

## Description

Branding for a company is more crucial than you would realize. Your brand is not only the logos and colors that you see but it is also the personality of your brand. Some businesses are struggling in building their brands. One of the struggles is how to communicate and establish their values in front of their customers. In this episode, Chris Faust, founder, and CEO of Fastlane, an independent, full-service branding, marketing, and communications agency, will discuss what branding is and how to establish the values of the brand and communicate it with the target audience. He also talks about how they help their clients establish their brand in front of their customers and what typical clients they've handled. Lastly, he gives some takeaways about what are his hopes and dreams for the future.

## Key Takeaways

Chris's background and his company

What are Fastlane and its place in the market

Definition of branding and why companies are having problems with establishing brand values

The clients they worked with and the challenges they experienced

Takeaways and wishes from our guests

## Quotes

*Branding goes well beyond just a good logo. It involves the entire totality of the experience and touchpoints that a customer or a buyer, B2B or B2C has with that company - Chris*

*We walk our clients through what we call a value ladder. The value ladder is ultimately asking questions that can provide feedback to make the customer's experience better. - Chris*

## Featured in this Episode

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## Transcript

**Kit:** Welcome to Strategic Growth Council, a podcast about strategic growth and mergers and acquisitions for the middle market. Strategic Growth Council provides growth strategy planning and peer advisory round tables that meet virtually every month. We focus on solving members' cases or business dilemmas, and growth dilemmas as a group intentionally, consistently, and as a dedicated support team for one another. I'm just the moderator, but feel free to contact me. Learn more. The website is [StrategicGrowthCouncil.com](http://StrategicGrowthCouncil.com) and this is our podcast. If you're interested in learning more about organic growth, growth by acquisition, or the sale of your company, this show should be interesting or useful for you. Thanks to our sponsor, Acclaro Growth Partners, a strategic consulting firm serving middle market M&A, visit [AcclaroPartners.com](http://AcclaroPartners.com). Now every episode I interview an expert or a practitioner in the world of strategy or growth or M&A. And today I'm joined by Chris Faust of Fast Lane Consulting. Chris, welcome.

**Chris:** Thank you, Thank you for having me on. And I've known you for many years, Kit. I didn't know you had such a voice for radio or podcasting in this case.

**Kit:** But I also have a face for radio, so it works out really well.

**Chris:** Yeah, there you go.

**Kit:** So, Chris, this is great. Tell us a little bit, you know, 30, 60 seconds, a little bit about you. And I have known each other for probably more than 50, more than either of us would care to admit. It's been a long time. But. But 30 to 60 seconds on yourself in your firm?

**Chris:** Sure. I'll give you the short form, not the long-form version. So kind of the condensed CliffsNotes version. So kind of, in short. I like to consider myself more of a brand and business builder. I'm fortunate enough to serve on several boards in the past, as president of several associations. I'm also an investor. Beginning to be an early investor in a couple of different ventures as well. So I started my career as the assistant press secretary to the governor of Delaware. From there, I moved on to work at Burson-Marsteller in New York City. At the time, they were the largest reputation management firm in the world. So a great platform, great experience working with very large Fortune 50 brands, a couple of large sovereign entities, and individuals doing all kinds of different types of unique fun type of work, crisis communications, brand communications, executive communications, PR, reputation management, etc. From there, I became a partner at a high-tech consultancy down in Northern Virginia called the group pretty well-established, well-regarded public relations, strategic PR and marketing firm down in that area, specialized primarily in the technology sector, but now they've diversified into representing other industries. Then I went on to move on to the corporate side. From there, I was kind of an agency guy. I was always advising clients what to do with their large budgets, and I hadn't been on the corporate side kind of walking in their shoes. So to kind of round out my portfolio, I decided to join a little no-name venture out of New York City called World Technology Ventures. I think I was the 10th or 11th employee hired. I changed the name to enter a world and within five years we became one of the top five enterprise commerce software companies at the time. So that was my corporate experience, corporate MBA kind of building teams, working globally, working with agencies and, you know, eventually taking them through the whole pre-IPO IPO post IPO process and then exiting. So kind of went through in a very short amount of time. The whole lifecycle of that company was a little bit of a rocket ship ride and then just kind of an equally quick exit because it was right around the dotcom when the dotcom bubble burst and we needed to kind of move on. Then from there with Lincoln Financial out of Philadelphia was part of the Eagles Stadium naming deal and worked with Lincoln Financial in their wholesale division. And then from there, I started my first agency, Breakthrough Communications, and through that, sold it, and then I started Fastlane over ten years ago today.

