

SUBSCRIPTION ENTREPRENEUR



HOSTED BY ERIC TURNNESSEN, FOUNDER OF [membermouse™](#)

EP 113: How to Find Your Audience & Bootstrap a Business with Abdo Riani

“One of the things that I was so impressed by through the experience of getting to know you, is how quickly you can get something to market. How you kind of naturally make something simple. You don't try to overcomplicate it. That's the secret! You just gotta do the work. You have to come to it every day, be persistent, have that enthusiasm and excitement and keep going. The result is that you are where you are, and there's no shortcut. However, people can listen to what you say and avoid some common mistakes. That's what your mission is. To share the things that you've learned that can be shortcuts for people, but aren't at same time giving it to them on a platter. Because, you know that that's not going to help them anyway.

Abdo: I couldn't have said that better, Eric. Thank you for describing that all beautifully.”

INTRO:

And we're back! Welcome to the first episode for 2019 of the Subscription Entrepreneur podcast. We have a really engaging episode for you today and I'm glad you're with us. Our guest is Abdo Riani, the founder of StartupCircle.co. Abdo has successfully bootstrapped a number of businesses on his own and now focuses on helping aspiring entrepreneurs with their startups. He's an expert in growing an engaged audience through strategic relationships and collaboration, rather than competition. Abdo comes on the show today and shares his tips and strategies for building a business from the ground up, connecting with experts, authors and other entrepreneurs, and finding your ideal audience. We want to help you have a successful year in 2019 and believe this is a great way to kick things off. As a special bonus, Abdo has generously offered his Accelerate Method as a gift for our listeners, stay tuned for more details in this episode. So let's get started. I'm your host Eric Turnnessen, and this is episode 113 of the Subscription Entrepreneur podcast.

Eric: Hey Abdo, Welcome to the show.

Abdo: Thank you very much Eric, it's a pleasure being on the show.

Eric: And it's actually very different than what you're used. You're usually on the other end. How many interviews have you done in the last month?

Abdo: 106 I think.

Eric: That's actually a good place to start. Let's talk a little bit about your current project startupcircle.co and how you got into that.

Abdo: Absolutely. Startupcircle.co provides entrepreneurs with guidance by connecting aspiring and rising entrepreneurs with successful founders through daily live Q&A sessions. The way that I got into launching StartupCircle is over the years I'd developed this passion for starting new businesses. I found that one of the easiest ways to avoid mistakes and to take measurable steps is if you can listen to those who are a few steps ahead of you. They don't necessarily have to be 10, 20, 30 years more experienced than you, just at least people who have done what you need to do. One of the things that I wanted to do was create a resource for entrepreneurs to connect with those who are a few steps ahead of them to get some guidance, get some mentoring, and get some advice that they can apply to move their businesses forward. One of the things I definitely wanted to do was to make this advice as personable as possible. StartupCircle is different because we limit the number of attendees to a maximum of three people in each session. So, those that join can truly benefit from the session and not just ask questions, but ask follow up questions, get personalized advice, and build relationships with those speakers.

Eric: That's great. Where do you think, if you had to guess or if you know, where this passion came from for you to help entrepreneurs in this way?

Abdo: I started my first adventure back when I was a sophomore in college. Two years later, after taking an idea, or a hypothesis, or an interest in helping the environment to about \$5,000 in recurring revenue, I realized I was more passionate about starting businesses than running businesses. Over the next few years I got involved in the launch of many businesses. Taking those entrepreneurs and helping them go from ideas to the first-paying customer. It was because of that experience, taking nothing into something that I thought to myself - this is what I really want to do for many years to come. I wanted to launch a venture that can provide entrepreneurs with resources to accomplish the goal that I wanted to accomplish for those years in the future. I think that's why I created a StartupCircle.

Eric: In your estimation what is the key ingredient to starting a business? There's probably something even before the businesses started that's the real key ingredient for how people get the ball rolling. From all the conversations that you've had with people and your own experience, what is that spark that somebody - before they actually are fast on the track of getting their business started?

Abdo: It's one of two things Eric. It's either that they have always admired people who have started ventures and who have made a tangible impact on people's lives and they want to follow that path, or they have gone to the path of following leaders in an employment setting and just want to start controlling their own destiny. Those are the two main reasons at least from my experience and from the discussions I have every single day, of why entrepreneurs become entrepreneurs.

