

JANINE: Today's guest, Simone Novello, is an expert at teaching small businesses how to use partnership marketing to achieve phenomenal growth. Simone is a mentor we have invested on ourselves and we believe 100% in what she teaches about partnership marketing. And we can't wait to show you her story and tips with you today so that you can go away and use it to get better results in your business in a really time effective way. So, Simone, welcome to the Get It Done Mum podcast.

SIMONE: Thanks, Janine. It's a pleasure to talk to you again. And I'm gonna remember to ask you about how you're progressing on that big deal we're talking about.

JANINE: Yes. Yeah, absolutely. So we're gonna dig a bit deeper into Simone's story in a moment as well as share a bit more of some of her other content and where you can find it. But first of all, Simone, could you give us a bit of a teensy sound bite on who you are and what you do before we dig deeper into a background.

SIMONE: Sure, so I've been working in partnerships for about 18 years, so most of my career, specializing partnerships because I just found that it was the most effective way to grow a business these days. It's the most effective way to build resilience into a business. I found that partnerships, you know, the right relationships and the right partnerships work professionally and personally to help you lift your time in every way possible. And really, in the course of my whole career, I've just not seen anything that's as effective [00:01:33.02 LAG] creating the right relationships.

JANINE: Yeah, and we'll talk a little bit more about that in a moment. And also, we'll be sharing some other success stories from women and mums and entrepreneurs who have been using the principles you're teaching at a partnership growth, as well, in this interview. So to our listeners, look out for that later on the interview. But before we get there, we wanna talk a little more about the birth of Partner Fast or what was Partner Fast is now Partner TO Grow. Is that right?

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SIMONE: It's probably a little bit confusing 'coz we're just rolling out our whole rebrand. So basically I started in corporate and I worked with major banks airlines in partnerships. So for anyone that may not know Qantas is pretty much, now, a loyalty company that owns planes. So they're worth [00:02:22.09 LAG] times more than the airline. And it's all partnerships. And, but even in the days when I worked with big companies, there were smaller companies and startups that, you know, had the smarts to go to these bigger brands and create partnerships. Now, I saw what impact that had on the business and it was through, I guess, you know, my own experience and the experiences in businesses that I saw an opportunity to create a community of partners for the businesses that know how these work or identify the right partner 'coz it's not always [00:02:57.10 LAG]. It's usually the most aligned partner and, you know, the one that's gonna get you the objectives that you're looking for.

So, many, probably 2008, I came up with the idea now for Partnership Grow, at which we are now. And Partnership Grow now has several programs of which one of them is Partner Fast. And they're all designed to help our members to create lucrative marketing partnerships quickly depending on the stage that they're [00:03:30.12 LAG] to get quick cash, to leverage your existing assets and to leverage relationships that you already have in a lot of cases. And I think that's what I love most about that particular program because [00:03:43.02] everybody has assets that they're probably not even aware at all or under leveraging and everybody has connections that they could be leveraging but they're not sure how. (CLAMMR) So Partner Fast is all about giving a bit of framework to have the confidence to understand this [00:04:02.15 LAG].

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JANINE: Great. And we're gonna touch again on more of the how later on and also we've got our recording available to our listeners on the show notes of the interview we did with you last year from Midas Touch Mama Summit, Simone, and there's really lots of nuts and bolts stuff in there. We got your six proven steps for success and strategic alliance. We've got the common mistakes that people make when they're starting out with partnership marketing, and also lots of gems for how to get started. And that would be in the show notes. But, we'd love to kick off now, Simone, by sharing a bit more of your personal story as well with our listeners because you're also a mum.

SIMONE: Yes.

JANINE: And you live in the Blue Mountains, and you've got this pretty cool sounding life going on. But we all know that these journeys always have their ups and downs and that this being there, the challenges for you, I'm sure, along the way. And it's really a powerful thing for our mums to learn from. So I was wondering if you could share with us what you... When you're looking back on your journey so far, because you've achieved so much. You know, what's something that you might do differently, when you look back on your own business journey?

SIMONE: Yeah. The main thing I would do differently is having more realistic expectations of what I could achieve in the business and what I wanted to achieve in the business around the lifestyle that I really wanted to have and how available I wanted to be for my family. So, when I came out of corporate and I went in to my own business, you know, part of my motivation was wanting to have the flexibility around my son. I had one son at the time, now I've got two. And I think the biggest disconnect for me was still having that mentality of being very driven and, you know, wanting to build Rome in a day, listen to a lot of business mentors, and looking at, you know, lots of... I [00:05:59.00 LAG] marketing hype out there that gives you the impression that its really simple to just do it all, have it all, be it all.