**Kit:** Yep. Excellent, Chris. The word communications came up a lot. And now I'm curious about crisis communications. We could talk about what the Trump folks should or should not be saying at this time.

**Chris:** It's oh, yeah.

**Kit:** It's September 1st, and you're going to be hearing this podcast later than that, but interesting time nevertheless. So a lot of the eclectic background agency side, the client side, marketing communications, as I said. So that's great. Now a naive question. Fast Lane, I think, defines itself as a consulting firm, but you could also call yourself an agency. What's the

difference? Where do you fit into the world of marketing, communications, consulting, and brand strategy? How do you define Fastlane?

**Chris:** Yeah, good question. We are a little bit of a unique agency in that respect. We do frame ourselves as an independent, full-service branding, marketing, and communications agency, which is a lot that covers a pretty large spectrum. Within that, we often refer to ourselves as well as a Baby Bahn or a mini McKinsey. We do a fair amount of consulting work where we're doing brand benchmarking, the voice of customers, and brand sentiment analysis. So the marketing strategies, gap analysis. So we're involved very heavily on the strategy research side of marketing communications because from my perspective, you can't do really well branding, marketing, and communications work and fundamentally understand that business and the strategy and the drivers necessary to move the needle. So that's where we get involved on the front end, doing a lot of primary and secondary research. We dig in to understand the client's pain points and problems. And I think what makes Fastlane unique in the industry is the custom plans that we generate are truly tailor-made custom plans. So a lot of agencies have their best practices and their commodity services that they provide and they're supporting that business in one area. Whereas we take a little bit more of a holistic approach across the enterprise, not just marketing and communications. We'll look at operations, we'll look at the executive team and even the board on how the board can support growth for a business and form strategic advisory. So when we are able to kind of get in at a strategic level, the custom marketing plans that we generate are geared towards very specific KPIs, short and long-term business objectives that we can point back to and see what's working, what's not working. And more than just the strategy and counsel that we deliver, we execute everything we recommend. So we have a team of fast liners that provide the implementation support of everything that we're outlining in a game plan for that business.

**Kit:** Yeah. So I'll jump in there. This is great. So for our audience, it benefits a firm like our sponsor, Clara Growth Partners. They'll do similar types of work: primary research, secondary research, create a report and the output of that work is essentially what you're describing as kind of the starting point, the infrastructure of the foundation. So there are firms out there like Acclaro partners that, you know, sort of start the process and hand it over. And the deliverable, the output, is a written report. And what you guys do is you do that research and analysis for the purpose of an endpoint that is a marketing recommendation or next step or you know, it serves as kind of, as I said earlier, the foundation of whatever that next step might be. Now, talk to us about what that next step is, and what those next potential next steps are. Is it sort of input into the process and it's an ongoing process as opposed to it just being a deliverable, right?

**Chris:** Yeah, that's right. I mean, I can give a very relevant case example of working with Clara. So right now we are working with a global leader in the hardware security space for access solutions and we are looking at the entire market from a SWOT standpoint, a competitive analysis. We're doing a full comp Intel perspective and we've partnered with Clara to do a full voice of customer sentiment and analysis work in addition to messaging and positioning. All of this is being done to support an upcoming product launch that they're having later this year rolling into next year. So this is an example where we are testing some assumptions, and I give

a lot of kudos to the leadership in this business by saying, hey, look, we're already the global leader. But what they see is their market share, mindshare, and heart share has been eroding. Over the past five or so years because they have a new wave of buyers and decision-makers coming into that space that is looking at things a little bit differently. They're not your status quo buyer. They're leveraging technology, they're leveraging augmented reality. They're leveraging different points of data to make decisions on what solutions to go within a hospital setting, setting, you know, a large building, commercial building setting, or whatever they may need to do to employ their solutions. So this is an example of how we are developing the story, the new kind of crystallized story and position for them to go to market and launch their products that we will tie to specific revenue drivers. So we will look at all of our launch initiatives and there are about a dozen different launch initiatives that are all spearheaded to support the launch, and they go way beyond just traditional public relations, email, and campaign marketing. We're looking at doing, you know, annual insight trends reports. We're doing two account-based marketing with key accounts and other thought leaders initiatives.