Eric: I would certainly agree with you that that is one of the ingredients, but I've also met a lot of people who have that and nothing ever happens with it. They have that fire that was started

by seeing someone in a position that they would like to aspire to be in, or someone that they would like to emulate, but there is a difference between some people that have those and some people that actually transform it into something that is tangible, right? Have you seen any relationship to that or any patterns how to get from that point to a realizing?

Abdo: Most entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs, they start by being “wantrepreneurs.” Even those that set up becoming very successful in entrepreneurship they go through many faces of self-reflection, trial and error, quitting, sometimes quitting for many months at a time and then they continue and take breaks and go back on and start again. So many things happen in the mind of the entrepreneur, especially in terms of risk and opportunities, influence from the people that are closest to them that define their next move. Those that are truly interested in creating this life are the ones who create it. Most of the time Eric if we look back at all the people who have started successful businesses, they all go through a long period of time where they debate, they try, they quit, they fail, they try a little more, they consider it a side project, they never think about turning it into a full-time venture or a company, but then with some traction, with some results, with some confidence, they go all-in. I really cannot define the exact reasons why people do it and continue to do it and why others don't. It's many things that happened in that period from “wantrepreneurship” to entrepreneurship that define the next steps.

Eric: Yeah. One thing I've seen in my own journey and others' journeys that really acts as a bridge between the want and the actual manifestation of what you want, is there is some underlying passion. No matter what you're going to push through it to keep going. You're not going to let a minor or major obstacle swerve you from the path. Those obstacles will come for everybody. There's no avoiding them.

Abdo: In my case for example, Eric when I was maybe a freshman and I wanted to start my first venture - you know the deal, everybody tells you you're just starting college focus on at least just finishing college, or at least getting acquainted with college. Try to get some grades, try to make some progress and then maybe start thinking about it. I spent that you're debating, thinking, talking to people and doing things on the side, doing things silently and eventually I said - “I don't care. This is what I've always wanted to do.” I slept on it 365 days and I'm just going to go all-in. I'm going to do it and whatever happens happens.

Eric: And you did have some early success. Can you talk a little bit about that? I think you bootstrapped a business early on and you had some good financial success with that. You started something called The Bootstrapping Summit. Can you talk a little bit about these early things you did?

Abdo: Sure. So that first venture that I started when I was a sophomore in college was a platform that rewarded users for their friendly actions. I've always had a passion for the environment. I wanted to contribute to it and I wanted to do something that could at least make a small difference. The idea was to recycle 10 to 15 pounds of metal to get some points and you

could redeem those points to local businesses. My main concern back then, and the main concern for most starting entrepreneurs was - how am I going to fund the development of this product? How am I going to connect users with recycling facilities that are the closest to them, proximity wise? How am I going to know exactly how many pounds I have recycled? How am I going to know how they're going to be able to redeem those points to local businesses, so on and so forth? I focused so much on trying to find funds, raise funds for creating the business, that I forgot I could actually be the business and be the product. I was looking for ways to bootstrap the business by doing things that don't scale. I said, what I have to do to solve this problem is to actually be the person who is connecting people with recycling facilities and then them to local businesses. So, how can I do that? All it took for me was to create a small landing page that had lists of recycling facilities. I had a small three step process that they had to follow: recycle, email me, request what you want to get from whichever local business that you can find on that landing page, here's the receipt, take it, redeem it, come back to me and I'll update your points. When I started thinking that way, I was able to go to those recycling facilities and tell them, "the platform is being developed, but I'm actually serving you right now. I am bringing you people. I'm getting people to recycle with you so would you be interested in being featured on the list in exchange for paying me \$200 a month for this feature?" I did the same thing for local businesses who I sent people. As a result, I was able to fund the initial stage of the business by generating about \$2,000 a month in recurring revenue way before I created any line of code. I used the funds from the pre-sale to build the product a year-and-a-half later. We're generating about \$5,000 a month in recurring revenue. Then I had to make a decision whether I wanted to continue with that project, or company, or do something else. One of the things I mentioned in the beginning of this conversation is that I always have been more passionate about starting businesses then running them. So, I decided to start Aspire IT which is a startup development studio for non-technical, bootstrap founders that provide those entrepreneurs with all the needed resources including product development to take an idea to first paying customers. Thanks to that I got involved with the launch of over a dozen businesses over the years, and helped many entrepreneurs in taking their ideas to first paying customers. I still do that today.

