

MASTERS Audio Club, May 2015

Phil Pallen
Brand Strategist



Phil Pallen builds brands for TV personalities, professionals, and entrepreneurs. His clients include sharks and entrepreneurs on *Shark Tank* and personalities on shows like *Dancing with the Stars*, *The X Factor*, *Project Runway*, and many more. He's a celebrity brand expert on *Access Hollywood* and the author of *Shut Up and Tweet*. Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, Phil

shares a step-by-step, "Do this now!" approach to helping individuals and businesses build their brands and expand their social media status.

WC: Hi everybody, Winn Claybaugh here. Welcome to another wonderful issue of MASTERS. This is an incredible world that we live in, especially in the world of marketing and social media and the role that that all plays. And I'm going to tell you straight up here: I worked very, very hard to make myself sound very intelligent during this interview but the fact of the matter is, I'm not. *[laughs]* I reached out to so many people and said, "If you were going to interview this guy, what would you ask him?" And so a whole bunch of people sent me some questions; people in the know. As much as I know the importance of having a presence in my social media circle, somebody does it for me. I feed them information and content and photos and what I'm up to but, to tell you the truth, I don't even think I know my password to get onto Facebook.

PP: *[laughs]*

WC: So there you go. *[laughs]* So, maybe this should be called "The Social Media for Dummies" and I'm the dummy here today and you're the expert. I'm sitting here with Phil Pallen. So, Phil, welcome to MASTERS.

PP: Thank you for having me. That's—you know, you're not unique in this, in terms of being—

WC: *[laughs]* Being a dummy here?

PP: No.

WC: Okay.

PP: Being intimidated by all of this, this crazy world. That's really my approach with everyone is I don't really care how much of an expert you are, the whole point of having this conversation is that we can setup a strategy and approach this, you know, in a way that's gonna make it all make sense.

WC: Well, any successful person—doesn't matter if you're an owner or just a manager or just somebody trying to build your own brand—to be successful, nobody does this on their own. Everybody needs to surround themselves with people who are smarter than they are. And I learned that a long, long time ago. My accountant is so much smarter than I am. My lawyer is so much smarter than I am. And the people who handle my social media are so much smarter than I am.

PP: Yeah.

WC: And so I am fine to turn it over to somebody else. Every time I get a new device I give it to my millennial assistant, 'cause I ain't gonna read the manual. I'm not going to figure it out.

PP: Mm-hm.

WC: And she just figures it all out and sets it up for me and says, "Here, do this." And so, that's a good way to go. I'm gonna read your bio here, and there's a reason why your bio is kind of short. And I don't know what that reason is but you're going to tell us. So here it is. So, again, Phil Pallen. He says social media and visual identity are codependent, essential pieces of a brand. Phil Pallen's work merges both of these worlds. Based in Los Angeles, Phil builds brands for TV personalities, professionals, and entrepreneurs. His clients are sharks and entrepreneurs on *Shark Tank*; personalities on shows like *Dancing with the Stars*, *American Idol*, *The X Factor*, *Project Runway*, *The Doctors*, and many more. He's a celebrity brand expert on *Access Hollywood*. So you've been on *Access Hollywood*?

PP: Mm-hm.

WC: Hmm.

PP: They call me whenever there's hard-hitting news.

WC: Oh, hard-hitting.

PP: Kardashians—

WC: That's 'til now.

PP: Justin Bieber. Yeah. *[laughs]*

WC: That's great. And the author of *Shut Up and Tweet*. I love the title of your book, by the way.

PP: Thanks.

WC: It's a book with game-changing strategies that will turn you into a Twitter rock star. When he's not tweeting, Phil speaks at conferences around the world about social media and branding. Okay, so tell me—'cause I think my assistant even emailed you and said, "Can you send us a longer bio?"

PP: She did.

WC: Okay, so—and you said, "Well, it's short on purpose."

PP: Yeah.

WC: Why is it short on purpose?

PP: All of that, there's nothing else you need to know. I mean—

WC: Okay.

PP: You'll discover things along the way but, you know, I try and keep things short and concise—everything I do—because people don't have time for anything more than that. And we have to be short and keep it sweet, you know? Nowadays people have short attention spans and they don't have a lot of time. So I try and—with everything I do—be concise and really stick to the point. You know, to respect people's time but also make an impression. You know, where it's the Internet age, you know, if you don't grab people's attention in three seconds or less, you've lost them to a viral kitty video on YouTube.

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: And you've lost them forever.

WC: Right.

PP: So I'm aware of that and certainly when I'm working, when I'm helping clients write their bios, I tell them it's not so much about a long list of credentials or where they went to school. In a lot of industries no one cares where you went to school. They care about who you work with or they care about where you're based or what you've accomplished. So that's important but not a full story of, like, you know, "At 14 I moved from this city to this city" and like—

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: The problem is, with big, long bios like that, you're giving up control. You're letting the user skim it and pick out pieces. But they're certainly not going to get every piece of it. If you keep it short—much like websites, you know, keep them short and concise—you retain more control because there's more of a chance that they're gonna click on everything.

WC: Right.

PP: Or read everything.

WC: I think that's a great message for lots of areas. You know, I used to sit in these management meetings that would last for three hours. I'm like, "Wow, couldn't we have done this in 20 minutes?" You know?

PP: You probably could've.

WC: Probably, yeah. And same thing: "We'll produce this incredible video that's six minutes long." And they're like, "No, it's too long." I'm like, "What?"

PP: Yeah.

WC: "You're not going to keep their attention for six minutes."

PP: No.

WC: "But it's a great video." They're like, "No. Can you cut this down to two minutes?"

PP: Yeah.

WC: I'm like, "Wow. Okay." *[laughs]*

PP: It's just adjusting for, you know—that's a realistic approach. Like a six-minute video, people will do what we call scrubbing: they'll grab the little—you know, they'll watch until—just until they start to, you know, focus on something else or, you know, and then they'll take the little cursor and they'll scrub the video and like wait for something more exciting to happen.

WC: Right.

PP: You know, this is what people do nowadays.

WC: Yeah.

PP: So really, on YouTube, like videos, you know two to three minutes. Three minutes, you're pushing it.

WC: Wow.

PP: It's just—things have changed.

WC: Wow.

PP: And we have to evolve with it. So that's why my bio is short. *[laughs]*

WC: So why are you so passionate about social media? 'Cause obviously you could have gone in many different directions with your career.

PP: Yeah.

WC: Why are you so passionate about social media?

PP: Well, I love social media for a number of reasons. I graduated my masters program, my degree, about—well, it would have been four years ago. So this is still a relatively new world. I'm 26. So I never worked for an agency, I never worked for the corporate world, I never—that's not my world. From the start—it's a long story short, but I'll give it to you. Brief, you know? Appropriate for this—

WC: Yeah, 'cause we don't like long stories.

PP: We don't.

WC: I've only got two minutes here.

PP: Right. *[laughs]*

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: I moved out to L.A. because I was in a competition to be Charlie Sheen's social media intern. Out of 90,000 people I made it to the top 50.

WC: Okay.

PP: And in that I had some opportunities that evolved. I had an internship lined up with Ryan Seacrest. I'd never been to California. Like I literally moved out here and I was like, "Okay, let's figure this out." I ended up not doing any of the internships because I had clients that came to me from over a hundred interviews and media that I did in this campaign that I created using social media to become Charlie Sheen's social media intern. At the peak of his craziness, remember in the media?

WC: Right, right.

PP: It was all over the place.

WC: Right, right.

PP: So I learned, doing that, how to use social media in an effective way but on a personal brand level. So I've only ever worked on personal brands. Lean marketing budgets, individuals. I don't really do a lot of corporate work. And even the companies and startups that I consult for are attracted to me because my approach is always so lean. So the reason I like social media is that I like it because you don't have to spend a lot of money to really build an incredible brand that's going to work for you. Regardless of what your industry is. You know, there's a lot you can do with it as a medium to grow your brand and really make a first impression.

WC: So it's not like *American Idol*, the TV show, hired you to do their social media.

PP: Never.

WC: People on *American Idol*. It's not like *Shark Tank* hired you but individuals on *Shark Tank* use you.

PP: Exactly. I never, ever work for—I mean, I have relationships with all kinds of people at those productions and networks: casting directors, managers—because these people come to me and go—they want to pick my brain: “How do we grow this person's brand” or “How do we—.” You know, they're always interested because my perspective is so different. It's not corporate. It's not agency. It's always been just me as a brand strategist with a team of people that I rely on to execute on specific things: design, copywriting. But I supervise everything and so I only ever work with individuals on those shows. And there's a reason, you know: we grow their followers or we get consistent with social media, it looks good for the show.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: You know, obviously, have efforts that support that. But also, you know, if you can grow your audience it becomes a really valuable point of, you know, leverage for negotiating another contract or if you're renewing, you know, for another season, you go into that meeting and you say, “Yeah. I'm a good host” or “I'm a good talent but I also have an audience that I'm bringing to the table.”