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And I think, particularly women as mums, it just puts so much pressure on ourselves to, I know for me, you know, it be fit to got to Crossfit, be there for my kids, build this business that, you know, I just wanted to be bigger than I needed to be at that point in time. So looking back, by trying to grow too fast and by trying to do too much, I actually probably stunted my growth and stunted my success for a longer period of time. So had I focused on a smaller piece at that time, and being realistic about what my real priorities were, there's the priorities that you think you should have, and that the world, you know, you think the world wants you to have, which actually probably isn't even true. And then there's your secret real priority that you don't wanna tell anyone. Like, you know, I actually [00:06:57.03 LAG] more businesses for a while.

And I think that is the biggest learning for me. So it was a really tough probably three years during my transition up here because I was trying to

have it all at the same time rather than recognizing that, you know, I could have some of it now and I could have some of it later on.

JANINE: Absolutely. So does it feel like, for you, all that hard work is now starting to, you're seeing now that the fruit of all that hard work? What is a day in the life of Simone Novello look like now? Do you still have a way to go before you reach that sort of dream that you're looking for or where you at now?

SIMONE: Now it's all coming together. So now, definitely, you know, the vision that I had and I guess part of it is maybe the... Maybe I wasn't trying to do too much but maybe it was just an unrealistic expectation of how long it would take. So, from the time that I decided to leave Sydney and move to the Blue Mountains where I live now, is my now, then nine-year-old and one-year-old.

Fast forward five years to now. I mean it was a huge transition. I had the two boys, I was raising them on my own. I uprooted from this, from, you know, the inner suburbs of Sydney with a small terrace with no grass to, you know, what we have now is a half an acre of beautiful gardens. And, you know, I've never mowed a lawn in my life. Totally changed my business model from consulting to big companies to working with, you know, micro-businesses, start-ups, small business, medium business. And now we have bigger companies wanting to work with us again. But I really shifted my life to align better with my values and my lifestyle.

So, you know, a day in my life now, I'll show you. I'll show you some props. These are my beautiful boys. They are a couple of years older now. They're a lot bigger than that now. But, you know, like today, I got up, I was mentioning one of my colleagues is staying with me for a little bit. So I mostly work from the Blue Mountains. So we started our day, started with a whip. Got my son to school. We then did yoga on the front lawn in the sunshine. We had the cat and dog running around all over us. And got in the zone and got stuck into finalizing, you know, the new website and, you know, doing our client consultations. You know, it's just a great day and it's a great pace.

And at 2:30, I'll pick my son up and I'll go run a few errands with him and then I'll come back and, you know, we'll finish some work and get into the evening. So it's just a really balance that we have now. My dog knows that on the weekday she sits on the porch wanting to play until we've been from our morning walk to school, 'coz she likes to go through the reserve before we kick off for the day. It's a really, really nice lifestyle that we have now.

JANINE: Awesome. It makes it worth all the hard work, doesn't it?

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SIMONE: It really does. And I think that the worst part of it was comparing my old life financially to my new life. And going, oh but I'm not as financially successful, like I wasn't as financially successful during those years of transition. And I guess, beating myself up too much about that rather than saying well these are the choices that I've made. You know, there's really good reason why the business is going through this period. I guess this is what partnerships come in because a) you need the partnerships to create the resources around you to achieve the growth that you want. Particularly when you decided, I mean, for me I decided I didn't want to be consulting while I was building those other parts of the business because it was just too much of a split focus and it wasn't leaving me enough time for my family. So I made the decision to cut consulting for a while and focus on building those more leveraged programs for the small businesses and giving myself time with the boys.

So naturally, that came with the financial sacrifice. And it's just being more pragmatic about the realities of the choices that you make. I have a friend who has paid off a water front apartment, bought a Mercedes, cash, has no children, never got married, has an amazing lifestyle, you know? Traveling around the world and spoiling her niece. And she said to me one night, she's a very pragmatic woman, she said to me one night, she said, I accept that I'll always be the auntie and that I'm not gonna have those other things in my life because those are choices that I've made. And I think it was those words from her that night that made me better accept that my life is the way it is because of the choices that I've made.

JANINE: Hmm. And it's a big shift, isn't it? From that corporate culture where you're probably indoctrinated in those higher salaries and the longer work hours. Like that really is it. A really strong part of that culture. And then all of a sudden, you're taking this leap into a completely different space. And in your heart you know why you're doing it but you've got to sort of get your head around and the rest of you around what that actually looks like in real life, don't you?