Eric: There's two things that I want to ask about based on what you just said. The first one is a noticing. When you're talking about your recycling business, what you're saying, even though you have brick-and-mortar elements to it and in a sense, you're dealing with real-world things and not just information product - you are echoing what a lot of our previous guests have said which is, you start with a giving something for free. You started by sending people to the recycling centers without making a deal. You gave the value up front to those people and in exchange they were willing to pay you \$200 a month. A lot of people are afraid to do that. They're afraid to give something up front and away for free to people. To illustrate again that this is another example where that worked and that you had success with that.

Abdo: I was just going to say that that was the proof Eric. If I went to the recycling facilities and told them that I am going to create something that is going to do X, Y and Z, who is really going to trust me? When I go and meet those facilities, essentially it was a cold stop by, I don't know how to explain that better. It's the same idea of cold-emailing and cold-calling. I was literally just

stopping by these facilities and asking for a little bit of their time to explain. One of the things that helped was that I was a student. For those of you that our students right now, take advantage of that. Most people are likely to listen to when you were a student. Anyway, I stopped by and I told them here is a list of 500 people that I collected from campus, by the way. I spoke to every stranger I could find and it was so embarrassing, but I did it. I said here is the list of 500 people from this University that is just five miles away from your location, I'm going to send all those people to you, or at least a percentage. I'm going to get them to recycle their recyclables with you. I did that. A week or two later I went back and I told them what we're trying to do right now is make this more scalable. "Would you be interested in investing in making this more scalable and in exchange one of the things I'm going to do - in addition to emailing people and referring them to you, is I'm going to feature you on the page. I'm going to add extra things to your page to make sure that people see it and make sure that people go to it. One of the other things is I'm going to do is I'm very active in the local community, I'm very active in chambers, I'm very active environmental clubs and I will almost always be speaking about you. Would you be interested in investing just \$200 to make this happen?" All I needed was 10 people so it was easy. It took maybe 10 days.

Eric: What you're talking about reminds me of Dale Carnegie's book How to Win Friends and Influence People. One of the things that come up in that book is how he talks about - one physical example is when you're writing a letter. Some people start with what they want. Then, at the end they talk about what's good for the person or maybe not even at all. In a sense, that's what you're doing. You're starting with what the other person wants and you're putting energy into showing them that you can deliver on your promises. You put your money and your action where your mouth is. You're following that guidance which comes from him, which comes from other entrepreneurs I've talked to whether they see that as something they're following or not, people who are successful generally are doing something like that. They have a way of selling themselves to people, selling the idea and getting people excited about it. The thing is, you can't do that unless you are excited yourself and you have a natural enthusiasm. That's one of the things I said when I was on your program StartupCircle. So, a couple weeks ago I said the people who go into business to make the money specifically, they're missing this component. They're missing natural enthusiasm which, is it so important in the beginning stages. That's the spark that helps light the fires of other people around you that are going to help build your mission to continue.

Abdo: Look Eric, when I went and sold - pre-sold I guess the idea of this venture to those recycling facilities - to be honest with you they were investing in the awareness that I was creating for them and the acquisition that I was boosting for them, but they were actually mostly investing in my energy and me. That's what they were investing in. They saw how excited I was and how enthusiastic I was and how energetic I was. That was the deciding factor for their investment. When I talked with the owners of those facilities and local businesses - by the way it's the same idea, I'm sending people to local businesses whether it's restaurants or coffee shops, I'm contributing to their awareness. One of the things I realized, looking back, is the conversations I had with those owners, only 10% was about the business. We're talking about

why I'm creating this, what's the goal, what's the vision, what's the mission, what's the impact. Now that you mention energy it's really my being at least 80% of both sales. Obviously if you show that there's value as well.

Eric: I 100% agree with you. Jumping to your - what was the name of the development from that you did is your second business?

Abdo: Aspire IT.

Eric: One of the things you specifically said you were doing there was offering technical solutions to entrepreneurs to help them build their businesses. This is an interesting area for me because MemberMouse is a software product and one of the questions I have is how important is technology in starting a business? What I've seen is that sometimes technology can get in the way and sometimes it can assist. What were the kind of things that you saw when you were helping people? When did you determine when you should use technology and when something else was the answer?

