I figured that I might as well try them out and I was looking at YouTube videos and there was another guy who was doing a video of how we hired writers to write health books, so I figured that I might try that out as well. So I just came at it.

Nick: Sure, so what are you doing, do you have a specific process that you follow to come up with these different book ideas?

Nicklas: Yeah, I tried to follow trends. I have a book that sells really well on the homer and Lepton, a lot of niche authors that don't reveal their books but I figured that I might just walk the walk in this book is called "Conquer Lepton Resistance" (inaudible 8:17) And I think that one book made me thousand dollars last month so as you can see you have to really release a lot of books because you never really know what is going to sell. Because I have released that book following a set of metrics and then released other sets of books following the exact same metrics and they don't sell it all, so it is very important to just keep at it, because at one point you will hit that book or many books hopefully that will sell like (inaudible 8:49). So it is about keeping at it.

Nick: I have heard that a go to a couple of times, you never really know what is going to go to sell and what is going to be a dead and so you have to build that portfolio up. So talk to me about this, this is something I've never heard of, lepton resistance. Is it a dietary thing?

Nicklas: Yeah, it's like a hunger regulating hormone, so I have always been interested in health and such so I figured I would write a book. So to start with I went on the Kindle for him and saw if there were any other books on this topic, and there were two other books that were named something with lecithin as well, and they were written by doctors. I actually know outrank those two books written by legitimate doctors, and I just hired a medical student to write my book.

Nick: Fascinating. So tell me about the process of outsourcing the writing, because I did an experiment in the fall trying to get a book to market quickly and I said, "hey, I can do this a lot faster if I hire somebody to do the actual writing." I put the bid up on Elance, hey I need you to be a native speaker and this is what I'm looking for and I kind of made some mistakes dad I normally would not make in hiring this person, and the work came back and it was technically fine. It was acceptable but she didn't have my voice, it didn't have... they met the requirements and check the boxes but it was not good. Like I wouldn't be comfortable putting my name on it, you know?

Nicklas: yeah, it feels a bit muddy sometimes. But the thing is that you have got to be willing to read write some of the stuff. Like you have got to like to write, because I rewrite most of the stuff I get back because many of them are not native speakers. They will have a lot of freelancers that have like I have one girl who wrote two books for me and she had an

American sounding name, and she had a picture of a white woman in her late 20s, and when I got to work it was just so obvious that this was not from an American girl, so I ended up just rewriting most of the stuff anyway, but I am pretty fast with it so I wasn't too worried about it. I just gave them a shoddy review; I just told them that I am not sure the person is actually American and put that review up, because it's just not right that they do that. Like it shouldn't be legal, that you can put someone else's picture up and then pretend to be another person.

Nick: That's good, I'm glad you left the feedback because I think that there is a lot of grade inflation that goes on on these platforms, for fear of retribution. Because they have an opportunity to review as well, and if they don't want somebody to say bad things about me, then I just won't say anything at all. And then over the course of time, all the people that have negative just say nothing and all the people that loved it say good things and then well of course everybody has five-star ratings, even if they are not delivering consistent five-star work.

Nicklas: Yeah, I am not sure how that works when you are hiring on email, because I have hired I think about 10 writers and I don't think that they have ever left the review ever.

Nick: Okay, with your guy in Pakistan, your medical student in Pakistan, how much did it cost for you to get this book produced?

Nicklas: \$120, and another five dollars for the cover. And if only I could replicate that with everything in my life.

Nick: Okay, and how much of that did you have to rewrite?

Nicklas: That when I did not have to correct very much; I think I only had to fix some spelling mistakes and that was it.

Nick: Okay, so he did a really good job for \$120. Do you remember the word count on that?

Nicklas: I think the book is like 50 pages maybe, so each page is somewhere between 250 and 300 words on Kindle that is. Yeah so around 12 to 14,000 words.

Nick: Okay, and this guy was through Elance? Any best practices for submitting that job and screaming the candidates who come back to try to get more hits and misses?

Nicklas: I think it is just going through the portfolio, and really reading and looking at all of their work samples and all of that. I think that is the big best practice. Right now I am experimenting with another portal called (inaudible 14:04) where the writers are screened and you don't actually get to contact the writer, because they have to get hired by the portal first. Epic write, yes. I just commissioned three books there, so they should be coming in tomorrow I think. So yeah, I don't know how good it is yet, but there are certain like... basic package and premium package and gold package and whatever and you pay for how good they rate their own writers. So I have experimented with the most expensive one and the second most expensive one, so I am interested to see what comes out of that.