**Kit:** Yeah, I mean, let's back up to the driver of this. It doesn't necessarily have to be this particular client. I certainly don't want you to reveal anything you don't want to reveal. But what's the driver of an engagement or a relationship such as this? You mentioned a new product launch, but that's maybe that typical. Maybe that's atypical. What is a typical driver or a reason that a client comes to you and says, we want to work with Fastlane?

**Chris:** So it varies because we deal with customers that are along a continuum in their lifecycle. We deal with large global 2000 enterprise-class clients to mid-market clients, which is our sweet spot and very early stage venture-backed entity. So, you know, a lot of times they'll come to us with a brand problem, you know, their naming convention where they've over the years, they've acquired a bunch of different businesses, but now they're very fragmented. The left-hand doesn't know what the right is doing. Even from a brand perspective, they still look very siloed. They look like ten different entities going in ten different directions. And that's not their ultimate end goal. Their ultimate end goal is to get behind that one arrow, to build faster, to go further. And so it's our job to kind of take that a little bit of a complex story that they've created to kind of create a little bit more of a singular approach: brand consistency, brand story naming convention to go to market. So, that's on the branding creative side. And then even just for marketing strategies, what we see often too is sales and marketing are still not aligned. It's the classic problem. You know, you have a lot of clients where, you know, you have your sales team often running, trying to meet their quarterly objectives, and then you have the marketing team doing the same. But a lot of times they're simply not aligned in any way to the degree that they could be. So lately we're seeing a lot of work in just sales and marketing alignment. It's not sexy work, but when it's done right, it works very well for a lot of companies. And then the last piece I'll say is technology disruption. You know, there's just a lot of new innovations and technologies even within the MarTech stack of different types of applications and solutions that businesses are struggling with. What's the right platform? What are the right technologies? Can we streamline our processes? Do we have the right people in place to implement some of these solutions? So they're just struggling with the right direction in some of those areas.

**Kit:** Yeah. So, you know, our clients, our listeners, our viewers, our audience is largely not of early stage, not big enterprise type clients, but the middle market. So if we focus on the middle market and we think about organizations that are becoming more strategic, more intentional about strategic growth, or organizations that are in M&A mode, they're considering acquiring a business. Maybe it's the first time they're considering a sale, and it's a big deal in those contexts. Can you give us an example of either past experience or situations where, you know, a middle market client is facing more intentional strategic growth or an acquisition or a sale where you guys came in and solved a need or performed a service that was really relevant in that situation.

**Chris:** Well, yeah. I mean, I think, you know, one good example is we have a long time client, maybe ten-year client relationship.

**Kit:** That's a long time.

**Chris:** Long time. I mean, we pride ourselves and most of our clients have been with the firm for six or seven plus years, which is a pretty good run rate for a small agency of our size and growing. So but I think a good example is that account that, you know, that's a client where, you know, when we first started with them, they were a small \$5 million company in the health care billings arena. And, you know, five years later, they're well over 50 million, probably approaching 100 million at this point. And we've helped them all the way through the capital raise process, even working with an investment banker recently for a successful exit. So but along that continuum of those past five years. We always had an exit in mind. They started it's one of the first questions we ask often: What? What's your end goal? What are you trying to exit five, ten years from now? And then we reverse engineer the process steps and the strategies that we looked for to help support that, that end goal. So that's an example of a client over a five-year perspective where, you know, a 5 million little baby firm that was a regional, local player. We help them, put them in the national spotlight, become a national provider doing channel marketing with specific key select partners to get them to that perspective, and then continue to kind of grow the brand and grow demand very strategically.

**Kit:** That's great. So I love the backward thinking, yeah, I have a military background. I was an army officer. And, you know, I like the concept of starting with the endpoint and backward planning, but nevertheless a sale event. Let's, let's, let's hypothetically, let's hypothetically say you have a client that tells you five years from now, we plan to sell the business. And other than that, I'll leave it up to you. How do you help a client prepare for a pending sale from a brand marketing communication standpoint?