WC: Right.

PP: “So you get me as a host but you also get my audience of 500,000 people.”

WC: Well, actually, let me read—the guy who introduced us is Dean Banowetz.

PP: Yes.

WC: Whom we love. Dean Banowetz, he's called the—

PP: Love Dean.

WC: —the Hollywood Hair Guy, right?

PP: Mm-hm.

WC: I've known Dean for a very long time. He's very successful and has his hands in all kinds of things. So this is what Dean said: "One of the main things for me is, a lot of production companies look at my social media numbers because of sponsors and how big of an influencer I am. Phil helps me with building and maintaining consistency with my brand. He is responsible for helping me build legit followers instead of just buying followers."

PP: Mm-hm.

WC: "I am fortunate because I understand the value of marketing myself but a lot of hairdressers don't have a clue as to how to begin branding themselves." So that's what Dean says about you. Obviously you did a good job for Dean.

PP: I appreciate those kind words, Dean. I love working with Dean. He's one of my favorite clients. I think everyone can agree—I honestly believe he has one of the best reputations in this city. There's not a single person—I mean, everyone knows Dean and not a single person would ever say anything negative about him.

WC: Right, right.

PP: So, I'm a big fan of Dean. But I appreciate that and that's what I try to do, which I was able to do successfully with him and continue to do, you know, regardless of what show he's working on. Any of my clients, we're always trying to grow, you know, people will hear, "Oh wow, you can buy Twitter followers." Oh, and then they think that's such a good idea but it's—

WC: Can you buy Twitter—?

PP: Of course. Yeah, you can. Yeah, you can.

WC: See, that's the dummy in me—

PP: No.

WC: —asking, "Can you buy them?"

PP: A lot of people—I'm sure a lot of people listening, that's news to them. You can go and actually purchase followers, and what that does is it adds to the number

of followers that you have on your profile. However, they're either fake or inactive accounts, which mean they're not gonna do anything but add to that number.

WC: Got it.

PP: Right? They're not going to engage with you. They're not going to reply to your tweets or retweet you. They just sit here.

WC: Well, how would a production company know that they're not legitimate followers? Or how would an individual know, "Yeah,"—

PP: Yeah.

WC: —"I've got 20,000 followers but only 5,000 are legit?"

PP: That's a really good question. I can always tell but production companies and networks aren't always as savvy, right?

WC: Right.

PP: This is not what they do day-to-day. However, they are starting to catch on. They didn't know for a while.

WC: Okay.

PP: But now it's become so common that they've had to become more savvy in identifying it. So here are some ways. Twitter, within the last year, reformatted the way that they display tweets on the timeline or on your profile. It used to just be, "Here's a tweet," you know? But now, right below it, you can see how many favorites, how many replies, and how many retweets each tweet gets. So it's a lot more transparent. So if you—

WC: So Twitter went out of their way—they wanted to make people know or help people know, "This is legit. This is not."

PP: Yeah, I don't know if that was their motivation to change the format.

WC: Right.

PP: But certainly—

WC: Right.

PP: —it was a wakeup call for a lot of people in the entertainment industry that thought, *Oh, I'm not going to do anything strategic. I'm just gonna, you know, pay whatever—*'cause it's not even that expensive—*I'm gonna go buy 100,000*

followers and I'm done. No, because if you have that many followers and I go to your profile and it's dead, it's like, silent, you know?

WC: *[laughs]* Right, okay.

PP: *[laughs]* Then we know that those accounts were purchased, for sure.

WC: So, of all of the social platforms, why did you choose Twitter as the platform to write your book?

PP: Yeah. Twitter, I believe, is the only social media platform right now where you can build a targeted audience without spending money. I really did write this book because I was mad at Facebook.

WC: *[laughs]* Okay.

PP: Facebook made some changes in favor of, you know, companies, corporations that have a marketing budget that they can spend on promoting individual statuses. So when you write a status update on Facebook, say you've got a Facebook page that you've been growing. You may have even spent a little bit of money on advertising—Facebook ads—to grow the number of likes on your page. Many of my clients have been spending money on this over the last few years. All of a sudden, Facebook goes, "Now, when you post an update, not everyone on your page is gonna see it." So you spent all this money growing Facebook likes—

WC: Right.

PP: —likes on your page or fans—and now, you have to pay to promote or boost each status update. So—

WC: Even though they are followers that you, so—

PP: Yes.

WC: —to speak, earned.

PP: Right.

WC: Or recruited.

PP: So, if you don't—

WC: Or attracted.

PP: Exactly.

WC: Wow.

PP: If you don't promote or boost a post, you know, such a small number of the total followers that you have are gonna see it. You know, between like 1% and 3%—

WC: Wow.

PP: —of people on that page are actually going to see your content unless you pay to boost it. So from my standpoint—again, working with lean budgets, individuals—it's really not a smart platform for clients to invest money in when there's so much more that we can do on Twitter without spending money. That's really why Twitter is what—you know, on Twitter, networking is encouraged. Not so much on Facebook. Facebook is like your close-knit group of friends.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: And if an intruder comes in, someone that you don't know adds you on Facebook, you're like, "Who are you? I'm not going to add you. I'm not going to accept your friendship. I'm gonna ignore your request."

WC: Right.

PP: "And cast you out so you can't come into my personal world."

WC: *[laughs]* Right.

PP: But Twitter is not that way. Twitter is, I say, is like an airport. It's like this wonderful hub of people moving in all different directions with all different motivations, where it's understood that there's a lot of thoughts and a lot of ideas but networking is a lot more welcome. So someone can follow you and you don't necessarily know who that person is. That's okay. For people who are new, they're like, "Why is someone following me?" But you get over that—

WC: Right.

PP: —when you see strangers that start to engage with you.

WC: Right.

PP: That's what I get excited about Twitter: it's this unbelievable opportunity that so many people don't realize. Everyone that you could ever want as a follower, as a customer, as a purchaser, you know, of your book or of your product, they're all out there.

WC: Right.

PP: You just have to be strategic about getting in front of them.

WC: Okay, well, not to get off on a tangent here, but so we mentioned Twitter and Facebook. What other social media platforms are you excited about or do you have an opinion on or that you recommend people also get involved with?

PP: Yeah, there's a lot out there and I—

WC: What are your top five? Obviously, Twitter.

PP: Yeah. There's probably about 10 out there to choose from at this stage.

WC: Right.

PP: It's always changing. Some of the social media—all kinds of social media networks pop up and people get excited. Sometimes they fade away and we don't even hear about them or sometimes they stick around. I'll say, specific for the beauty industry—it really does differ—

WC: Right.

PP: —industry to industry—but I think with the beauty industry, there's a lot of visuals that we can incorporate.

WC: So Instagram, obviously.

PP: Instagram is definitely up there. If I—let's pick five. So Twitter is always number one, in my opinion, given the opportunity for networking and growing a brand.

WC: Okay.

PP: And having something to show for it. Twitter would be number one. I think Instagram would probably be number two.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: Instagram is the only social media platform that's essentially bridging every age group right now. Facebook is no longer cool. Facebook is for grandmas. That's so, so passé.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: You know? Parents, mom and dad came in and infiltrated and now it's not cool.

WC: *[laughs]* Okay.

PP: So Instagram is really the only social media platform that is bridging all the age groups and industries because it's visual and it's simple and it's mobile-focused. So there, you know, it's not really a website per se. It's still, you know, you can view photos on a browser but it's all about the phone. It's all about being in someone's back pocket and seeing behind the scenes or day-to-day, that kind of intimate experience.

WC: Okay.

PP: Instagram, because of the visuals and because beauty—a lot of clients get to do some pretty exciting things. You know, if you're on set or, you know, behind the scenes of a shoot, you know, an editorial or on a TV show, people want in.

WC: Or you're in the salon. People wanna—

PP: If you're in the salon. Absolutely.

WC: You just did a really cool haircut.

PP: Absolutely.

WC: Right.

PP: That visual simplicity makes Instagram really exciting. Another one—so we have, let's review here: we have Twitter, Instagram. I would include Pinterest as one of my favorites.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: Pinterest, also very visual, but really new-age scrapbooking and letting people in on this visual lifestyle that you're building. So it's not just about putting pictures of your products, that's so basic.

WC: Right.