Nick: Yeah, you're going big doing three different products at once. So let's go back to kind of the trends or the topic discovery. Is there a specific tool for keyword research or something like that that you are using to say okay I'm going to make a book about this and that sort of thing?

Nicklas: Yeah, well some people like to use Google trends or just whatever they feel they have noticed people talk about, but that is a big thing. I just like to kind of peruse the Kindle store and there's always the sections of people who have bought this about that and I just kind of get lost in there and for example I will go and press the health and fitness niche and then it branches out and they're all of these under nieces and then you press those and that is how I like to get ideas.

Nick: Okay, one trick that somebody shared with me that I thought was a really fascinating way was in their book they recommend some, for additional reading, they recommend these books by these big name authors in nonfiction and so intern if there readers go ahead and buy those, then it shows up as their page with a much much bigger audience of people who bought this also bought this tiny book that you have never heard of and they are like oh let me check that out. And that's genius.

Nicklas: Really? I never heard of that; that's interesting.

Nick: Okay, see you come up with the idea using these trends or just seeing what people are talking about, and I kind of did a similar thing with my treadmill desk book because it is like oh this is kind of that trendy topic, but fitting is killing you and walk while you are working. And it was from personal experience because I love my treadmill desk and I had to jump off of it to get on this call but I am already 3 1/2 miles deep this morning. And this is a topic that I care about and am excited about and like to share with the world and it is not setting any bestseller records but it is pretty consistent sales each month, so it is kind of cool but I would need to add a lot more to kind of build up the offer portfolio. So I wanted to ask about the time you come up with the idea to getting back you're finished product from your writers, what is the timeline for that and how much does it typically cost?

Nicklas: Usually at least a week. I actually don't really know if they keep their schedule because I usually just commission it and then I just wait them until they have put it up on my desk. But I think about a week, and some books I have paid as little as \$35 for and the highest I've paid was the lepton one which was \$120. And I think that I am usually in the \$50 range and I've been experimenting a lot with just 6000 word books at the moment, so when it comes out that is about 25 pages, so you can really fit in the \$2.99 price point on Amazon, which is pretty easy to sell books at that price point.

Nick: How do the reviews come back? That seems really really short for a book, I mean I have written blog posts that are that long.

Nicklas: Yeah, it's funny because in the beginning I felt kind of bad releasing these books because I didn't really feel like they were good content, but like I mainly released books about things that I knew at least a little bit about. So when my eyes it was not great content, but the majority of the reviews that it gets a really good, so I guess he must be doing the trick. By the

way, another good way of finding niches, I was going to say this but I forgot it, is there is something that is or that you would like to know something about, see if you can write a book about it. Like I just commissioned a book on hypothyroidism because I don't know what it is and I want to know, so it is just kind of a nice way to leverage your own interest. It is a pretty good way to find your niche as well, because it keeps you interested.

Nick: Yeah, I can see that. I am just trying to get over; I can't imagine that anybody is going to come back with a quality product, something that could be labeled a book, for 50 bucks. That just seems insane to me but apparently it is working, so more power to you. So what is the breakeven window? Like you don't even have to sell very many copies to make back your investment on that stuff.

Nicklas: What do you mean by breaking even?

Nick: Like you invest \$100 in the writing and doing the cover and you only have to sell at \$2.99 and a 70% royalty, you only have to sell like 200 copies to break even. Or less than that, like 50 copies.

Nicklas: Much less. But I have a lot of books that I have not even broke even on at all, and I have only released I think 15 books and I think four of them I have lost money on. And then it is almost like three or four of those books that I making all the money on, so say you want to try this and you release five books and they all balm, you just have to keep doing it because you will get that one book at some point and you will make good money from it and you won't have to touch it again. The only thing you will have to do is schedule the promotions for like when you get out your book for free, that is all part of them KDP, the Kindle direct publishing deal, you get to give out your book for free and you get to, or you can either pick to give it out for free or by making what is called a Kindle calendar deal. So say your book cost \$2.99, you can give it out for \$.99 and \$1.99 and it will be on a deal like that for five days and you will still earn full commission.

Nick: okay, so the little countdown shows on the side like it is on sale for a limited amount of time. Okay and that is when, to be eligible to do that you have got to give Amazon the exclusive rights to the book, right? This is KDP direct?

Nicklas: Yeah, so you get 70% if you enroll your book in KDP, but you have to price your book between \$2.99 and \$9.99, if it is outside of those brackets and you only get 35%.