**Chris:** So. You know, it's a lot of businesses that are exploring exits. And we're working with another global talent acquisition company right now that's headquartered out of Argentina. So we've been working with this client for several years now, helping them continue to explore and expand their global footprint, primarily going from a Latin America-based company with about ten different business operations centers in different markets into the US market. And now we're bringing them abroad in the pan, European, and eventually Asia-Pacific markets. But that's an

example of we're beginning to have those exit discussions with them now because they're at a crossroads of potentially meeting additional capital to get to another stage or exploring a strategic buyer or a partner. So we're just in the very early stages of saying, well, in either scenario, you need to heighten the story of the business in terms of how you got to where you are. We're enhancing some of their brands in a couple of areas. So right now, their branch offices are operating almost as independent businesses where we're folding them now under the parent company. So they're all, you know, contributing to the quarterly story that they can go to the street around their performance. The other aspect is just looking at the capital requirements to continue to run the business for the next several years. And if they were to exit, what are the things that we would do for them to get to that point? So a lot of times it's a lot of work just creating some of the data rooms and the information required for a buyer to review. So we're helping to go in and pulling out key information, asking the right questions, generating the reports and presentations that they're delivering to those different audiences, because a lot of them, they don't even have investor decks, investor presentations, or prospectus, you know, key marketing materials, even some of the data, they don't even have the right data pooled together to begin to have some of those conversations.

**Kit:** Yeah. So Chris has done it. Geez, probably hundreds of due diligence exercises over the years. It often occurred to me that one checks the box for exercise. I hate to say check the box exercise, but one tenet of the overarching mark of due diligence should be brand strategy, due diligence, or brand diligence. In other words, assessing the value inherent in the brand. Have you ever done anything like that? And maybe a better place to start, Chris, is how do you define a brand? And in other words, you know, if some of our clients, let's say hypothetically a listener is a \$20 million widget manufacturer, that they've got the name and their clients know the name, but they've never really thought about the brand and the value of their brand. So let's start there. How do you define the value of a brand?

**Chris:** Yeah, it's really great because we're in a lot of these conversations where we look at a valuation of a company or having those conversations. And often the branding is really underserved or left out of those discussions. And we're always servicing it, as you know, first of all, let's define, you know, what is a good brand and how that contributes to a higher brand valuation. So branding goes well beyond just a logo, a good logo. It involves the entire totality of the experience and touchpoints that a customer or a buyer, B-to-B or B2C has with that, with that company. And it could be a product, could be a service, and it crosses internal and external. By the way, in a lot of our branding exercises, we start internally, we start by creating the internal brand champions and ambassadors to carry that brand forward. But we are really hyper about looking at everything when it comes to the way a company positions its brand. So we look at the buyer journeys, journeys, we look at different personas, and all of those different touchpoints. Everything from the time you're approaching a business or a store to what your professionals are wearing, to how they're conducting themselves, to the web experience. So it's the totality of that experience. And we have different audits and checklists and methodologies that we walk our clients through in all of those areas. And then we come back with a little bit of a report card or report at a high level that says, you know, there are some areas that you're you have a tremendous amount of value. And this is why customers are buying from you or coming

back to you. And then some areas are in need of improvement. And then in terms of value, yeah.

**Kit:** I'm just going to summarize for, for our listeners, a couple of terms that you threw out so that the buyer journey refers to the stage that a buyer is at and making a purchase decision. And the personas are just essentially different segments of types of customers by demographic or by personality. And some segments or some types of personalities make purchase decisions in a unique or different way than other groups of customers might. And you have to understand those nuances in order to be able to sell to them. Right. But that's what you're talking about, this overarching experience or feeling that you have in interacting with a company, that's the brand. That's what the brand is. And there is value in having a powerful brand. And I'm just going to give a simple example. Okay. I saw a little vignette, sort of a little mini movie once that was so beautiful and simplistic. Two characters, one character, is a customer who walks into a cell phone shop. You may have seen this, Chris, and the other character is the salesperson. And so the customer walks in and says, I want to buy an iPhone. And the salesperson says, Great, we sell lots of different kinds of cell phones. And the customer says, I want to buy an iPhone. And the salesperson says, Well, let me show you this phone. It has these features and benefits, and the customer says, I want to buy an iPhone. And then the customer says, or the salesperson says, well, let me show you this other phone. It has better features and better benefits than everything else in the store. And it's way better in terms of these features and benefits than the iPhone. And of course, the customer says, I want to buy an iPhone and that's it, and it ends there. But the power is you know, sometimes people get so wrapped around the mystique of a particular brand, they want to be a part of it, regardless of whether the features and benefits and. The way that that product or service meets unmet needs is met. It's just that I want to be a part of that company, right? That the loyalty that's created is the direct result in many cases of the power of a brand. Sorry, Chris. I'll get off my soapbox.