PP: It's not enough. But it's about, almost like building a catalog or building a mood board of what that is. So for creatives, it's amazing.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: You know, you can—say you're inspired by holidays, you know, you can build a board or a few boards about that and then you can promote that on social media. You know, send a tweet linking people through to one of your new boards that you've been growing. I pin like a maniac so I have almost 10,000 pins on my Pinterest. And Instagram and Pinterest are my projects for 2015. I have Twitter—

WC: What do you mean? What do you mean your projects?

PP: I want to get better at them. I want to really be able to deliver tangible strategy like I can for Twitter. I have Twitter on lockdown. Like, you know, that book, start to finish, if you read it and just do what I tell you to do, you'll grow your numbers by thousands. I mean, people do. I get tweets every single day, "Phil, I did it."

WC: So right now people ask you, your clients—

PP: Mm-hm.

WC: "Hey, can you also help me build a following on Instagram or Pinterest." You say, "No, I'm not ready to help you with that," or—?

PP: No. I can definitely help them with it.

WC: Okay.

PP: But it's constantly changing.

WC: Right.

PP: So I always want to be in the know on what's coming and that's—even with Pinterest, I've doubled my followers since January just by trying and experimenting with what works and what doesn't. So now I'm kind of formulating ideas around that that I know work and work with other clients and with people that implement these strategies. No, I love Pinterest, I love Instagram. I think those two visual platforms are great for the beauty industry. So Twitter—so those are three. I actually, I may not even go into five because I really believe, again, thinking about the individual, you know how much time this stuff takes, right? You have someone who helps you out—

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: —because truly this stuff takes so much time.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: And one of the most important things I can say is, rather than being mediocre on 10 different social media platforms, I'd rather you be awesome at three.

WC: Right. Great advice.

PP: It's gonna be better for your brand. So I wouldn't even worry so much about, you know, platform four and five. I'd rather you focus on one, two, and three, which is gonna be different for every single individual and every single brand, depending

on your market and depending on your brand, what that entails. But if you can be really awesome at three—try to be a rock star at three platforms—that's gonna help you more and it's more realistic when we're looking at individuals, when there's only so much time in the day.

WC: So before we move forward, give us your definition of a personal brand 'cause people listening to this right now, there's a salon owner who has 10 stylists working in his or her salon and they're thinking, *I need to get the word out about my stylists and about my salon*. Then there's an 18-year-old, brand-new hairdresser who's thinking, *Well, building a brand, that's the salon owner's job. That's—I don't own a company. I don't need to build a brand*. So just kind of give a definition of all that.

PP: Sure. Speaking specifically to personal brands, I think it's a very simple formula. A personal brand is a combination of two things. It's your passion. Something that, if you won the lottery today and you could do whatever you wanted tomorrow, what would that be? If money wasn't an option, what would you do for the rest of your life? What's your passion? So something you love; that's element number one, ingredient number one. There's two main elements here: element one is something you love, something you're passionate about, paired with something people need.

WC: Wow. What great advice.

PP: It's that simple. Something you love paired with something they need. This isn't a hobby. A hobby is something you do for yourself because you enjoy it. A brand is the opposite. A brand is something other people need. I approach this from the drive to monetize this, right? A hobby is a hobby. Fantastic. You do it for yourself. But your brand—

WC: But you're not necessarily looking to make money at it.

PP: Right. You may—

WC: Like I love gardening,—

PP: You do it for yourself—

WC: —I love playing the piano but I'm not trying to market—

PP: Exactly.

WC: —or make money off this.

PP: You do it for yourself 'cause you get enjoyment out of it. But a brand—more important than the enjoyment is offering something that people need. So they spend money on it.

WC: Right.

PP: Right? And so we can't be so concerned about what it is we want. It has to be more about what they need. Not just want. Some people spend money on wants but most people don't have the money to spend on wants. They spend money on needs.

WC: It's kind of a nice to do. Yeah.

PP: They spend money on needs. And, you know what? Chances are it's probably not something they need. Do they need a fancy purse? Do they need a vacation? I mean, they think they need it.

WC: Right.

PP: So that's something to be aware of as well. What do people need? If you can satisfy a need, like any good business does, then you won't have to worry about marketing yourself or your business because the need is built in. I've never spent money on marketing myself, ever. I've just really, truly—I moved to L.A., you know, didn't do any internships, applied to agencies 'cause I thought, *Well, that's what I'm supposed to do, right? I'm supposed to—I love social media, I love marketing. I'm supposed to go work in an agency.* I couldn't get a job. Like, I literally couldn't get interviews, I didn't get hired. So I thought, *Well, either I'm going to have to leave, move back to Canada—which is where I'm from—I'm going to have to move back to Canada or I can figure out what people will pay me to do.*

WC: Hm.

PP: Right? And I had people come through and they're like, "Phil, I need help with a website. Can you do that?" And I'm thinking, *I mean, really, truly, should I be taking this on? Probably not.* But, "Yeah, sure I can help you."

WC: Right, right.

PP: And that's how it all started was like, "What do people need? What are they willing to spend money on?" Satisfy that need. Like, you know, any good business does that. That's the basis for it. So, I really—when I'm working, you know, when I'm onstage or I'm working with clients or workshops, people will say, "Phil, this is what I love and I've wanted to open a restaurant my entire life and this has been my dream." And I'm like, "Okay, great. But you don't really matter

in this case. Prove to me that people need what it is you're building. You'll thank me for this later, you know, because your business won't go bankrupt." [laughs]

WC: Right.

PP: What do people need? And that's the formula. That's the formula for personal branding.

WC: Okay, so hopefully everybody listening to this now understands why this message is so important. Okay. So how do celebrities, like from these TV shows or Dean Banowetz or the sharks, use social media to grow their brands?

PP: Mm-hm. All of them have prioritized what platforms are most important, which is looking at: Who am I trying to access? Who do I want more of, you know, more followers. What do the networks look at? What do they want of me, you know? Or not just networks 'cause I won't even keep it specific to entertainment, but anyone who's making a decision—it could be the bank. It could be you're trying to get a loan. How can we show that you're legit? You know, how can we show that you're legitimate? Having followers proves that people are engaged with your brand, that people know you exist. And so, clients use social media in all different ways. Really, at the end of the day, regardless of who you are or what your industry is, you're using social media to stay on people's radar. It's like a billboard on Sunset Boulevard. I did research when I was writing my book. Those cost upwards of \$100,000 a month. Isn't that crazy?

WC: Yeah.

PP: That's a lot of money to spend to put an ad for a pair of jeans knowing full well that people driving by are not going to change their schedule for the day to reroute to the mall to go buy a pair of jeans 'cause they saw it on a billboard. It doesn't work that way.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: But when they pass it every day and they see another billboard, you know, a few miles down the road, what is it that these companies are paying \$100,000-plus for? It's not for conversion because it's not converting. We have no proof that it's converting, no matter how we try to, you know, come up with some formula that, you know, this billboard equals this many sales. It's just not—that's not possible. What they're paying for is something very simple. They're paying for brand recognition. They're paying to stay on our radar and they're paying a lot of money for it.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: Tweets do exactly the same thing but they don't cost any money. All they cost is time, right? And if you're organized with your social media strategy and you've got a good little system, whether it's you or whether it's your assistant giving you a hand, staying ahead of the game, every single tweet that you send helps you stay on your followers' radar. And it costs nothing. That's what excites me about Twitter.

WC: I hope you don't mind, I'm gonna jump all over the place.

PP: Please.

WC: But—

PP: That's how my brain works.

WC: Oh good.

PP: Yeah.

WC: Thank goodness. So what nightmare stories do you have about people using social media platforms the wrong way?

PP: Oh boy. Where do I start on this one? You get better the more you do it.

WC: Right.

PP: So I can always tell if clients are just getting started, and that's totally fine. I mean, it's like anything: the more you do it, the better you get. But one consistent thing with every single person who's using the platform wrong is this: they're using it as a platform for broadcast instead of conversation.

WC: Give us an example of that.

PP: So, yeah. So they, again, become consumed with me-me-me, self: "I need to let everyone know what I'm doing because I'm so important and everyone's gonna care."

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: Which is sometimes the case but usually not. They post it in a way that's all about themselves, and that does not work well on social media because you look self-obsessed. I would even argue that if you have a big, long bio about all your credentials and your, you know, your life story, that it actually looks like you're obsessed with yourself. That's at least how we interpret it, in many ways. So, social media needs to be used as a tool for conversation. It doesn't mean you can't update us on what you're doing and who you're with and, "Here's me and

this celebrity.” But, like share a little personal anecdote about that experience, something that prompts us to talk about it; to, you know, share it with someone; to, you know, comment on the status or reply to the photo on Twitter. How do we take this and start a conversation? I think you do a very good job of this on Facebook, by the way. You get really great engagement on all of your posts because they’re interesting. And you get a lot of likes, you get a lot of comments because you share really interesting stuff and you’re in tune with how to socialize with people: just how you would in a room. How do you feel about the guy who walks in and talks about himself all night, doesn’t ask anyone else how they’re doing?