Nick: Okay, is there any tactic that worked well in terms of like when to schedule these countdown deals? Like do you always lunch at \$2.99 or do you lunch at the \$.99 price point, and get some initial download the reviews, or something like that?

Nicklas: Actually, I haven't really done any a-b split testing, but most authors say that Sunday is the best day because then people are not out all I night. So if you scheduled for five days he will get Sunday until Thursday.

Nick: Okay, so Sunday is the best day to launch?

Nicklas: Yeah, to launch your promotions because then you skip the weekend on Friday and Saturday when people are not sitting at home and reading books.

Nick: Okay, I didn't know; that is good to know.

Nicklas: As I said, I haven't done any split testing, but that is what I do because it seems logical.

Nick: Now someone else had recommended, if you are going after borrows, in KDP select, they also pay you about two dollars anytime somebody on Amazon prime borrows your book, and I think they get one free borrow per month. And so most often does happen in the beginning of the month, so people would recommend pumping up your promo deal at the end of the previous month or the first couple days of the month to try to boost up the exposure and boost of the numbers and then maybe you can grab some borrows from people who do not want to buy them.

Nicklas: I never thought of that; that's clever.

Nick: At a \$2.99 price point, I find that the borrows go up the higher your prices are, so people are more likely to....I mean people only get one free borrow a month so they're not going to waste it on a \$2.99 book. They will find a \$9.99 book or something.

Nicklas: That is true, there are so many tricks like that. Like for example, I found that a really good trick is putting your book in Create Space as well, so you can put a really high print list price above your Kindle price, so there is a scarcity mentality. So I usually put all of my books between \$9.99 or \$4.99 and so they have a list price of being 50% off or 70% off, and that is actually, I think that has affected my sales really positively.

Nick: I really really love that Create Space strategy, and from the standpoint of this is not just Kindle author anymore, anybody can be, like they have a legit paperback.

Nicklas: Definitely. What is even better is the only reason why I created the Create Space account was to get the \$9.99 above my Kindle price, just to get that 70% off. Definitely, but I went into my Create Space account two weeks after I had done this, and I had done \$110 in sales.

Nick: That is really surprising, because I find that a third of the business comes through Create Space which is surprising because it is a higher price point. But people still like the tangible copies, so if you are a Kindle author and you were neglecting to do the paperback version, create space makes it super easy. It is printed on demand, so you never have to touch the product and you owe it to yourself to check out the platform. Okay, so you make that public goal of making \$4260 in monthly passive income before starting university. So how long do you have before that and what specifically are you doing to make that happen?

Nicklas: I actually just wrote a post on it today, because Amazon updates or weekly sales every Sunday and so I've decided that I'm going to do an update every Sunday or Monday. I was, 45% towards my goal and I have 26 weeks to go.

Nick: You are tracking very well. Well I guess I should ask when you started, how long has it been since you started to school? When did you start this adventure in publishing?

Nicklas: As in when did I decide that I wanted to reach that goal? Oh, I got started in Kindle I think it was in October. I didn't start making any money on it until late November.

Nick: Okay, and we are chatting here and so this will go live in a few weeks, we are chatting in the end of February 2014, so we are four or five months in into your author career. You're already up to \$1500 a month which is amazing and outstanding. I don't think many authors will ever touch that amount, so that is really good.

Nicklas: You can do it way quicker. I was not putting that much time into it. It was only when I started seeing that certain books were doing really well that I decided to ended up, but if you just put in a lot of time and you're willing to throw a lot of money off the street answers, then you would do well. It is not that difficult.

Nick: Okay, I have got to go back to these freelancers for a minute. \$50? So are these people all in Pakistan or are they all over the map, where are you finding these guys?

Nicklas: Some of them are actually from the states; a lot of them are from Pakistan or India, or I just hired one from Serbia today.

Nick: And the English is actually okay? Are you have to do a lot of editing afterwards?

Nicklas: Always. You have got to deal with that with British and American writers anyways, so anyway.

Nick: I had to completely rewrite the whole thing that I got back and it was just a pain. I was going to put it under my own name and so I think that was my downfall. I wasn't comfortable putting this out under my friend I guess, like this is not me and this is not consistent with the quality that I want to be associated with, so I had to re-create it and that was okay. It was a good lesson to learn. Live and learn, and inexpensive lesson. Okay, so let's talk about it, I guess you have got a skill share course going on that is teaching people abroad how you're getting this done.

Nicklas: Yeah I just updated it a couple of days ago, actually.

Nick: Okay we will get that on the show notes page. Everything that we talked about plus a little more detail?