**Chris:** No, I think that's good. I'll give you another analogy that, you know, it's really down to the individual consumer level. But, you know, you go into a restaurant, you sit down, you have you know, you love the food, you have a great experience. But the service was less than poor. You walk away from that restaurant saying, you know what? Loved it, loved the food, but the service wasn't great. You think twice about going back just because of that one simple point from one person, not kind of living up to that brand standard and being able to fulfill the promise of what they're expecting. So a lot of times, you know, we're setting that standard, that brand standard, and the expectation that they then need to fulfill in order to have that unified brand experience that creates value.

**Kit:** And you eat you as the company and you as the brand strategist working with the company get to determine what that brand promise is going to be like. We stand for service or we stand for quality, but not service. But the customer ultimately brands you because it's the totality of all of those customer experiences, feedback, loyalty, etc., that basically determines what the brand actually is and the value that the brand actually has. So that's why it's very important to pay attention to feedback and to proactively go out and do what Chris talked about doing as the first

step, which is primary research, and secondary research to understand the needs and interests, and buying behaviors of customers. I'm doing way too much stock here, Chris.

**Chris:** Well, I love it. And you know what? We walk our clients through what we call a value ladder. So the value ladder is ultimately, you know, who are you? What have you done? Why do you do business? What makes you different? You know, there's a series of value ladder questions that we ask that are associated with different characteristics that we're looking for as part of that experience. But it all ends up in that brand value and how you're positioning yourself in the marketplace and where it gets interesting for us and this is where we spend a lot of time, is what really makes you different because you have a lot of brands competing for mindshare in a specific segment. There's a lot of competition, typically in a lot of different segments, and they're all saying the same thing. You could look at a category or segment and you have five of the top ten providers or even all of them, and you could swap out one name for that for the other. And you think you're still billing with the same company? So we create separation. We're looking for where we create additional separation in the market share on how you're positioning yourself with really specific key differentiators that we can measure with proof points that can back up those differentiators. And that's really important because you get a lot of commoditized language and services and products that are just, you know, they're starting to get this sea of sameness that we really try to break them out of.

**Kit:** Excellent. I love it and I love the proof points. You know, being able to test what you're doing is working and reacting to things that aren't working and doing things a little bit differently. So maybe that leads to a good question. Struggles, challenges, maybe two questions in one. Chris, who do you typically work with at the client? And does it vary by size of the company? And what are some struggles or challenges or hurdles that you guys deal with? I don't want to say on a regular basis, but just the nature of doing marketing communications agency brand type work is that there is going to be some pushback, right? So why don't you talk a little bit about that, if you don't mind?

**Chris:** Sure. So whenever possible. We prefer coming in. And either the CEO or oftentimes even the board level is sometimes referred by a board member. And if not, we're usually coming in at the president, CEO, CEO, or C-suite level. That's an ideal scenario for us, you know. And oftentimes, depending upon the size of the company, we are working with CMOs or CROs. Chief Revenue Officer. Chief Marketing Officer. Sometimes, you know, again, we're working with some very large customers that, you know, their VP or director levels are in charge of a very large national or international budget or segments. They just don't have the title to support that, but they're very large in what they do. So, you know, it's interesting because, in all of those cases where we find where we get the best traction, the most momentum we're really getting to the heart of the matter is working with the CEO and specifically sometimes the board members. Typically they're looking at things a little bit more long-range, more holistically at a high level, the chief marketing officer or chief revenue officer tends to get myopic at times in their approach and view, and maybe rightfully so because they're trying to hit specific objectives. But I think an effective CMO and even a CRO has to kind of think bigger, go bigger, look at things a little bit larger like a CEO does, and be aligned a little bit more with the see with the C-suite. And