WC: Right, right.

PP: We’re all like, “Oh, God. Here he is.”

WC: No more, no more.

PP: Yeah, no more.

WC: Yeah.

PP: Social media is exactly the same thing. It’s just another way of socializing. It’s just another way of communicating, and some people forget that. They become obsessed with self. And we all know those people on social media, don’t we?

WC: Right.

PP: That’s probably the biggest mistake is people use it as a tool for broadcasting over and over and over again and they’re not in tune with what people want or what other people are doing.

WC: Yeah.

PP: That’s really the biggest mistake.

WC: Oh, that’s great advice.

PP: There’s a lot of articles and stuff on the stereotypical Facebook, you know, people. *[laughs]*

WC: Yeah, right.

PP: You know, there’s a certain type. You know, the person who—oh my God—it’s like private stuff or like drama they’re going through or these really dramatic status updates: “Oh my God, my life is over. I just can’t put up with it anymore,” dot dot dot.

WC: Right, right.

PP: You know? But then don't like explain what's going on 'cause now we all want to know.

WC: Right.

PP: It's like why we open a celebrity tabloid: we want the drama. Like, you can't just post that and not disclose what's going on. And then you get the people commenting, "What happened? Are you okay?"

WC: Right.

PP: You know? That's one of our—

WC: That drives me crazy.

PP: Me, too. Drives me crazy.

WC: Ohh. Yeah.

PP: And so, oh yeah, I could come up with all kinds of examples just based on, you know, those stereotypes that we can all relate to. *[laughs]*

WC: So have you had people who made a mistake, so to speak, on Twitter or one of these social platforms and then came to you and said, "Ooh, Phil, help me clean this up. Help me fix this 'cause I was going down the wrong path and broadcasting and I pissed off a bunch of people or—"?

PP: It's never usually one kind of set-off or one kind of moment like that. It's more just overall changing the strategy.

WC: Okay.

PP: And touching base with—really evaluating every so often, "What is it that my audience wants?"

WC: Okay.

PP: Give them that. Even from a very basic level. And if you can't figure that out for yourself—it's hard to be self-aware. Even me or clients will say, "Gosh, I can give everyone else advice but when it comes to my own stuff I have a really hard time."

WC: Right.

PP: Well, that's why you ask for help. A lot of people don't cut their own hair. They go and have an expert cut it, then they hold up the mirror at the end of the day or at the end of the cut and say, "How does it look? Here's what you look like."

WC: Right.

PP: Right? It's exactly the same thing.

WC: Got it.

PP: Right? Like, don't try and do all this yourself if you're not good at it. Leave it to an expert to evaluate you and take inventory of what we have and say, "Here's what we're dealing with." Even for me, when I first—my first year of business, my gift to myself, my Christmas gift was to hire an agency, a branding agency, a small one, that I thought was really awesome. And I thought, *Gosh*—'cause, I mean, I can brand anything, anything that walks. Really, truly, I can brand anything. But when it comes to myself I find it harder.

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: And everyone can relate to that, so.

WC: So, did you hire somebody?

PP: Sure. I totally did and I collaborated with them on the first, you know, phase of my branding and what I got—the most important thing I got out of that was my job title. They were like, "Phil"—I didn't know what to call myself. I was like, "Here's what I do. I do social media and I help people with their brands." And they were like, "You're a brand strategist." And I was like, "Oh."

WC: So that's your title?

PP: Yeah.

WC: Brand strategist.

PP: Yeah. That's what I call myself. And that was probably the most important thing that I really wouldn't have been able to come up with on my own. I needed someone to just kind of take inventory of me. Brands are constantly evolving. If we're not evolving then we're dead.

WC: Right.

PP: You know? Just as you evolve as a person, your brand is evolving with that, especially if you're brand-new. You may not know what your brand is. And I do a lot of cleanup work with other, you know, branding gurus that say, "Your brand is

this.” You know, based on what? I’ll be very honest with clients when they’re hiring me to help them come up with their brand. I’ll say at the very beginning of the meeting, “We may arrive at this at the end of this meeting in the next two hours or we may not.” And that’s okay because if your brand is going to be sustainable it can’t be a quick decision. You need to take the time to think about it and let things fall into place so that it’s something you’re really excited about and something you know people need, which requires research, it requires being in tune with yourself. But everyone can come up with a brand. It just sometimes takes some time, which is totally okay.

WC: I really want to get into that but I have to ask this question: you’re not going to please everybody; how do you advise people to handle haters on your social media platforms?

PP: When you try to appeal to everyone you effectively appeal to no one.

WC: Okay.

PP: So you have to have an opinion. You have to have a standpoint. You have to have a perspective. On the Internet, that becomes your personality and so haters are a wonderful thing. Even though it’s hard to not take things personally—

WC: Right.

PP: —because this is *personal* branding. It’s not as if we have a product—you know, here’s a bottle of water, people don’t like the taste of it. That’s my product but I’m not going to take offense because, in this case, oftentimes you’re the product. Just like going into an audition and someone’s saying, “I don’t like you.” Well, there’s probably nothing wrong with you as a person, it’s just you’re not right for the gig.

WC: Right.

PP: But it’s hard for everyone to not take things personally. But when you have haters, it’s a beautiful thing because it means people are paying attention to you.

WC: Okay.

PP: What’s worse than haters is not having haters ’cause it means—or not having any engagement because no one’s even noticing.

WC: Okay.

PP: That should be the scariest.

WC: So when you do have haters, the best advice is to respond?

PP: Well, it just depends—it depends—I base it on their nature. If people have constructive criticism on whatever you're doing, on your opinion, on your product, on your service, then it's actually, in most cases—it is case-by-case—but in most cases it's better to acknowledge it and to show that level of transparency for other people to see. So someone complains, nip it in the bud. Respond to it as promptly as possible but a very professional, happy, you know, painfully nice demeanor.

WC: Not on the defensive.

PP: Definitely not on the defensive. It makes you look vulnerable.

WC: Right.

PP: Which we don't want. But if someone is rude, if someone swears or is offensive, in that case I believe you can delete it because it's not a constructive effort to have something fixed.

WC: Okay.

PP: So in that case where it really doesn't serve a purpose to anyone, delete it or ignore it.

WC: Well, I think you also just gave us good advice: there's no swearing on social media.

PP: Yeah, I mean, it's—you know, some people have built really incredible brands by being provocative and in that case it's fine but in terms of like—you know what I'm talking about.

WC: Yeah.

PP: Anything that's like obscene, anything that's—

WC: Right.

PP: —negative in terms of like, you know, swearing or rudeness. I don't give those people the satisfaction to even, you know, of even knowing that I saw it.

WC: Right.

PP: Especially when I'm dealing with, like, higher profile clients. It doesn't happen that often. All the brands I work on are usually like really nice, positive, optimistic

brands. But people will say stuff behind a computer that they would never say face-to-face—

WC: Right.

PP: —to someone.

WC: Right.

PP: So that's just the reality of the Internet that we all have to just face.

WC: Right.

PP: But, you know, they'll say stuff that they'd never say in person so I don't give them—a lot of times I don't give them the satisfaction of knowing that we even saw it.

WC: Right. Okay, so let's start from scratch or let's start from the very, very beginning. So if a new person is just getting started out building their brand—so what's—what do you recommend as their first steps here?

PP: Well, you know I'm all about step-by-step and making this super clear and easy to follow.

WC: Actually, you know, that's a great endorsement for your book—I have to tell you—because, again, the person who does my social media, knowing that I was going to interview you today—

PP: Yes.

WC: —said that she went through your book page by page, chapter by chapter, read the chapter, and then went onto Twitter and did exactly what you said to do and it was very easy, it was very understandable, and she immediately got results.

PP: Uh-huh.

WC: So, congratulations.

PP: Thank you.

WC: You know, you're just not in theory here—

PP: No.

WC: —this really is—

PP: I don't do theory.

WC: —a good how-to.

PP: Yeah, I don't do theory.

WC: Here's what you need to do.

PP: I don't even read. I mean, I'll read stuff like that's step-by-step, that's literal.

WC: Right.

PP: It's just not—I have the shortest attention—I have the attention span of a gnat. So it's like, seriously, if something doesn't grab my attention, I'm off on something else. And so the book—no one wants to read a book about Twitter, right? I mean, realistically, who on earth would want to read a book about Twitter?

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: Not me.

WC: Okay.

PP: So I know that going into it and so I kept it short on purpose. I kept it short. It should take you an hour or two to go through it. And then refer back to it.