Abdo: Eric, one of the things we do with Aspire IT is look court, find a plan, or come up with a plan that allows us to go to market under the condition of the unavailability of the product. In other words, we wanted to completely forget about the product in the beginning so that we could get the initial traction, perhaps pre-sale the idea, or the service - whatever it is, and get to market the soonest so we can gather feedback the soonest. Then perhaps start building something. Most of the time Eric, yes, there is some product development or MVP development or first version development in the project that I get involved in, but 90% of the time it's doing things that don't scale. I can recall an example for you. Findfirewood.com, a marketplace that connects firewood buyers with sellers. In that case we did start by doing things that don't scale. We did start by connecting buyers and sellers without a website. Then very quickly we realized that it's a model that needs a little bit more scalability and we can go ahead and create a platform for that. It depends on what we're creating, but most of the time - it actually isn't 100% of their time, starting by getting your hands dirty, by doing things that don't scale, and by almost completely forgetting about the product, unless we can connect some tools that allow us to mimic the product.

Eric: Yeah that makes a lot of sense. You also did something called Bootstrapping Summit. Where did this enter into the picture?

Abdo: In the beginning of this year in 2018 one of the things I wanted to do is launch different services. In addition to Aspire IT, I wanted to start one-on-one coaching and consulting, and perhaps eventually start selling or offering some digital products. One of the main problems I had which, is a problem of most digital product sellers have in the beginning is audience. I did not have an audience or a big enough audience that I could sell my services to. One of the hypotheses that I had Eric was what if I can leverage other people's audiences? Most people call it Influencer Marketing, but what are the odds that I'm going to email people and tell them

here is a product that I'm looking to sell, here's the idea of the coaching plan or program. Would you be interested in promoting that for me? One of the things I learned quickly is that people are willing to do that if it is a product, but not a service. If it's a product they can test it, they can try it, they can see it, they can touch. They would be willing to promote it because the sales are a lot easier, but when it's a digital product they don't know you because you are the product. It becomes a lot harder to convince influencers to do that. I started thinking how else can I do that? The hypothesis was what if I leveraged people's audience instead of competing for the attention of their audience? One way to do that is by highlighting their expertise through an online event. It could be in many ways one of the things I'm going to discuss later. As a result of that, get access to their audience by kindly requesting their promotion. When I started working on the Bootstrapping Summit - so I decided to create the best Bootstrapping Summit as a result of that hypothesis. I interviewed a hundred people, a hundred bootstrapping entrepreneurs and added to the recording five live Q&A sessions to make it more exciting for people to join. Thanks to this approach that goes as follows: highlight people's expertise, ask for their promotion, get access to their audience, use their audience - not use but offer their audience - after you've nurtured some relationships with them, your services. When I did that 5,000 people joined as a result of launching the Bootstrapping Summit. That led to about \$10,000 in monthly recurring coaching revenue. Then I started implementing the same ideas in different ways. The hypothesis once again becomes what if I can apply the same thing with people who cannot get access to experts at ease? I contacted the Chamber of Commerce and I told them I know one of the Chamber's goals is to educate its members and to bring speakers and has a budget for bringing speakers every year, but it may not be as feasible to bring a list of names X, Y and Z. It may not be feasible to bring them all, so what I can do is see those people. I can invite those experts, those influencers to come and talk with Chamber members for free. All you have to do is distribute this. All you have to do is help me with a promotion. Would you be interested in doing that? Five out of seven Chambers agreed and now we're in the process of launching the online events. This is another application of what I call The Accelerate Method which, once again and entails leveraging people's audiences instead of fighting for the attention, or competing for the attention of the audience. It's something that will also help you pre-sell ideas as well. One of the things I did in launching the Bootstrapping Summit when I got the access to those thousands of people, I pre-sold access to my coaching program. I didn't have anything. I didn't have any courses. I didn't have any plans. I didn't have any method. All I said is "I'm going to open access to this for this much money, would you be interested in committing to this today?" That helped me generate the amount that I mentioned earlier. That is it in a nutshell.