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SIMONE: It's actually, it's really funny 'coz I think sometimes you can feel like you have a split personality. So I was seeing a therapist for a while when I had split with my youngest son's father. And I've made the move up here which was part of the catalyst for doing that. And she said, I said to her, you know, I had this real bohemian lifestyle when I first moved here which was a complete swing in the opposite direction to the life I had before. And she said to me, do you feel that what you're wanting to do is realistic or do you think that you're being, you know, it's too idealistic? You know, trying to have the best of both worlds. And it turned out that she was right. I mean, I did the bohemian thing when I first moved up here and then I kind of, you know, it's not really me, either.

So I've got to find this middle ground that made me, I guess, feel more connected with those two parts of myself. So I think there's... As I was saying in the earlier, there's that person you think you should be and there's the person that maybe deep down, you really want to be. So that was definitely allowing yourself to be more connected with what you really want and not feeling that disconnection between actions that are what you think you should be and actions that are who you really want to be.

I think that's what creates that internal conflict that can slow you down in both your family goals and your business goals. We all know what it's like to have the parental guilt and to have that guilt that we didn't get enough done. All those, I guess, those expectations we put on ourselves.

JANINE: Yeah. And it takes a lot of courage, doesn't it? So it's really inspiring for our mums to be able to hear from other mums like you that have taken that leap and making it a success. So along those lines, what's a major achievement that stands out for you that you have come up in the last few years since you started on this new path of your journey?

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SIMONE: I think the major achievement was to be able to fully replace my consulting income with the new programs that we run. They're much more leveraged and I really enjoy working with, you know, the same sort of lifestyle of value driven entrepreneurs and business owners I work with now. And I think what's really exciting is that it's giving people permission to leverage their partnership in whatever ways they can achieve their objectives. So [00:14:50.15 LAG] You know, come here and we'll help you do it. We just empower people to identify the partnerships that are going to help them achieve the goals that are important to them. So, you know, whether that's

more of the lifestyle business, whether that is, you know, achieving audacious goals, whatever it is. That's what I like about the values in the business. And realizing that vision and that vision was always about really believing that we do better together.

And really believing that creating a community of partner friendly businesses was my goal in life. I think it's a major achievement. And just knowing that... I got a mother's day card from my boys. I think it was this year. Or it was possibly my birthday card. But my son wrote, my oldest son wrote something like, thank you so much for the life you've given us in the mountains. And it was just that one sentence that validated all the decisions I've made, all the sacrifices that came with that. You know, I've made the right decisions 'coz there were times when I had a broken leg and had an acre that I couldn't look after.

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And two, you know, children that needed me. Where I thought, oh man I've made a terrible mistake.

JANINE: Yeah. Well it's beautiful to hear that you've had those moments and that, you know, successful entrepreneurs have those moments a lot as well. And no matter what stage of your journey yet, you still have to hold on to that belief that this is gonna work and you are gonna get there. And trust in yourself and get the help you need. And build the partnerships that you need to make it work. I think our listeners might be really interested in hearing a little bit more, because you've talked about the transition from consultancy to more leveraged products and services.

Would you be able to explain to our mums, a little bit more about an idea that you've created leveraged services? 'Coz a lot of them are also working in that service based consultancy model or their wanting to work to create more leverage products and services. So, how are you making money from the business now, Simone?

SIMONE: So, what I've done is, I mean, the business side, created now as a portfolio business. So it covers a range of services from the consulting through to, I guess it's more, you know, done for you, done with you. And that was, that came from, I guess listening carefully to what the clients were telling us. Observing, you know, the common things that were working for them and you know, where we can create that leverage, where we could automate. It

was really gathering a whole lot of business intelligence based on, you know, our experience with the clients and treating our clients like partners.

So, one of the things I talk about a lot is moving away from any form of transactional relationship. And I was listening to an interview the other day with someone called Darryl. And he talks about the fact that, what's the difference between a client and a customer? And he said, a customer is someone who would buy from you, a client is someone you have a relationship with. [00:18:04.13 LAG] in our relationship with our clients.

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So I've always worked very closely with our clients, particularly my earlier adopters. And when I was testing those programs, because, you know, I had a thought, you know, not everybody can afford the consulting with me. How do I make this more accessible? How do I help more businesses understand how to make this work? And so, I worked with a great person called John Tonkin. He runs a business called Brain In A Box. And he sat me down 'coz a lot of people had a lot of expertise and knowledge that it's about how do you monetize that expertise and that knowledge by making it accessible to a bigger audience?