Nicklas: Yeah, I have got like videos showing what I do, and I actually just put the landing page on my website so it is going to be NicklasKingo.com/SHN, Side Hustle Nation, yeah.

Yeah, it is just a landing page to welcome, and I'm going to put together a coupon code so I think I will just give it to them for free.

Nick: Wow, thank you, that is awesome.

Nicklas: I feel like with Digital Products that you're not really losing anything. Like I used to have the scarcity mindset and I would put out post-for like \$25 and then I would put them for five dollars and I would be stuck with like two reviews and I just figured what am I doing? So then I would just give it out to the bunch of friends and just ask to get a review, because I believe in abundance and if you just give out a butt load you will get it back, you know?

Nick: Yeah, if you do check it out, be sure to leave make a review. That is very generous of you, thank you. And so a skill share is kind of a Nether side hustle on its own, you're with people teaching courses and stuff. Is there any strategy besides giving it away to collect reviews? Anything you have to understand out on that platform and generating passive income there?

Nicklas: (inaudible 31:00) I do a really good job. Like once you create your course, you get assigned a skill share person in the will help you out if you have any questions and they have a blog where they teach you how to word the name of your class and they change it, because when I started out, I think I named it something like "The Easiest Way to Make Online Passive Income" or something stupid like that. I actually made like a really fancy video, I have a friend who is really into video editing, and he made it with me and in the video I actually say that it is a sign up for my skill share class where I was teaching the easiest way to make online passive income, but I change that text but I can't really change the video. So I'm just stuck with it.

Nick: I love the quote that I believe in abundance, because that is just something that resonates with me from the mindset of instead of all fighting over this tiny piece of the pie, what can we do to make the pie bigger and help everybody else out? And that is one of the reasons behind this podcast and behind the site is that there are other methods out there to earn a living and that is kind of what we believe in sharing, so thank you for bringing that up. Moving towards the end, if you had to start over, is there anything that you would do differently with regards to the Kindle business?

Nicklas: I would have invested more time and more money into it. Definitely.

Nick: Yeah, because it sounds like if you have a system here that is scalable and replicable, you might as well if you can spend one dollar to make two dollars, you might as well just sending those dollars.

Nicklas: For sure. The first time you make your first online dollar, it feels great. Like when you go to sleep, actually in the beginning when I would go to sleep at night I would wake up in the middle of the night and I would go to my account and I would say "oh I just made three dollars while I'm sleeping!" It is so addicting and it is so much fun.

Nick: Nicklas, thank you so much for reaching out. NicklasKingo.com/SHN, special website for a side hustle listeners. Let's wrap this up. Nick what is your number one tip for side hustle nation?

Nicklas: Yeah, I actually thought a bit about this and I would say just be willing to expose yourself to as many things as possible and figure out what is the least amount of effort you have to invest to figure out whether or not this thing is for you. Because I tried building niche websites and I tried all of the basic things and all of that Internet marketers do and I just thought it was boring. But Kindle publishing is just right up my alley and so just be willing to try out everything. And just figure out what is the least amount, so in the case with Kindle publishing it would be \$100 that you're investing to get two books written and to get some covers done and to figure out whether or not you find this entertaining and you're passionate about it, because you can lose a lot of time and a lot of money and you just stick out it and you do not feel it. It has got to be that the spark is there.

Nick: I agree 100%. This is something that I have talked about a lot of different shows, this experimenter's mindset. Just being able to and willing to try something else. And if it doesn't work it doesn't work. We kind of compared to a scientist in the laboratory, whose experiment never really found but it either proves or disproves his hypothesis, and so back to the drawing board if it doesn't work out the way he thinks. Anyways, thanks so much for coming on and I enjoyed it. We will talk to you soon.

Nicklas: Definitely, take care Nick. Cheers.

Nick: Thank you for listening and sticking it out to the end and bearing with those distracting distortions. Trying to get it cleaned up, but that is beyond my audio editing skill repertoire, so sorry about that.

You may have heard a hint of skepticism from me about this low-priced outsourcing thing book publishing strategy, but hey, who am I to knock it if it works? Is it low risk and it's relatively easy to get started, so if you go down that path or if you have already gone down that path, leave me a comment and let me know how it's going over in the show notes of side hustle nation.com/episode 47.

Very curious to hear of other people are making this work and making a side hustle out of it.

So I still have one World Domination Summit ticket to sell if anyone wants to hit up that awesome awesome conference that is going on in Portland this summer.

Nick@sidehustlenation.com is my email.

Okay guys, that is it for the show, until then go out there and make something happen and I will see you next week in episode 48. Getting closer and closer to the big 50.

