



Alan Hennessy, Digital Marketing & Social Media Consultant

Keynote Speaker | LinkedIn Trainer | Podcaster



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Alan Hennessy, [LinkedIn](#) & [Twitter](#)

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Thank you for doing The Global Interview. Maybe you could start with giving a brief bio for the audience in terms of who you are and what you do. That would be very helpful.

I am Alan Hennessy, of Kompass Media - a social media and digital marketing consultant and LinkedIn expert. I help businesses to break through the noise of social media and help them to create visibility and build awareness for their brand. I've been in this profession for fifteen years and I'm also a podcaster with two very successful podcasts.

In terms of your current role then, this sort of a 2-podcast plus your company, what do you like about your career and the area of focus that you're involved in now? What do you like about it?

What I really enjoy about my profession is supporting my clients and helping them be more visible online. It is satisfying for me seeing my clients getting results from the work that I can help them with; the work and training that I do.

When you are outside of your, I suppose your work area, is there anything from a hobby or an interesting perspective that's important to you as well?

Family is especially important to me because I think that they are the key to everyone's success. When it comes to hobbies, I enjoy music and DJ-ing, which I've done for over 30 years. It has always been a passion of mine and enjoy it in my spare time.

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Is it computer-driven .mp3 list or is it still in vinyl or a mixture of everything these days or how does that work for a DJ in today's age?

It's more computer-driven but you still can't beat the vinyl. From the sound of the needle picking up the first sound as it is a more natural sound. Predominantly, it would be what's called the computer mp3's because they're easy and accessible.

I read only last week that for the first time ever, vinyl sales beat the sales of CDs. It's incredible.

It sure is. I was over in one of the shopping centers here in Dublin that has a vinyl section and I'm walking by saying to myself "I have that album, I have that album, I have that album." When I look at the prices, ranging from €30- €50, I can remember buying that for only €5.99. So, it's really interesting to see that.

But it's great to see it coming back, and I think people are looking for that now – old school. They are looking for stuff that people can go back to when they were younger that they can enjoy. It's like a book, we can all read digital books but when you actually get a physical product in your hand... It changes the whole complexity of what you're doing, what you're listening to or what you're reading.

Very good. And whether it's hobbies, life in general or your chosen career path, is there a phrase or a quote or a saying that you sort of like live by, that inspires you?

Many years ago, I heard a quote that I think is brilliant and it sums up what I do and what I believe in - "Your only limitation is you." I think it's so true because we limit ourselves and we seem to say, we can't do something that we can actually do.



What are you most proud of, Alan, from your life? What are you most proud of?

I'm most proud of my career to date and my family. I have a beautiful wife and two teenage girls and I look at them and think they are 'Phenomenal.' To be part of their lives is what I'm most proud of.

What do you wish you would have known when you started out?

That it is not all a bed of roses. [Laughs] What I wish for when I started out was to understand that things just don't happen overnight and it's hard work. You must be prepared to put the hard work in. It has shown me over the years that nothing is ever handed to us on a silver plate, you have to work hard.

If you put the work in, you will get your rewards and never give up. When you just throw the hat in; you're only failing yourself as opposed to failing anyone else as all good projects and ideas take time.

Excellent. Is there anybody in business or academic or even creative circles that you admire?

*There would be a number of people including Simon Sinek or Mark Schaefer. Simon Sinek has a way of speaking the truth and his explanations of understanding life and your own ideas of life. Mark Schaefer looks at subject, and he takes them, understands them and develops them in such a way that the reader can understand it and we all learn from it. I was fascinated by his book - *The Marketing Rebellion: The Most Human Company Wins*. It changed my perception and vision for marketing because I came at it from a different angle. It was so refreshing to understand, to listen and to read that book.*



So when you think about that and the context of companies, brands, institutions, did that change your opinions on brands and companies that are getting it right or do you think there are – do you look at certain brands and companies and say, "Look, I think they are not getting it right at the moment?"

For sure, I can see some brands that are doing it right because I think we have to move, adapt, and we have to pivot. And I think some brands are still in that zone of, "This is what we do and this is how we do it," whereas other brands are more open to change. And the age that we live in now, I think there is so much more opportunity, we have to listen to customers, to the consumers and understand what it is that they are looking for because they are the ones that are in control. We are no longer in control. It has become full circle now, which is great to see because it opens up so many opportunities for us to be human and interact as humans with each other.

Is there any advice that you've received along the way in your career to date that you'd like to pass on or share?

I think one of the best piece of advice I got was when I started the podcast. I interviewed Ted Rubin and I was quite nervous interviewing him because he was such a celebrity and an innovator and a marketer of global standings.