WC: Okay.

PP: And then you know everything you need to know.

WC: Okay. So step one. What do people need to do?

PP: Step one. You know, branding happens in three phases. Building a personal brand or taking inventory of what you already have. A lot of times we're not building a house, we're renovating the house that's built so that it's better. So three different steps. First, we position the brand. What is it you love, married with something people need?

WC: Okay.

PP: That equals your personal brand. Once the brand is positioned we have to build something to show for it. When we're face-to-face we have the luxury of conversation, of seeing facial expressions, you know, engagement, those little nuances in person. We don't get those on the Internet.

WC: Right.

PP: So we have to overcompensate a little bit for that. So every good brand has personality and content. Content plus personality is a good brand. It's never one or the other. Even if you look at some of the most successful brands—personal brands—out there, every single one of them is a combination of personality and content. I call it content to personality ratio. So, out of a hundred: Ellen is 90% personality, 10% content. It doesn't matter what she's saying. We don't even really remember the content; it's more about her delivery.

WC: Right.

PP: That's what we love.

WC: Okay.

PP: Anderson Cooper is 70% to 80% content and the other portion is personality.

WC: Okay.

PP: What happens when we give Anderson Cooper a daytime talk show to really showcase his personality?

WC: It doesn't go well.

PP: It gets cancelled.

WC: Yeah.

PP: They didn't talk to Phil.

WC: Right. *[laughs]*

PP: We don't care about Anderson's personality, most cases. I know he's had a few little laughing fits and whatever; those little moments that we feel like we get to know the, you know, the reporter. But at the end of the day he should be sitting at a desk either delivering the news with a teleprompter or having a great interview. He's very good at interviewing.

WC: Right.

PP: That's his strength. We need to play to his strengths with the content, with the positioning of the brand, just like everyone else. So everyone has a different makeup of content to personality and that's part of—you have to have that self-awareness as you're building the brand. Now specifically the steps. First thing is photos because the best online branding is when we replicate the in-person experience as closely as possible. So I don't have the luxury of sitting here face-to-face like we are now, so how do we do that on the Internet when there's a

medium right in the way of everything? How do we play to that? You've got to have amazing photos. And this isn't about looking like super hot in your headshot, you know? This is about having a picture—not from, you know, your high school yearbook or, you know, your headshot from five years ago. Chances are you probably don't look like that anymore so it's not going to work in your favor to have that as your display picture. It needs to be what you look like now and it shouldn't be a pixelated iPhone photo. It should be—go see a photographer. It's the most important step in building a brand, more important than a logo, more important than anything because your photos are used as your social media profile photos, which get seen every single day, right beside your content that you're sharing on every single device. Your website. Think about all of these platforms we're building to show for you. The best branding is when we replicate the in-person experience as closely as possible. So steps for building your brand after we've positioned it: photos, logo—if it's necessary. It's not always necessary. Some clients will come to me and they're like, "Phil, here's my budget. What can I do?" If we've got to cut something, logo is the first thing to go. Let's put your name in a nice font that we like; you know, move on.

WC: Okay.

PP: Photos, logo, website. Social media profile design, which is just making sure your social media profiles reflect—they're like an extension of your website.

WC: Okay.

PP: Those are the steps to building your brand.

WC: Have you found that a lot of brands—personal brands and even companies—that their social media presence does not match their website? So they spent a lot of money with their website but their nephew is doing their social media and it's just a mess.

PP: All the time.

WC: Yeah.

PP: All the time. There is inconsistencies.

WC: And that's not good.

PP: No, no. There's inconsistencies. People just want transparency. Social media was born out of the fact that we don't want advertisers to tell us what to do, what to look at, what to listen to, what to see. We're over that. I want to make my own decisions. And so social media, you know, it's supposed to give the power to the

people where I can choose what shows up on my newsfeed and what doesn't. Of course, they've gotten, you know, fancy—sneaky, I should say—with ways of having advertising 'cause that's how, you know, we pay for things.

WC: Right.

PP: But still, a lot of these social media sites have given you the power to click X on this or hide these posts moving forward. So companies can't just be on social media or individuals can't just be on social media now; you have to give people something they want so that they engage with you. It's not going to happen automatically. It's not going to happen just by spending money. You have to be doing something that people care about. If they don't care about you, they're not going to pay attention to you. And so that's—you know, companies do that all the time where there's inconsistencies: websites and then the social media. It's like—it's hard especially for a company, right? I love what Chipotle does on social media. We know that on Twitter, for example, we get higher engagement if we can have a face to the brand as opposed to a logo, you know? But that's not always the case. These big companies—how do you—you can't have a person always.

WC: So what do they do? Chipotle?

PP: I love what they do. They have at the end of their tweets—so say you tweet about Chipotle, "Having this for my lunch. This is so good." You will get a tweet back. They'll probably favorite your tweet and you'll get a reply from someone who will have some kind of fun comment and then they do dash and the name of the person who tweeted you.

WC: Oh wow.

PP: Kind of cool, right?

WC: Yeah.

PP: It's a simple, little thing that builds that sense of transparency.

WC: Hm.

PP: You know? I've seen on other accounts where they've been transparent about who does the social media. So, you know, big company, MTV—you know, official account for MTV—"Tweets by @ whoever does the social media."

WC: Huh.

PP: Kind of cool. I'm not saying that—I mean, it's case by case. Sometimes that's smart for your brand, sometimes it's not. But these are just examples of how people are trying to increase the sense of transparency.

WC: So I'm not just tweeting with some mega company and who knows who's reading it, but I know an individual at Chipotle. I know an individual at MTV and that's who I'm engaged with.

PP: I thought one of the biggest mistakes that has ever been made in social media was when Ashton Kutcher admitted that he didn't do his own social media. Like what's the point of being on social media—

WC: Wait a minute, I admitted that.

PP: No, no. But—

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: —but—

WC: Do I have to go back and edit that now?

PP: No, you don't.

WC: Okay.

PP: No, no, no, you don't because a lot of us have help but it's still coming from you.

WC: Yeah.

PP: It was very obvious in his content—

WC: That it wasn't coming from—

PP: —that it wasn't him.

WC: Okay.

PP: And that's the problem.

WC: Okay.

PP: Right? But think about his industry, though, right?

WC: Right.

PP: Like, he's the star. People—I mean, imagine getting a favorite or a retweet from someone like that—a big celebrity. You've made someone's day. When I'm

working with clients—I mean, be realistic—a lot of these people on television, you know, stars and stuff, they don't have time to do all this themselves. That's—

WC: Right.

PP: But still, like, we want to believe that it's real and we want to believe that it's, you know, that it's them.

WC: Huh.

PP: It's like finding out that the tooth fairy doesn't exist.

WC: Right.

PP: You know, it's like such a lunch bag letdown. And so, that's just something to be aware of. But no, I don't think it's bad that you admitted that. I mean, I have people help me as well. I'm busy. So are you.

WC: Well, but I still provide the content.

PP: Absolutely.

WC: Like you and I, when we're done we're gonna take some photos and shoot a little video and I'm gonna send that to her and she's gonna put it everywhere.

PP: Yeah.

WC: Okay, so I want to take you back to where we were talking about somebody getting started. And that's either a brand-new business, entrepreneur, hairdresser just starting out or it could be, like you said, a house that needs remodeling. So it's a brand that's been out there for a long time but they need to remodel and get back to building the brand the correct way.

PP: Yeah.

WC: So you said that there are three steps for that.

PP: Yeah.

WC: Number one was positioning, right? Number two was what people need.

PP: Building, yeah.

WC: Okay.

PP: Number two is the build.

WC: Okay.

PP: We have to build the house.

WC: Okay.

PP: If we take a house to market and it doesn't have a roof, we're not going to get the full value we deserve.

WC: Got it.

PP: Right? So we have to build the house and decorate the house. When someone comes to me with a really brilliant brand or we build it together, I tell them, "You brought the gift. The gift is right in front of me. All I have to help you figure out is how to wrap it and how to, you know, promote it. How to get the word out that it exists."

WC: Okay.

PP: So once the brand is built—we've got photos that showcase our brand, we've got a logo that complements everything and reinforces that brand, we have a website that's short, concise, you know, the fewest number of pages possible so that you retain more control over the user in terms of what they see. If you've got a website with 30 different pages, you've lost them. They have the control over which pages they click—

WC: Got it.

PP: —and which they don't. And chances are they'll miss a lot of stuff that you want them to see. So it—you know, a very visual website, optimized for mobile. I love platforms like Squarespace for building your website. Strong visuals: so photos, logo, website, updating your social media profile design. Once we have all of those checkmarks ticked off then we get to cross the bridge from building the house to promoting it.