And so what he did was he sat down and basically picked my brain and pulled out a process. And I didn't even realize that there was this very structured process that I follow every time. And then I would observe [00:18:59.04] in our successful partnerships. And he was at it to help me extract that into a process that I could then turn to a program that other people could follow. So, a part of it, I think, is really understanding the needs of your clients or your ideal customer. One of the things I struggled with was being told, you know, being asked all the time, who is your ideal customer? Who is your ideal avatar?

Sometimes you actually don't know. You just need to go out and test. Or you need to, you know, work with people that are your adopters that represent the types of people you really wanna work with and have a collaboration. They are gonna get a benefit out of working very closely with you in a way that, you know, wouldn't be available to them once you've created these programs. So there's a lot of benefit in working with clients like in the early stages and then refining your programs with them. And what I didn't know was my pricing was a lot lower so the other adopters are getting lots and lots of benefit from working with me in the early days. And I worked closely with them to share the programs up to what they are today.

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JANINE: Cool, so you mentioned how you've done it effectively. I think there may be some people wondering... Because you had a successful corporate career before you launched into doing your own business. And that I assuming that you bought some money that you could invest into the new business across from what you are doing before. And correct me if I'm wrong here, 'coz a lot of our mums are starting from scratch and don't have funds to invest. Some of them are starting to look at things like crowd funding or they might put some money on the mortgage or they might just try and boot strap it from the beginning. So what would you suggest for those women out there that are listening who don't have much in the way of cash resources to get started and how that relates to partnership marketing. 'Coz I think there's a really important lesson to be learned there, probably.

SIMONE: There's a few ways that I've done it. I think the problem with coming from a corporate career is we, you know, I was of the impression that money, that sort of income would always be there. And so in the early days I wasted a lot of money and I think a lot of businesses do this. You use what you have and then you suddenly find yourself realizing that you don't have the money you need to grow. You spent the money in the wrong places. So I think a lot of businesses and a lot of business owners find themselves in that situation where they don't have the resources that they need. There's a few ways that I, personally, have found, you know, innovative ways accessing the resources that I need, which are legal, and ethical and moral.

So I started with my partnerships. My partnerships, I think this is the thing about partnerships. People think that partnerships are about swapping databases. And a lot of people might think, oh you know, I don't have a big database so nobody's gonna work with me. Everybody has assets that somebody else would want to leverage. And by going through the framework and process of identifying what those things are, and this is what I did, I was able to work with partners that had assets that I needed to leverage in the early stage of my business.

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So partnerships are beyond going, oh I need their database. It's about saying, you know, I wanna work with my clients as a partner. They're gonna help me build my programs. I'm gonna give them loads of value in return. There are other partners that you might have thought about as being suppliers in the past. You know, someone that you could buy a service from. But if you can see an opportunity for a win-win, you could actually leverage

those kinds of relationships and partnerships. So in the first year that I developed the first of those programs, I didn't have the cash reserves back then. I spent through all where I... and had a couple of deal that, you know, didn't work out. So I lost a lot of money.

And so what I did was, I had I think four, five key partnerships. Not only did I access \$30,000 in professional services that I needed from experts, but probably 10 times that in strategic value. And I was able to do things like growing my database by 460% in 90 days and tripling my cash flow. That was all things I did using the power of partnership. So it's really just having that mindset of, you know, we do better together and identifying what way you can provide them with a lot of value. And they can provide you with a lot of value in return. That's a great way to access resources. When I then got the business to a certain stage and I'm ready to grow to the next level, lots of people look at crowd funding, venture capital, loans from the bank, you know? There's loads of things that the people are looking at, drawing out of there mortgage.

I actually brought my mother in this as an investor. So she's obviously been very close to the journey. And this is where getting it done mum. My mum helped me get it done.

JANINE: But truly, yes. That's awesome.

SIMONE: Yeah and, you know, she's obviously my biggest fan and my biggest, you know, believer in what I'm doing. She's been there the whole journey.

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But I didn't wanna do it as though, you know, my mum would just give me money. I really approached her in a professional way. I engaged her in what I was doing. I said, you know, this is what I need the money for. And I made sure that I had an arrangement with her that would give her a return on her investment. So, you know, I gave her two options. I said, look, I can either pay you back as a loan or I can give you shares in the business based on where I was going. So she chose shares which is good. She must really believe that it's all gonna work out. And I found out it was a really great way that it helped me get that boost I needed to go to the next level.