When I got on the podcast, he actually came off from another interview with Amazon Time or Amazon News on CNN, when he came on, he said, "Sorry for being late. I just had to be on CNN news."

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I said to him that really has made me a little bit more nervous and his exact words to me, and it's the advice that I've carried through with everything I do is that "It's just the two of us having a chat, person to person, friend to friend."

And I will always remember that because we are all doing the same things just in different way. It really resonated with me and I've carried that through in everything I do in regards to training, business, and in people I have met in my life.

That's a great guest for your podcast. Do you want to give them the podcasts and just maybe explain a little bit about what they are about?

I have two podcasts, the Social Media Talks Podcast which we talk to some of the world's leading experts in digital marketing, social media, and in business. And then I also have the Curious Fire Podcast which is more of a passion of mine which delves into subjects that are a bit off-center, but they're things that people don't ask. The types of procrastination, what is procrastination, digital dope, things like that, all the questions and on this podcast, we have conversations about it.

So, it's really interesting and insightful. I do it with a good friend of mine, Trevor Lorkings, from England and it's called the Curious Fire Podcast.

Fantastic. They're both sound really good. In terms of your own motivations, is there anything that drives or motivates you in a work environment?

The thing that drives and motivates me most would be seeing people getting results and helping people.

And that is such a motivation, seeing customers getting results from how I have helped and supported them. They now start to see the opportunities that are there for them, that can bring their business to the



next level. They also go on a journey of discovery and understanding and enhance what they do from the right motivation.

That's great. And just going back to what you're saying, you had mentioned that human connection and you're talking about the book earlier, helping businesses you mentioned a moment ago, and that brings me on to what I call is the next question about social media.

You've obviously got podcast focused on social media, so you're the perfect person to ask, but I'm interested in your own thoughts on the future of social media. There's a lot of talk at the moment in the area of is social media good, bad? People have different views on it. What are your views on the future of social media? Maybe where we're at now and where this is going?

I think social media gets bad publicity and it has for a while because they are saying it can be very destructive; and it can be. But it can also be used for so much good. It brings so many people together. It helps us to build solid relationships, connect with people that we would never have been able to connect with. We understand how people are thinking. We understand how people are feeling from what they are uploading, and it gives us the ability to nurture relationships. I think, social media going forward, will see a huge shift. There will be more structure in personal connections over the next number of years where it's not going to be about the brand, it's going to be about the people that are behind these brands. And also include the people that are involved in social media. It will give companies a huge opportunity to show the human side of what they do.

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That's interesting. Do you have a personal favourite social media platform? Do you mix and match, or what do you use? Where do you find yourself spending most of your own time in terms of social media?

My two favorites are LinkedIn and Twitter. But if I have to pick between them, I would definitely be going for LinkedIn because I find that LinkedIn is great for connecting with like-minded business owners and like-minded people and not always necessarily looking for business. The connection on this platform is paramount with a broader medium, and not just connecting with influencers and people that you can really have a meaningful conversation. That's the beauty of LinkedIn and it's business orientated. Twitter, I find is a fabulous way to reach out and connect with people and then to bring the conversation on to the next level on LinkedIn. So, I think they work hand in hand and they both have their own merits.

I'm sure over your career, you've obviously mentored a number of people. Have you ever had a mentor? Has anybody ever been a mentor for you maybe earlier on in your career?

I've had a number of mentors because of people that I've connected with and from conversations. And I believe that mentorship is about collaborating and learning from each other because we are all learning every day and I think that's the key to it. So, I would have never had a mentor. But what I had was people within my community and my close circle that I would turn to for advice and guidance. And likewise, I would have done the same where I've had a number of people that I have mentored and just brought them to where they need to be, seeing their potential and helping expose them see what they can achieve.



You were talking about LinkedIn a moment ago, do you find that in this I suppose pandemic era that we find ourselves in, do you find that you can make the same type of network connections digitally as maybe you would have gone in the offline – in inverted commerce real world or do you find it's better, the same, it has made no difference, or is it a third way of networking for you?

It's true that before the pandemic, it had always been face-to-face, and I've always enjoyed that. When the pandemic struck, businesses had to move everything online. I find that connecting with people through LinkedIn has been a great resource and recently I've set up one networking group, but I've also been involved in another networking group.

That has really opened my eyes and has allowed me to learn a lot more about certain people that I would never have thought possible of talking to. It's a fabulous way of connecting, in that we don't have to be in the same room but we still all share a common purpose.

I think the virtue in that working arena has become so important over the last number of months and I think it's here to stay. A lot of people have started to see the benefits of it and I believe it's really powerful for what we are doing now.

Is that what drove you to set up your own network as opposed to just joining other networks, or was there a strategic reason for that?