Eric: You mentioned The Accelerate Method as something that you use to really fuel your growth and leverage other people's audiences in a harmonious way. Is this a method that relies on somebody's personality type? As entrepreneurs and growing businesses, what you're talking about - the fundamentals of getting an audience, getting the ball rolling, getting a platform where you can put your stuff out there, this is something that we all have to crack, right? The Accelerate Method has really worked for you, but I really wonder if this is something that is working for you because of your specific personality traits and your strength?

Abdo: Well, Eric it's very important that you have some communication skills obviously because this entails communicating with influencers, interviewing people and connecting them with other stakeholders. So, you definitely have to have some communication skills or one of your team members can be the spokesperson of this project. If you are not afraid of talking to people and connecting people and gathering people, then anyone can do it.

Eric: Which by the way, you don't have to start there. For me personally, that wasn't a strong suit of mine. The thing is if you do it five times you'll get better. Even if you're the type who you would say, "I don't have strong communication skills." It's not, in my experience, a stumbling block. Ultimately, if you're going to be in the world of business, you have to communicate whether you are doing the beginning stages of sales, outreach, interest building, etc. You have to be able to communicate, so you can't get around it. At some point you have to learn you can't hide forever. The fact that your method has this as a foundational element, to me is a benefit. You're attacking one of the root challenges head-on early in the beginning before you do anything else.

Abdo: Eric, one of the things I wanted to mention - so I launched The Bootstrapping Summit in June and I started the first interview at the end of May. That was the first interview I've ever done in my life. After that, I completed 100 interviews in two months. It was just a decision. We can all speak. It was a decision that I'm going to assume any embarrassments, if any. I'm going to learn by doing things instead of by reading books. That helps as well, but I wanted to live it. I realized five, ten interviews later that I wasn't even thinking about what to say, how to say it, how to prepare anymore. It just becomes natural. It's not something that is unattainable. It's something that you have to decide to do, and do. Then get used to, very quickly, and it won't take you that long. It's something you definitely need, absolutely.

Eric: I think the obstacles are the ones that we can create in our own heads. Just the word "interview." Oh, I'm doing an interview. Now you have to imagine that you have to prepare and what am I going to say and all this other stuff. Of course, you're working yourself up but ultimately, it's just a conversation. We've all talked to people, right? We never go to our friend's house and concern ourselves with what we're going to say ahead of time. It's a lot of it has to do with mindset and like you said, after you've done five of these things you realize a lot of it was just how you were thinking about it and perceiving it. Back to The Accelerated Method, can we get into some more specifics about how you for example, lineup 100 interviews over a 30-45 day period?

Abdo: First of all, we have to start with a safe assumption. That assumption is that experts, speakers, influencers don't expect much from you. They are happy if you feature their expertise. I always say experts like to be experts and the least you can do is highlight their expertise. Out of the 400 people I emailed over the past 5-6 months only one person asked for money for the call. Nobody has ever asked me 99.99% of the time for money or compensation for the interview. If you approach people from the idea that you're going to feature them to a new audience, or you're going to highlight their expertise, they are very likely to be interested in

having a call with you. All I have to do is look real, that's it. I had a website and it looked real. I was clear about the value of this interview. Then the call-to-action was - would you be interested in an interview? One of the things you mentioned earlier Eric is starting letters. How you should start by talking about how they are going to benefit from this thing that you are proposing or, how they are highlighted or the answers that they are going to get. All I did for example, I say something along the lines of "hi, Eric I gained a lot of insights in your recent startup Circle interview and I learned X, Y and Z. I respect your work a great deal. The reason for my email today is to seek your interest in an interview where we will talk about A, B and C where I will highlight to my audience and I will promote A, B and C. Would you be interested in an interview? Thank you, I look forward to hearing for you." That's it. That's the copy I've been using every single time, every single day. Out of ten people I email, seven people answer. Some people say I can't do it now, but seven people answer. It's as simple as that. One of the things I mentioned in this letter or in this copy, is the word StartupCircle. Here's an idea, here's a safe assumption - if someone was featured in another channel, podcast, YouTube, anywhere, then we can safely assume that this person would be interested in being on another one. One of the things I like to do is start with people that have been featured somewhere because it makes it a lot easier to explain to them what we're doing and why we want to do the interview. One of the things we're doing right now for example, is emailing people who have not been featured on interviews because we are kind of running out of people. It's become a little harder because we have to explain. The email thread is a little longer. You have to answer questions sometimes. We have to take calls before scheduling the interview, but the idea is the same. We're going to highlight you. Give us your expertise and you give us a little bit of your time.