WC: So that third step is promoting.

PP: Exactly.

WC: Okay.

PP: Yeah. Exactly. And then promoting your brand is isolating your top three social media platforms, your priority platforms, and giving a specific use for each one. We can't just, like I said earlier, we can't just exist on social media. It's not enough anymore 'cause everyone is just existing. Instead, we have to be smart

about this. We need to use intelligent social media strategy and that happens when we give each platform purpose. So what are we using Pinterest for? Well, here's an example: I could pin all of the travel destinations that I want to go to, that *I want to go to*. These are places *I've* wanted to go. Does anyone care about that? I would hope not. If someone does care about that, they need to get, you know—

WC: A life?

PP: —a day job. A life, right.

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: People come to me not for the top travel destinations—that has absolutely nothing to do with my brand. They come to me because they want ideas, guidance, inspiration on branding or social media. In this case, I've given Pinterest a purpose and I pin great examples of branding: business cards, websites, logos, advertisements, you know, anything print, you know, all kinds of stuff like that. And so what it's become is a tool. I mean, you know, I need inspiration when I start branding and so I could scour the web and, you know, right click, save as, into a folder hidden away somewhere on my computer or I could build a scrapbook that's useful for me when I start a branding project and it's useful for my clients.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: So I've built, you know, a lot of followers because people find it useful. I get emails and tweets from people, "Oh my God, I love your Pinterest." Because it now has a purpose. People have motivation to go follow it because it serves a purpose and I'm consistent with it. Your favorite TV show isn't on at a random time every single week that you have to guess. If you look at a lot of successful YouTubers—which we haven't talked a whole lot about today, so I'll bring in some video—but a lot of successful YouTubers have a very set structure: new videos every Friday, you know, or they brand it in some way. That is the same way as airing a TV show at the same time every week.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: It serves two purposes. One: the audience knows when and where to find it and the expectations are very clear. The show is on at this time. I'm launching a video at this time. But what it also does is keeps you, as the content creator, accountable for actually doing it.

WC: Hm.

PP: That's one of the big problems with social media. People do it 'cause they have to do it, 'cause Phil says I have to be on social media, but if you treat your social media like taking out the trash, it's gonna be trash.

WC: Right. *[laughs]*

PP: You know?

WC: Right.

PP: Just don't even bother, in my opinion.

WC: Right.

PP: So you need to have a set structure. You need to stick to a plan. It's like working out or anything else that requires discipline. What's your structure? Respect it because your audience has expectations.

WC: Now, the reason why we're talking about this is for business. We're teaching you this not to help you build your hobby.

PP: Yeah.

WC: We're sharing this information with you so that you can build a business, so that you can make money, so that you can create a following. Correct?

PP: Mm-hm. Absolutely.

WC: Okay, so based on that, what mistakes are people making? So here they're using these social media platforms but then they're posting—like you gave the example of “I'm really having a bad day. My life sucks.”

PP: Yeah.

WC: You know? Or, I—somebody wants a job with me or somebody is trying to connect with me for whatever, I go and—you know what I look at? I look at their photos and stuff. And if there's like a bunch of photos of them smoking and partying and they're half-naked and it's—I'm totally turned off.

PP: Mm-hm.

WC: Like, this is your brand and your brand tells me that you're a party person and I don't want to hire a partier.

PP: Yeah. Unless it's their brand, right? In some cases—

WC: It's not my brand, though.

PP: I know.

WC: They're coming to work with me. I don't hire smokers.

PP: In that case, then they need to be aware of that—

WC: Okay.

PP: —because everything is out on the Internet. It's all out in the open now and we can find it. Even if you delete it or hide it or whatever, it's still out there and there's a lot of times we can find it. So, that's an interesting point you bring up. I do a lot of talks at universities and something that comes up a lot—I'm usually on a panel with professors and they kind of lecture—

WC: So these are college kids—

PP: Yeah.

WC: —who are getting ready to graduate—

PP: Yeah.

WC: —and they've got to put themselves out there for the workforce.

PP: And my opinion is different than usually what the other professors who are like, "Don't do," like a parent. They're like, "Don't post this," or "Don't," you know, "Make sure you do this and that." And then I kind of am like a breath of fresh air for them because I'm like, "Go ahead and do it if it's your brand." Like, if you're gonna go work at somewhere provocative, then do something that's aligned with that brand. But, again, it's not about, you know, like listening to a parent bark at you about what to do and what not to do. Be aware of—

WC: What you're putting out there.

PP: Exactly. Be aware of the first impression that you give out. That's all we're talking about today is this is the business of first impressions.

WC: Right.

PP: You know, a lot of my clients, they, you know, they'll go, "Phil, I can't," you know, "I want to go submit for this casting," or, "I want to go set up a meeting with this network executive or this casting director or manager," whatever. But what they don't realize is you really only have one shot because these are busy people that have people coming up to them all the time selling themselves.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: And when you pop up again—say you go, you have a meeting and they say, “You’re not right because of this, this, this.” Or, “Here’s what you need to work on.” You pop up, you know, every few months—like, that’s annoying. Like, that’s not going to work. So think of this as, you know, you have one shot to make that first impression. Knowing that we’re always evolving, we’ve got to start somewhere. We’ve got to walk before we run. We have to crawl before we run, you know, and it’s a process but really treat it like a profession, like your career. And be aware of that first impression that you give off because that is what people are consuming and judging and making decisions on before they even give you the time of day or the opportunity to go face-to-face with them.

WC: Got it.

PP: Mm-hm.

WC: So, which leads me to another question: how active should I be? How active should I be on YouTube? How active should I be on Facebook? How active should I be on Twitter? And are they all different?

PP: Yeah, they’re all different based on the mediums. But, you know, it’s hard—

WC: Should I be tweeting every day?

PP: Well, it depends on your brand. If you’re a news station or a news source then they get away with tweeting a lot and people expect it. They even look for it, right? Like, you know, CNN tweets a lot because they’re delivering the news.

WC: Right.

PP: But if you’re not a news source should you be, you know, tweeting breaking news? Probably not. Like, you know, *[laughs]* every five minutes.

WC: Right.

PP: You know, for the rest of your life. No. It’s like that’s gonna get annoying.

WC: Right.

PP: So you need to be aware of like what’s too much.

WC: “I don’t get my news from you, Winn. I get it from CNN’s tweets.”

PP: *[laughs]* Right.

WC: Right.

PP: So I get asked this question a lot and I used to say, “Well, it just depends on your brand.” But I was like, “No. I need to come up with an average to at least get people started.”

WC: Right.

PP: So I think once a day on Facebook is fine.

WC: Okay.

PP: Even once every other day is fine if you’re trying to save money and you’re going to boost your posts ’cause realistically that’s the only way people are going to see them.

WC: Right.

PP: You’re fine to post every other day. If you go, “No, Phil, that’s not enough. We have a lot of exciting stuff going on.” Fine, post once a day but don’t do it more than that unless you’re a news source or an editorial. You know, like a magazine or, you know—

WC: Right.

PP: —something like that.

WC: That’s good advice.

PP: Twitter, on average—because I have to give an average—I would say four a day is fantastic. Some people might go, “Oh my God, I tweet 27 times. Four is nothing.” Fantastic, you know? Then scale up. You know, don’t tweet four times in a row but, you know, if you can get away with more than that, then spread them throughout the day. And by doing that, you’ll find—keep track of your analytics, keep track of what posts get the most engagement. Factor in when is your audience most active. That just depends where in the world you are—not even where you are but where your audience is. So, giving an average on Twitter: four times a day is fantastic. Some people say, “Phil, that’s nothing. I do way more than that.” Great. Some people go, “Wow. That’s way more than I could ever handle.” In the book I teach four different tweet types. So my strategy is tweet four times a day, one in each tweet type. And if you tweet more than that, fantastic—say you tweet 8 to 12 times, fantastic. Just, you know, do—

WC: Cover the four?

PP: Exactly. Just go through the four different tweets. The four different—

WC: What are the four?

PP: Well, the four different types, they ensure that your content is different. It's not the same thing over and over again. Here are—here's a little crash-course on the four different tweet types. I go into more detail with examples and stuff on the book, in the book. But the first is website link. I have a little short-form for all of them so that's WL. Website link is anything about you, anything that's self-promotional. But I don't call it self-promotion because I feel like if you can provide a link people are more likely to engage with you longer. It can be a link to your website. It can be a link to your blog post. It can be a link to a press interview. That's not necessarily your website but, again, one in four tweets; this is about you. The rest of them are not about you. This is only one in four that you get a chance to talk about you.

WC: Okay.