oftentimes, they're not there. They're coming in thinking that they're solving a problem specific to sales and marketing, but they're not connecting the dots to how's that really supporting the business. So we've come in some cases, we will undo certain marketing communications programs where we're just simply not seeing any or why they're there. They're either not being measured or they're simply spinning wheels. And you have a lot of people spending a lot of time and resources to advance a brand, build demand, and hit specific objectives. But it's not tied to the business. It's not that we can't even be identified as a top ten business rival. It's not even it so why are we doing it? So we ask a lot of questions. Why ask why sometimes seven times or five, six, seven times on a singular question to get to the root of the matter? And we ask it in different ways to really understand, okay, but again, why are we doing this? And question a lot of that. Excellent answer. Answer the question.

**Kit:** I think so. I mean, it sounds like there is often some pushback or difficulty in dealing with individuals that have established some aspects of communications or marketing within the company that you're struggling to understand the connection that they have between those expenditures and corporate goals and objectives that have been laid out. And so when you bring that up, sometimes there's a little bit of internal pushback or conflict.

**Chris:** Yeah. And keep in mind, too, that the average tenure of a chief marketing officer is, I think under two years now. So you have folks and it's the high rate of churn. Churn in that position is a problem. And it's difficult for any C-suite level executive to come into a situation where there are legacy marketing, communications, people, platforms, and programs to get an orientation and then make a difference. Because, again, they're kind of coming in to establish a status quo legacy. And a lot of me will run status quo marketing. And that's not going to make it any longer with the types of technology and innovation and disruption happening in the marketplace almost on a weekly, monthly basis. So, you know, we challenge a lot of the executives we work with and they like that. They don't want us to be a yes agency. They really want us to kind of come in as being that third-party unbiased opinion maker, because even internally, they sometimes will have conflicts internally where one group has one set of assumptions, another group has another. And they'll often come to us and say, we need a ruling. We need an unbiased objective.

**Kit:** Got to be awkward.

**Chris:** You know, it's very tough to navigate those waters internally because, you know, we could end up on the wrong end of that fight sometimes. But, you know, we're always saying, yeah, we look for what's right for the business and let the cards fall where they may. If we ended up, you know, for one reason the other being shown the door, it's not because we felt we were doing what's right for the business looking forward rather than zigzagging to the left or right.

**Kit:** Yeah. I've known Chris for a long time, as I said at the beginning. And one thing you are is a straight shooter. So I appreciate that. And so with Fastlane, you do get that integrity and candor, too. Two more questions. Chris will take them in whatever order you'd like. One has to do with I often ask our guests to share something about personal or professional ambition,

dream, hope, or objective. And so that's one question. And then the other one just has to do with the concept of what we do at Strategic Growth Council. So this is a peer advisory roundtable for middle market executives that are looking at growth, looking at acquisitions, or potentially selling the business. And we bring those people together from different industries to talk about growth challenges or growth opportunities, and dilemmas that they're facing in their business. And it often helps to bring people together that are from very different industries because of the cross-pollination that happens in a roundtable. So the second question has to do with those peer advisory roundtables and any obvious benefits that you see in either being a part of that or your clients being a part of that. So, again, whichever order you'd like.

**Chris:** Sure. Maybe I'll talk about the peer advisory and go back to the first question. So I'm a huge fan of peer advisory network groups. A lot of times we will establish partner ecosystems and advisory boards for our clients. That's along the same lines. So I'm a big believer that many minds make lighter work in terms of knowledge sharing. You know you force a level of knowledge sharing and collaboration that can advance any cause or any business. When you have the right group of individuals in a room that is thinking about a similar cause or problem or issue. And so I welcome it. I just think that the amount of insight, intellect, and ideas that are often shared you won't get if you try to just tackle that yourself or even internally. So a lot of leaders will, I think, tend to look inward. They tend to try to take it upon themselves. And they don't look for that help. They don't look for that support when it's there. You just sometimes.