Eric: I don't want to brush over this because you're so experienced in this, but some of the fundamental things that you have mentioned I'm still trying to wrap my head around how you do. I get it all conceptually what you're saying. You reach out to an audience. People that have done similar things before are likely to do it again, make sense. The second thing is you email them. Just in that my two questions are, how do you find the people? Are you doing Google searches? Do you have any special techniques for how your locating that you are willing to share of course? Second, once you found the people, how do you get their email address? For example, my email address, as far as I know, wasn't listed anywhere, but that was able to be found. Was that an educated guess? How are you actually getting into contact with those people?

Abdo: Absolutely. So, the first thing is we start with podcasts. We look at podcasts because once again, if people are on a podcast then they are more likely to be interested in being on another podcast. They know the benefits of podcasts so we don't have to explain how they work. We don't have to explain what a podcast is. We go on a list of the top podcasts and then we start from the beginning. Obviously, if you are picky then you need to filter. Some podcasts allow you to filter by category, by market place, by fintech, by whatever. You filter. You select those that you want to contact and then there are a bunch of tools Eric that you can use to find email addresses. One of my friends recently acquired Voila Norbert. Sujan Patel recently acquired www.voilanorbert.com. My last conversation with him he said you know what I'll give you 2500 credits to use on Viola Norbert. With Viola Norbert all you have to do is put their name

and email and then on another site put their company website or personal website and click search. It takes a second and it gives you the email address. You copy that email address. You go to your inbox. You open a message tab and then the title I usually write "Interview." Make it simple... and that's pretty much it.

Eric: How do you spell that website?

Abdo: V-o-i-l-a N-o-r-b-e-r-t.

Eric: Perfect. Is there anything else to The Accelerator Method that you use?

Abdo: There are many other things. It depends on your goals Eric. One of the other applications of The Accelerate Method is through Guides. For instance, it doesn't have to be for all online events. It doesn't have to be for events at all. One of the things I did a couple months ago was I wrote about a topic and then I invited three speakers, three experts in that topic. One of them was Andrew Warner from Mixergy. I interviewed them and asked him some questions. Instead of just writing an article, I wrote an article that includes 45-minute interviews. Once I completed the interview and since I highlighted the expertise of those experts, I reach back to them and I asked them if they would be inclined to promote it. Two out of the three agreed to promote it. One of them actually also invited me to his podcast and the other one who is Andrew Warner suggested a partnership. He said what if I could invest in a Facebook ad and promote this for us. Would you be interested in that? Of course, I was. This is another application of the Method. Once again, it's really about trying to provide them with as much value as possible so that their decision to help you promote your product or service is easy. They don't have to think twice. For those who are starting membership sites for example, one of the things that's important for The Accelerated Method is that you find people or companies that are offering complimentary products. I gave you the example of the course creating website. I do not create courses, but I help course creators get their first 100 members or students. When I talk to the founder of this platform and tell him that I'm going to be able to bring people, new people, to your technology, to your software or to at least know about your software and you can assume a certain percentage of them will use it. Then I ask them would you be interested in being involved by also bringing some of your least active users, who still need help to go from wanting to create a course, who have paid for creating a course but have not done it - they won't mind doing that. It's becomes a win-win. I'm bringing new people and I'm branding their company as a leader in the space by inviting some expert course creators to talk about it. At the same time, I am branding myself as an expert in the space. I am getting to access to new people that I can help and it becomes a win-win. Same idea with the Chambers. Same idea with the Bootstrapping, with a Summit or an online event. Same idea with the articles or the Guides.

Eric: That's amazing. One of the things in my mind that's the difference between a "wantrepreneur" and an entrepreneur. A "wantrepreneur" wants somebody else to do the work for them a lot of the time. An entrepreneur understands that it falls on their shoulders. It's like if you go to a museum and you're looking at an artist's painting, and a "wantrepreneur" may want