PP: So—and a link is always better. It means that rather than just, you know, reading 140 characters about whatever you're doing—that takes me three seconds, I've moved on to something else—if you provide a link for people to read more, engage with you further, that's always gonna work better.

WC: Okay.

PP: Second tweet type is QQ, which is quick question. So, first one: WL, website link. Second one: quick question. This is just meant for engagement, quick and dirty, you know? Like, it can be on-brand, it can be not on-brand. You know, your tweets don't always have to be about your brand; then you become like a brand robot. Like, no, you're a human being.

WC: Right.

PP: You're allowed to start conversations that don't involve your work. Wow, what a novel idea.

WC: Right.

PP: You know? So a quick question could be, "Coffee or tea?" I give that example in the book or when I'm doing workshops. Has nothing to do with my brand but do you have a preference? Coffee or tea?

WC: Coffee.

PP: Me, too.

WC: Yeah.

PP: Used to be tea but I started drinking coffee in the last three months. Can you believe that? It took me this—

WC: *[laughs]* Welcome to L.A.

PP: Yeah. It took me this—I was actually in Paris and I had coffee there and I was like, “Oh, this is good. I’ve been missing out on this my entire life.”

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: Then I came back and I was like, “It’s not as good here.” But I’m still hooked.

WC: Right.

PP: Yeah. So, quick question meant for engagement. Just be in tune with what conversations people are having or what people will respond to. And so I’d switch them up. You know, today’s quick question will be on-brand, you know? Here’s a good one: complete the tweet, “My favorite social media platform is,” and I draw an underline.

WC: Right.

PP: And then, you know, and then I could say in brackets, “Reply with your answer.” Or—they’ll get it.

WC: So that’s your quick question?

PP: That’s a quick question.

WC: Yeah.

PP: It doesn’t always have to be this or this but it can be something—

WC: So coffee or tea has nothing to do with your brand.

PP: No, nothing.

WC: The other question, “Which social media—”

PP: Yeah.

WC: —“platform?” has everything to do with your brand.

PP: Again, I’m just creating a structure here so that people will be accountable to the social media.

WC: Right, okay.

PP: And a lot of my clients—you know, even when I do a talk some of the best feedback I get when I teach people this stuff, I get it from like 60-, 70-year-old, like grandmas and grandpas. They come up to me and go, “Oh my God. I was so intimidated by this world ’cause it’s just so foreign to me but now you’ve broken it down into a science.”

WC: Hm.

PP: That’s all I’m doing. I’m just creating a structure—

WC: Right.

PP: —for you to create within. So—

WC: Most of us do really, really well with structure.

PP: Yeah.

WC: Ninety-nine percent of us—

PP: All of—

WC: —need—

PP: All of my clients—

WC: —a structure.

PP: All of my clients are creatives.

WC: Right.

PP: Every single one of them and I am as well, but I’m this weird little combo of creative and logic, structure.

WC: Okay.

PP: And so that’s how I’m able to get in the brains of my creative clients who have all the ideas in the world.

WC: Right.

PP: But, typically, they have trouble executing, and this structure helps them execute.

WC: I love it. This is so helpful. So the four types of tweets: number one, some type of a link to a website.

PP: Yep.

WC: Okay, number two: a quick question. What's number three?

PP: Number three is IB: industry buzz. This is the one in four tweets where you get to remind us that you're an expert. Remind us that you're an authority in this space or that you know what's up. It could be a statistic. It could be a fact. If you're a professional or an expert then share a little tidbit of advice.

WC: Okay.

PP: You know, an industry expert or an IB industry buzz tweet for me could be one that I did the other day that did really well, "Your brand = your passion + their need."

WC: Right.

PP: Now that's my formula and people love that 'cause —

WC: Right.

PP: —it makes sense. That's an industry buzz tweet. That's my theory. That's my little reminder, "Yeah, I know what's up."

WC: Right.

PP: And those are really effective. Those—some of those, you know, some of your industry buzz tweets, if done properly, will be the most retweeted content that you share.

WC: Okay.

PP: 'Cause people read and go, "Oh, yeah. I couldn't say it better myself." So they won't. They'll be lazy and they'll click retweet. It's a wonderful thing.

WC: Got it. And what's number four?

PP: Number four is the most important tweet type. If you could only do one a day or—no, one a day is not enough—two a day, one of them would have to be this. I would have you like alternate between the other three but then you should have this next one every single day. NE, which stands for networking effort.

WC: Networking effort.

PP: You know what some clients do in their little day book or their, you know, whatever their scheduler is? They'll write "WL, QQ, IB, NE," and they'll cross it out whenever they send that tweet for the day. Like, I love that. Anything where you can just stay accountable to making sure you're tweeting. NE, networking

effort is exactly that: it's making an effort to start a conversation with someone you don't already know. So here's an idea: on your next plane trip, have a magazine that you love and be a little bit of a nerd and have Post-it notes and a highlighter and go through and keep track of things that you like, opinions that you think are cool, columns that people write that are interesting. Go and find those people on Twitter and send them a tweet. Send them a compliment. Start a conversation.

WC: Got it.

PP: You know? Say, "Hey, loved your perspective on entrepreneurship in @Inc magazine." You know? Start—so compliments are, we know, are always a good way to start—

WC: Right.

PP: —because if you go up, you know, I take my—

WC: Well, that's how I got you here today, "Hey Phil, I hear you're the best. Can you show up for an interview?" *[laughs]*

PP: And so all of a sudden you went from, you know, bottom in my inbox to the top. That's a really good point that you're making, though.

WC: Right.

PP: So if you had come to me and said, "Phil, here's my idea. I want you to invest in my business. I want you to give me free social media advice." Me-me-me-me. It always comes back to this.

WC: Right.

PP: Then I'm probably not going to respond to your email 'cause I get too many emails. However, just with a little bit of repositioning, you can send an email to someone and say, "Hey, I loved your book," —even if you didn't read it—"I loved your perspective on this. I love," whatever. Compliment, "I would love to feature you on my blog."

WC: Yeah.

PP: This person may not even have a blog yet, you know?

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: Or, you know, they started yesterday. "I want to feature you on my site." Those people: top of my inbox, first response.

WC: Right.

PP: Because it's something—there's something in it for me.

WC: Totally makes sense, yeah.

PP: And so that's—like, think about that, like, how do you get through to a celebrity? Tweeting them is not always gonna end up in engagement but if you share the spotlight, give people the spotlight, then there's a good chance that they'll give that opportunity. And then after the interview, you have a conversation and then you become clients and friends, whatever. You know, it gives that kind of setup but that's how I want people thinking about—

WC: This is great advice.

PP: —these kinds of outreach.

WC: I mean, those four types of tweets. I mean, that's absolutely amazing. Such great advice here; both in this interview and in your book and I hope people get your book. How do they get your book, by the way?

PP: Oh, Amazon is probably the easiest way.

WC: Okay, so *Shut Up and Tweet*.

PP: Mm-hm.

WC: By Phil Pallen.

PP: Yep.

WC: P-A-L-L-E-N.

PP: Yep.

WC: Okay.

PP: And I've got a link on my website as well.

WC: Okay.

PP: And I blog as well, so.

WC: Okay. So what type of results have you seen for people that are using your information, this great advice?

PP: I wrote it because—essentially last year—actually the CEO of the California Women’s Conference—I was going to speak, she’s like, “Phil, you don’t have a book. You need to write a book.”

WC: Right.

PP: I had like three months, so I wrote this in three months.

WC: Right.

PP: Literally from like concept to like getting the books two days before the conference.

WC: In your hand, right.

PP: And what I did before that was I took inventory of like what—when I moved to L.A. I started teaching classes, like I worked at a school for TV hosts so I’d do courses on building your personal brand and social media strategy. And I asked, you know, some of my past students, I said, “What—of all the things you’ve learned from me”—’cause honestly, I could talk for eight hours about this stuff and still go on to new stuff.

WC: Right.

PP: There’s just so much I feel like everyone needs to know, you know? *[laughs]* But I asked my students, what was the most important thing that they learned or the most useful thing that they learned, and it was my strategies for Twitter.

WC: Okay.

PP: So I was like, you know what? That’s gonna be, you know, the premise of the book, the focus on this one. And so people, like you said, if they just do what I tell them to do, amazing things will happen. I talk in chapter six about growth strategies. I approach this like a puzzle. You know, once you have all the pieces in place, then people get a very clear first impression of you and it will convert, whether that’s more followers, whether it’s more sales. The number-one driver of sales for my book, by the way, is Twitter because I have it as a pinned tweet on the top of my profile, which is a new feature they added a few months ago. So you can actually pin something so it shows up at the top of your profile, almost like an advertisement.

WC: Hm.

PP: I have like 150 retweets on my book tweet, which is crazy.