**Kit:** Well, I think. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Chris, sorry to interrupt. The DNA of an American CEO is never to say I don't have the answer. That's just not in their DNA. So it's difficult to share, hey, I have a problem. I have a dilemma. I have an opportunity, and I'm not sure how to go after it in a public setting. It's just not in our DNA. But I just read a great Harvard Business Review article that talked about leadership. And one of the most important tools a leader has is asking questions, asking questions when you know the answer, but also asking questions when you don't know the answer. And it's that power of asking the right questions that get the answer. In other words, in a group setting, somebody might say, here's my dilemma. I don't know what to do with the employee. Three. Well, if the right questions are being asked and the answer is going to come immediately and the group is going to have asked all the right questions, then the person who asks the question is going to have their answer much more efficiently. And the answer is often going to be a more effective answer than they would have arrived at on their own. But the important point is so much more efficiently, as opposed to having that issue weigh on them for oftentimes days, weeks, months, even years. All right, Chris, you're up. So back to the tough question and the question about ambitions, dreams, hopes, aspirations, objectives, personal or professional.

**Chris:** Sure. Well, I guess this is a little bit more on the personal side, but I'm going to try to translate it over to make a go out of it on the business side. But I'm proud to say that I'm a cancer survivor.

**Kit:** So I was going to if you hadn't said that, I was going to bring it up.

**Chris:** So, yes. So I went through a pretty, pretty arduous, difficult cancer scenario, a five-year battle. And thankfully, I'm cancer-free today. But it puts things in a whole new perspective for me, I think. I think I was pretty grounded before, you know, I had my faith, my family, my business, and the right priorities. But when you are reading Last Rites and when you are triaged multiple times and you really, you know, at that point where I was pretty close to moving on and have to be able to come back from that and move forward and come through the other end. It does kind of change you a little bit. You know, I do things a little bit differently. I look at the world a little bit differently. I prioritize things a little bit differently from that perspective. And every day for me is a bonus, truly. Every day I walk, I wake up, and I put my feet on the ground. And, you know, I thank God that, you know, it's a bonus day for me and I try to make the most out of it. So, you know, I'm pretty energized every single day that, you know, the folks and 50 plus fast leaders that see me, they wonder why I'm always smiling, why I'm always happy, you know, how do I do what I do on any given day? And so I've reached that point where I started to kind of look at what's happening in just the world at large. And there's so much negativity with, you know, pandemics, you know, wars, rumors, rumors of war and, you know, supply chain issues and all of these different global problems that you don't see the positive. You don't hear about the positive any longer. You know, journalism is now becoming weaponized in some respects. Right. And you're not getting the objective, unbiased stories that you once used to get. So I've started toying with the idea of creating a good network, simply good, all about good and delivering good and businesses that are doing good, highlighting success stories around the concept of good. And if you think about it, it's one of the largest markets you could ever possibly want to go after. And surprisingly, you look at publishing, broadcasting, and any number of industries they're not focused on. Good. Well, just that concept.

**Kit:** I love it. I love it, Chris. And I'd love to be a part of that if and when you get that network together. Thank you for being you. You've always been, as I said, a straight shooter, but also a positive light. And I and I think everybody in the world that knows you appreciates that. And you know, I wanted to say, of all the folks that I know that are as optimistic and good as you are, I think about that group and many of those people are cancer survivors. How about that? Interesting.

**Chris:** Yeah.

**Kit:** Well, food for thought. Well, thank you, Chris. I appreciate your time and collaboration. Any final thoughts or comments from you before we wrap up here?

**Chris:** No thank you. Time for the time. Great discussion. So hopefully it can come back and we can have a deeper dove on some other specific topics.

**Kit:** How can our listeners find you?

**Chris:** Fastlane.co So we're Fastlane.co and Fastlane last year we acquired several businesses. So we have Nexus group and Nexus.com is a licensing group we acquired. We also acquired a Sports Business Institute. So we have a number of companies that we acquired

last year that are all under the Fastlane parent company and umbrella. But I think the easiest way is just to go to [Fastlane.co](http://Fastlane.co).

**Kit:** Perfect. Thanks, Chris, and thank you to our listeners. And remember, visit not only [Fastlane.co](http://Fastlane.co) but also visit our sponsor [AcclaroPartners.com](http://AcclaroPartners.com) and of course please visit [StrategicGrowthCouncil.com](http://StrategicGrowthCouncil.com) for all of your episodes, all of the past episodes, and future episodes. You can follow us on YouTube. Listen to us wherever you listen to your podcasts and give the show a thumbs up. We appreciate your support.

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