JANINE: Cool. Thanks for your honesty. It's really great to hear that, you know, hear your story. And I'm sure it's gonna inspire our mums. And just open their minds a little bit as well to, you know, thinking in an innovative way. And

thinking outside the box for how they can achieve what they want because I think you did right when you say, you know, you spend what you've got. So whether you're starting off with a hundred thousand, twenty thousand, five thousand or nothing, if you're really determined to make it happen, you will make it happen.

SIMONE: I might share you the story which I found very enlightening. And that was, I heard a story about a group of investors that decided that they were going to create another Facebook. You know, that was when Facebook was so successful, started off by uni students who didn't have a lot of resources. And they thought, we've got those moneys. We've got that expertise. We're gonna create the next Facebook. We're gonna bring in all the experts. We're gonna pay them top dollar. And we're just gonna do something even better. It was a monumental failure because I think sometimes when you have all the resources think you need; you lose the innovation. You actually lose the ability to get really creative in your thinking. And, you know, I personally don't think that getting an expensive company to, you know, put together data reports or research campaigns is actually gonna give you any better insights than just talking to your clients and working closely with them. So I wouldn't let resourcing, you know, really limit you in achieving what you can achieve. And just remember the friendlies, you know? A lot of people forget that they've got investors in their own network, you know? They're looking to partners in an existing network. And it may not be just... It's not necessarily just money that they'll invest. **There's other ways that people can invest in your business. And it's just always looking for the win-win.**

JANINE: There you go. For those mums listening. If you've got those if only voices in the back of your head that are limiting you, if only I had this, I would get this. If only I could do this and have more time, if only I could do this, I'll be having more success. Maybe it's time to let go of it and just accept what you've got right now with what you've got around you. It's fantastic advice and some really great examples here too to back it up. Simone, I'd love to finish off with your response to our quickie closing question which is all around the, imagine you get up tomorrow and the people of the world have decided that it's crazy to work more than 20 hours a week. And so you've got to go away and rejig your business so that you can make the same amount of money or more in 20 hours a week. What would you do or what are you doing to create that for yourself?

SIMONE: Well I actually do believe it's crazy to work more than 20 hours a week. [00:27:29.09 LAG] And what I'm doing to build my business in order to achieve that. And I think this was a conversation that I've been having a lot lately and it's about getting really focused on the highest value activities in your business and in your day. You've probably heard that the, you know, the rock, the pebbles in the sand and how you fit them all into a jar. And if you put the sand in first then the pebbles, then the rocks, you won't get the rocks in. If you put the big rocks in first, and then let the pebbles sift in between the gaps then throw the sand in last, and fill the gaps you'll get it done.

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And so I think it's the same with a business. This is why I think it's so important to have the right people around you because it's very hard when you're in your own business to keep yourself on track sometimes and not get distracted. And it's hard to see the forest with the trees sometimes. So I think, you know, having the right people around you help you to keep focused on the big rocks and not the sand. So that would be my advice and I just want to add to that by saying I don't think anybody ever gets the balance 100% all the time, you know? It's okay to say someone, somewhere, maybe disappointed.

I took my son to school this morning and, you know, I've bent over backwards with my boys to make sure I'm there for them. But this morning I went in and these big brown eyes welled up with tears and he looked at me. And I said, what's wrong? [00:28:58.19 LAG] And I said, I can't stay for reading group today. I haven't planned for it. I need to put it into the schedule. And he looked so disappointed and that was just, I just came away going sometimes, you know, it doesn't matter what you do, someone's gonna be disappointed. And that's okay.

JANINE: And he's just adjusted his expectations from.... Well maybe not even know how you used to work in the past. But he's adjusted to his own normality. And he's just, he's looking to step it up a little bit more. Can I push a little harder and get a little bit more time for mum?

SIMONE: Pushing the boundaries.

JANINE: Yeah. Okay, Simone, thank you so much for being with us today. Yet again, a fantastic interview and you've got so much great, so many great tips to

share but also it's a real privilege to hear your personal story. So, thank you for that. For those of you listening, there's loads of free resources available over on Simone's website, partner2grow.com, so head on over there and get your fill if you're looking for more information about how you can apply what Simone is doing to your business and into your life. And also we can have again in the show notes, we're gonna have the links to that earlier interview that we did with Simone which has a lot more of the nitty gritty nuts and bolts stuff around partnership marketing.

So thanks again, Simone. It's been an absolute pleasure.

SIMONE: My pleasure. Thanks for having me, Janine.