WC: Wow.

PP: Like, it's my book, why does anyone care?

WC: Right.

PP: But people find it interesting. Another thing, in terms of building this first impression—I talk about this in the book as well; I think it's one of the most important things that I teach: how to write your Twitter bio. Most people's bios are so boring. "Lover, activist," you know?

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: "I have three cats." It's like, oh boy, *[laughs]* you know, all these little descriptors. I have a very specific strategy—like I do with everything else—but for your Twitter bio. I think it should be two sentences and written in a way that's going to start conversations. It's some of the most valuable real estate on social media, right? Your bio, on any single social media platform. Your bio should be two sentences. First sentence: who are you. Why should I care? Like, just address it, you know? Who are you and why on earth should I care?

WC: Hm.

PP: Second sentence: give me some indication of your personality because, again, I don't have the luxury of sitting with you face-to-face so I'm not going to pick up on your sense of humor or, you know, whatever it is that defines your personality.

WC: Got it.

PP: So I'll give you an example. Mine is, "Brand and social media strategist for media personalities, professionals, and entrepreneurs." Sentence one: who I am and why you should care. Second sentence: personality. I say, "If your baby is ugly, it's my job to tell you."

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: So people love that.

WC: Right.

PP: It starts all kinds of conversations. I get about 10 to 20 tweets a day of people that say, "Your bio's hilarious."

WC: Right.

PP: Or, "Your bio's offensive." No. *[laughs]* A few people—

WC: Right.

PP: —but like, “Okay, you don’t want to follow me, then.” Most importantly it starts a conversation, right?

WC: Right.

PP: People get a sense of my personality and that’s what I challenge everyone listening to this to do. You know, if you pick up the book, I give you a little space to like, you know, practice this and I give examples. Who are you, why should we care, sentence one. Sentence two, give me your personality. It doesn’t always have to be funny either.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: But these are just all pieces in terms of defining your brand. In terms of next steps, this is exactly what you can do. Make sure you’re tweeting, you’re posting content in a consistent way, staying on people’s radar. That’s why we’re doing this. This isn’t a hobby, it’s a business. You’re a business so stay on people’s radar without having to spend money to do so. Otherwise it’s a missed opportunity. Make sure your visuals are top notch. That’s how we separate the amateurs, the wannabes, from the people who are really, really what they claim to be. Visuals make or break the brand and I’m not just talking a headshot. A headshot means, “I’m desperate for work, please hire me.” A personality editorial-style photo of you in, you know, somewhere, a location that’s true to you, props that add some fun to the shot—those kinds of editorial photos say to the user they look important enough to be in a magazine, right? That’s the difference between a headshot and an editorial photo so I’m all about the editorial-style photos.

WC: Okay.

PP: On your profiles: a great bio, consistent content. Those are literally—you know, a pin tweet with whatever it is you want to draw particular attention to. Those are the pieces of the puzzle that if everything is plugged in you will have significant growth. In chapter six I teach you how to unfollow your followers. You know, how to re-follow, you know, targeted individuals based on people that you should be aware of: competitors, like brands—so people that are like you but not necessarily a threat to your business; they could be even in another country. And then brand heroes: people that are a few steps above you. Maybe got an earlier start or, you know, they’re stars in the industry. Watch what they’re doing and more importantly watch what they’re doing wrong, right? Let’s let everyone else

spend all kinds of money and time making mistakes to figure out what works and what doesn't.

WC: *[laughs]* Right.

PP: And let's be smart about this. Let's watch what they're doing right and watch what they're doing wrong, learn from it, and not have to spend money on it.

WC: So how do you see the landscape of social media evolving in the near future?

PP: I think it's really challenging for new social media platforms to become as popular as the ones that are now. You know, there's such competition for that. So, will we see new social media platforms pop up? I'm sure we will. It's hard to anticipate what those are going to be but I think really all of these strategies that I teach and that I discuss—I use Twitter and obviously I think it's the one that you can make the most impact with, without spending money. But I think the strategies that I cover in the book, and even in our conversation today, in most cases are directly applicable across multiple platforms. So knowing that social media will change, platforms will adjust the layout, they'll change and add and remove features—you know how upset everyone gets when Facebook changes their layout.

WC: Uh-huh.

PP: Right? And they're going to continue to change the layout because that's how the world works, we evolve.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: Right? Had we just stuck with the first layout, oh my God, from—

WC: Right.

PP: —when they launched.

WC: Right.

PP: If you looked back at it now it looks really old. That's—so we have to just be ready to change with the industry and with what's happening and it's volatile. It changes all the time. That's part of my job is to be up on all of that, to know what's next, what's next. But the most important thing at this level is to have a tangible strategy that you can implement and be ready for those kinds of changes.

WC: Hm.

PP: All of this stuff that we've talked about today is really just a matter of organizing yourself. Organizing your schedule and integrating it, like you would a workout, so that you can maintain and position yourself for growth. That's all it is, is just staying true to that and staying disciplined to do a really good job and that, regardless of what evolves in the industry, that will always help you.

WC: This has been so productive.

PP: Thank you.

WC: I mean—

PP: I've enjoyed it.

WC: —so informative. You may not want to go here but you put it in your book so I'm gonna bring it up.

PP: Sure.

WC: The introduction or the who you dedicate the book—

PP: Yeah.

WC: —to, it says, "To Gammy."

PP: Yeah.

WC: *[laughs]* "Who's made me fear failure since the day I was born."

PP: *[laughs]*

WC: I just love that.

PP: No one's ever asked me about that, by the way—

WC: Well, I want to know about it.

PP: —in an interview or podcast.

WC: Why did you put that in there?

PP: That's my grandmother.

WC: Right.

PP: Who I'm very, very close with.

WC: Right.

PP: My grandfather is an electrician and my grandmother is really the boss, you know? She manages the business and she's—I've just always really respected her approach. She is a no BS'er.

WC: Okay.

PP: And I love that. She's so sweet but doesn't put up with it and I have always admired that and tried to be that way, as well. I think I am that. I'm very nice but I also don't put up with crap, you know, for myself and for my clients.

WC: Mm-hm.

PP: And so she's really motivated me. My grandma, my mom—who is actually my assistant, by the way. She loves it so she travels around with me when I do talks and—

WC: Isn't that great?

PP: Yeah. It's really fun.

WC: You know, my mom has worked with me for 30 years.

PP: I love that.

WC: Yeah, I hired her away from her other job—

PP: That's what I did.

WC: —thirty years ago.

PP: And she loves it?

WC: Oh, still loves it. She's 88, still works with me to this day.

PP: I love that.

WC: Yeah.

PP: Ah, that's so cool. And we have so much fun together. She comes here actually tomorrow. We've already planned out our happy hour schedule.

WC: I'm sure.

PP: Yeah. So yeah, that's why I included her because it was kind of a fun way to just give back to her and just kind of recognize her in a way that's really inspired me to my approach for business, my approach for clarity and structure so people can approach this and not be overwhelmed. And, yeah, that's why I include her.

WC: Good for you.

PP: Yeah.

WC: Do you have a final message for our listeners?

PP: Yeah. I would—I mean, we’ve already said it a few times but I really want—here’s what I want: I want people to implement what we’ve discussed. It’s so—and I say this in all of my workshops to freak people out a little bit. I say, “The majority of people in this room that are paying attention and spending time to be here and paying for parking to be here in these chairs at the moment, the majority of people here and the majority of people listening won’t implement what we’ve talked about today.”

WC: Right.

PP: And that annoys me.

WC: *[laughs]*

PP: So don’t annoy me. Do what I’ve told you to do and then send me a tweet saying, “Phil, I did it and now I’ve grown,” whatever, you know? I have some people that, “From 20,000 followers, I’ve grown 300 followers.” Fantastic.

WC: Right.

PP: Chip away at it, you know, really execute. Like we said, with so many creatives that get so caught up with all the ideas, ideas, ideas but let’s start somewhere. Implement what you’re most excited about and just build your brand, step-by-step at your own pace and it will build your career. You’ll end up, you know, having a career doing something you love. Isn’t that what we all want?

WC: Absolutely.

PP: I think it is.

WC: You’ve got to love life.

PP: You have to.

WC: Otherwise you’re “TGIF.”

PP: *[laughs]* Right.

WC: “I hate my life all week.” *[laughs]*

PP: *[laughs]* Yeah. So that would be my final message. I want to hear from everyone. Send me a tweet @PhilPallen. I want to hear all kinds of success stories and testimonials about, you know, how everything's going for you. I'm always so interested to hear.

WC: This has been great. And, you know what? You were generous. You were very, very generous with your advice and your input today, so thanks so much, Phil. This is great.

PP: My pleasure, my pleasure.