to go buy something from the gift shop that's a paint-by-numbers. An entrepreneur will look at that painting and be like "what is it that that communicates to me from that painting and how can I take lessons from this, but also put my own personality into it?" I think this entire conversation, what you've been doing in talking about all your projects. That's a painting. You're describing how you approach things. There's a method there. There is also an art there. What I think people who are listening to this can do is with you and with anyone who has experience is you really have to listen to the story behind the words. One of the things that I was so impressed by through the experience of getting to know you, which started through one of these accelerate opener emails is how quickly you can get something to market. How you can naturally make something simple. You don't try to overcomplicate it. There's room for improvement, right? And there's nothing wrong with there being room for improvement. I think a secret that I had to learn because I'm a recovering perfectionist, it took me three years to get my product out to market in the beginning. This is the reason. I thought I had to be perfect. I didn't want to put anything out there that was half-baked. I was shooting myself in the foot. For those people who are looking for something on the platter, they want to go buy something they want pay someone to do work for them, there are going to be plenty of options they have for people who are going to take their money and say that they can do the work for them. Mostly it doesn't work from what I've seen. You have to put in the leg work, from what I've seen. You've shared that not only directly but indirectly because you've acted on that consistently over the projects you've done since you were a freshman in college. That's the secret. You have to do the work. You have to come to it every day and be persistent, have that persistence, enthusiasm, excitement and keep going. The result is that you are where you are, and there's no shortcut. However, people can listen to what you say and avoid some common mistakes. That's what your mission is. From your experience, to share the things that you've learned that can be shortcuts for people, but aren't at same time giving it to them on a platter. You know that that's not going to help them anyway.

Abdo: I couldn't have said that better. Thank you for describing that all beautifully. One of the other things to mention is that I do have options for those starting entrepreneurs or doubtful entrepreneurs. I do have options like you guys. I am actually one little presentation away from completing my PhD. I can work in the industry and get paid \$300 - \$400 thousand dollars a year or I can get paid as a professor and generate \$150 - \$100 thousand a year, but this is what I want to do for 50 years to come. If I'm going to think about what I'm getting out of it tomorrow, I can't compare. Tomorrow, I could from one day to another be making \$400,000 a year if it's the money that I'm going after. If I think about it from a 10, 20, 30-year perspective, that's going to compound. The business side is going to compound and it's going to deliver a much greater value, at least to me - to the world instead of my commitment to do a job, if I take a job. What I want to say is it's going to be a 10-year overnight success. It won't be a month or a year or maybe not even a 10-year overnight success. It may be a 20 overnight success. It won't happen if there's no consistency, and if there's no continuity, and there's no passion for the things you do. I quit so many projects because I realized I wasn't passionate. I'm so glad that I quit them soon because I could have been wasting more time and life. Not doing things I don't like or that you don't like is wasting life, wasting energy, wasting potential, and wasting opportunity cost. That is my advice.

Eric: It's a great message to come out at the New Year at a time when a lot of people reflect on the year and think about what was good and what could have been better. Maybe those dreams that we had that are so dear to us that we were afraid to even take the first step. When that happens, when we have this passion in this idea that we just tuck away and say "one day I'll get to it when all these ducks are in a row, I'll do that thing." Hopefully, with this message, with your advice and the wisdom gained from your experience people can make a better choice for something that's actually going to accomplish their dreams. Start small. If you spend five minutes every day towards your dream, by the end of the year you will have that times 365, which will put you in a much better position to continue that momentum forward in the second year, in the third year, etc. So, that's what I hope people will take away from this. By the way what is your PhD in?

Abdo: Finance. I'm studying Venture Capital backed IPOs. Looking at their underpricing and buying hold up in ... term.

Eric: Beautiful. Wish you the best of luck with that. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us. I really appreciate you sharing.

Abdo: Eric, thank you so much for having me. It's been a pleasure being here and talking about all of this. One of the last things that I wanted to mention is that if you're interested in applying The Accelerate Method to get your first or next 100 members in your membership site, don't worry about the tech - if you're a MemberMouse listener I give you the templates that I'm using. I give you the website that I'm using. You can use it and apply the method in different settings. We talked about partnerships with Chambers, online events, guides and there are other ways to do it. If you're interested in applying, reach out to me. You can actually go to abdoriani.com. The first thing you're going to see is a schedule and a link. It will take you 30 minutes. Let's have a call and I look forward to contributing to the success of your company, your venture.

Eric: Very much appreciate that Abdo. We will throw out the links for people in the show notes so that they can easily download those, get access to your site, contact you and all that stuff. Again, thank you so much of Abdo.

Abdo: Thanks Eric.

OUTRO:

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