When I began, my original thinking was to have a network group called a Virtual Tea Break and have a tea break. We are Irish and instead of having the coffee morning or the virtual cup of coffee, it was going to be the virtual cup of tea because we like to drink tea here. I spoke to a friend of mine and I put it out on Twitter and a friend of mine in the States came back and said "Yes, I would love to do it." We collaborated on the idea and decided to go global and renamed it The Global Tea Break. We started this prior to COVID back in February and in March, the pandemic struck. So, it was perfect timing, and it was never planned to be this – we had no insight going forward. But now, we have a community, and we don't call it networking. We call it a community which has over a hundred members. We do a monthly Global Tea Break where we meet up on the last Friday of the month for an hour and a half where we chat and help each other. It has been a huge support to so many people.

We have connected, we have referred, we have done business with each other and we have got to know each other's values and beliefs. It has been insightful, and we are moving forward by bringing our group to the next stage over the next couple of months. Watch this space...

Just going back to the Global Tea Break, I really like that because there's an awful lot of sort of coffee breaks type of place online now, but the Global Tea Break really resonates I suppose with The Global Interview for sure.

Yes, for sure, we have people coming in from Portland, Oregon, California, Los Angeles, New York, Germany, Sweden, Norway, England and of course Ireland. We are getting different perspectives and we are also learning how COVID is affecting other surrounding countries. I'm so excited for it because I have

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huge plans where I can see this becoming a hugely successful community and not based around making money. It's based around building communities; that's the most important part.

In terms of your own major organization, have you got any advice for anybody who would be looking to go into the same line of work whether it's podcasting I suppose or the more exciting things that you're involved in?

The biggest piece of advice I can offer, is to understand where it is that you want to concentrate your efforts on. This means finding your niche and audience, understanding it, absorb your craft and keep developing it every day. Going forward, don't just say, "I know it all," because none of us do. It is so important that we keep learning new things. And understand the industry that we are in, it's forever changing, so there's continuous updates, new concepts and new behaviors to keep up with. When I started first, it was all images, this has advanced quickly to video content. It has pivoted and it's changing on a daily basis. So, I would say pick your niche and work with it and become the expert in that field.

That's great advice. Do you think there's a common reason that people fail or give up or what do you see as sort of some of the common reasons that people just don't continue with something?

I think it's human nature that we want overnight success. When we start something, we say "I want to be great, I'm going to be great." And sometimes they fail because they lose sight of what the goal is. Set yourself some goals. Understand that success doesn't happen overnight. Like my favorite saying, and I always use it, it's this, "It took me ten years to become an overnight success." I think it's very true, you

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have to stick at it and build your brand because it's important that you build that credibility, build that business, and constantly keep trying to look at how you can develop it. Because of the world that we live in now, everyone wants an immediate reaction, when in fact, it takes hard work. Most of the biggest companies in the world have taken several years to become who they are. We all start somewhere, and we will all get there.

What about how you define success personally? Any lessons that you learned that you could share?

I define success by being able to help people and seeing the joy in people's faces when they do achieve that success, seeing them grow. It's great validation for me to see that, and that's how I would define success. I believe that we are all here to help each other, to motivate, to assist and add value to each other because I think that's the key to it; We must. We need to help each other for us all to get to where we want to be.

And would that be how – the lesson that you would share as well, helping each other?

Yes, that's the lesson I would definitely give, to help each other. Collaborate and support because when we collaborate, we are much stronger. When we work on our own, we are not as strong. By collaborating and helping each other, it brings us all together and it helps us all succeed.



Any skills that you feel would help you to become successful along the way? Is there any skill that you could sort of single out or highlight?

One of the biggest skills that has helped me become more successful has been doing my Masters in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) I started the journey five years ago, I read an article about it, and I said, "I'd like to investigate this more." I joined an NLP practitioner's course and went on to do a Masters level in it. I found that it has been so beneficial for me because it helps me to understand people and it also helps me to read situations and get the best out of people. NLP helps you study how to talk to people, how to deal with people and also how to help them and understand what it is that they are looking for. It has been very exciting to be able to put into practice what we do here with Kompass Media, in regards to social media and digital marketing and coming at it from a different approach. That has been a huge benefit to us.

Is there's anything that you're working on, or is there's anything else that you'd like to share that maybe we haven't covered?

We are currently developing a whole new training hub with Kompass Media, where we are going to be delivering a lot more courses and learning. It's about helping people become better at social and digital marketing and we come at it from a different approach. We don't come at it from the textbook approach, we come at it from a practicing practitioner of digital marketing. It's up-to-date and I think that's the key to training in any shape or form.