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## **Podcast Episode #57 – Kickstarter Post-launch - a home gym challenges the No pain No gain crowd, with Joey Atlas of SCULPTAFIT Global, USA**

### **RAW TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW**

**Balint:** Welcome back, Joey, to the podcast.

**Joey:** Thank you. Great to be here again.

**Balint:** We recorded our first episode was about a month ago before your Kickstarter campaign. I'd say before jumping into the post-campaign topics, there are many things to discuss. The campaign has finished recently so it would be great if you could give a short intro, a summary of your product first at least for those listeners who missed the first interview.

**Joey:** OK. So short summary of the product concept. It's basically an all-in-one commercial grade home gym system that is based on my unique methods that I've been developing for the last 12 to 15 years. Because my methods and approach to fitness deviated from the mainstream in my adulthood I needed a home gym solution and a commercial gym solution that allowed me to do the types of exercise and fitness training that I wanted to do. So fast forward, it was time to now commercialize this concept beyond the first few versions that I had made for it and that I had outsourced the fabrication of. And so the logical thing was to tap into my subscriber base and my customer base around the world who were already buying my information products and training programs and reading my newsletters and essentially launch it to that list that was following the journey of this machine and its evolution and its development. And I wanted to try to leverage Kickstarter for that and for the reasons that we'll get into. So it is an all-in-one home gym system for the whole family, all types of fitness levels from beginners to advanced.

**Balint:** Yeah, this a good summary. We discussed a lot more things in the first episode. I encourage the listeners to tune in to that episode, about the whole story about how you came to this stage, the story of the Kickstarter campaign and some other details. So how do you feel about the campaign's outcome? Was that success?

**Joey:** Yeah, definite success. I went into it as we spoke in the first episode not necessarily needing the Kickstarter crowdfunding community to back the project. Or ra-



ther it was more both an experiment to see if the things that we were reading and hear about on Kickstarter were actually going to be true for this product. And also, I knew that I could make it a successful campaign even if it didn't bring total strangers into the promotion to have them back it. So the experiment did not prove true according to my hypothesis and what I've been reading out there but I now have a successful Kickstarter campaign that will historically be on that website and we can have that carry-over public social proof credibility that I could weave into future marketing. Does that make sense?

**Balint:** Yeah. What was your hypothesis? Could you maybe elaborate on that?

**Joey:** Sure, absolutely. So, when I was gearing up to do this I had a few friends who were very familiar with Kickstarter, they ran some Kickstarter campaigns in the past albeit those were lower-ticket items whereas this launch for the home gym was going to be a 2000-dollar price tag plus shipping. So it wasn't a thirty-dollar game or a forty-dollar gadget or even a 100-dollar item. This was an over 2000-dollar item. But they said I should give it a thought anyway. And so, I had no intentions of doing it until I heard it a few times that I should at least try launching on there. And so the more research I did, the more I found that there were these hypotheses that claimed if you hit X percent of your funding level within the first 48 hours, then supposedly the Kickstarter algorithm takes over and starts showing you to a lot of buyers that would be likely to back your project.

The other hypothesis was that if you get within say 80 or 90 percent in the first two weeks and there's still two weeks to go, that Kickstarter will make sure your offer is getting seen by enough backers to make it successful and to also have the numbers rise even higher by exposing it to more and more super backers. And that sounds logical because Kickstarter only makes money when your project is successfully funded but they also make a lot more money because they only take a 5 percent cut of the successful campaign. So, if they take 5 percent of a forty-thousand-dollar successful project, well that's way less than a 5 percent cut of a 10-million-dollar successful project launch. So it made sense that if something was going to be successful or it reached 100 percent funding and there is still time to go that it would make sense for them to show it to a lot more people because they're going to get 5 percent anyway so why not try to get it in front of as many of their backers and super backers as possible and make maybe a hundred thousand dollars instead of 3000 dollars.

So it made sense. So I figured well, I have nothing to lose because I have an idea of how many backers that I have pre-committed for this already. And I know I can set the funding level based on the math on my end to get the first production run done and with those numbers I'll do two things. I'll be able to see if this hypothesis is true and if it is true, then great. I'll have you know a bonus of X number of more buyers and I could make a bigger first production run order and we can launch faster you



know with more fuel from the beginning. But if the hypothesis didn't prove true, I know that I would work things in a way that would still make it a successful campaign so that historically I can show that I'm in that 36 percent of projects that only make a successful funding level on Kickstarter and for my purposes I know I'll be able to use that in future marketing campaigns because it's the same thing I've done for info products.

When I was on TV a few times I wasn't counting on anybody seeing that one show and making me rich by buying all my programs. I was going to get the footage of that TV segment and I was going to roll that forward into my marketing funnels so that anybody knew finding me would be able to see as part of the marketing sequence, "Oh, this guy was on TV in New York here. Look at this, like wow this really must be something." So same concept is going to apply to the Kickstarter campaign. We'll weave that credibility into future marketing campaigns. So either way it's a win.

**Balint:** Yeah, that's good. So let me summarize, if I got it right. So you had two hypotheses, two assumptions, two casts you wanted to do on Kickstarter of how Kickstarter operates. One was that basically in the end how they promote certain products if they reach like 80-90 percent funding level and also at the beginning if they hit a certain percentage, right?

**Joey:** Correct.

**Balint:** These two hypotheses. And the second one was that, well it was more like a goal that you wanted to at least be able to fund the first production run and if it becomes like a runaway success, then you could fund it even more so you would have even stronger first production run, so producing more. What was in numbers the result?

**Joey:** So which specific numbers?

**Balint:** Yes, so like funding you know that you could get. And what the minimum goal was compared to that?

**Joey:** I set the goal at 32000 dollars and I knew that if I hit that number, I would be able to place a first order that made financial sense for me to get things started. And so anything beyond that would kind of be like bonus whether it was you know 10000 more dollars or 10 million more dollars. It would all be bonus from there. So I calculated the minimum viable number that I needed to start making things happen on my end and still have it look like... You know 32000 dollars is not you know peanuts. That's a respectable amount for a high-ticket item. So that that was those numbers. And we hit I think forty, maybe 47000 dollars. We hit the 145 percent funded level.

**Balint:** That's good. So that's why you can say that you're happy with this result.



**Joey:** Absolutely, yeah.

**Balint:** Yeah, I mean talking about the big-ticket items I agree that the thing is you know Kickstarter has a certain audience and if they are used to spending a hundred bucks, 200, 300 maybe up to 500, then they're less likely or at least it takes a lot more convincing to convince them to give up 2000.

**Joey:** Absolutely, absolutely.

**Balint:** In retrospect.

**Joey:** Yeah, for sure, for sure.

**Balint:** So you did a lot of work on creating like a really long and detailed presentation about your product how it came about the productions in the U.S. So you did do a lot of convincing. How do you think it could be improved in the future, similar big-ticket numbers like?

**Joey:** Right. So you mean launches on Kickstarter or?

**Balint:** Yeah. If you had for example another launch sometime in the future, similar product or second version generation because there are companies doing the startups coming out with the second version, and then again going on Kickstarter.

**Joey:** Right. I would say part of the investment has to start as early as possible for the pre-marketing. So sharing the story in real time up to the launch and building a list in that process for your most interested prospects. So of course, the best is a mix of organic and paid so it means becoming Facebook ad savvy, possibly using AdWords, maybe even Instagram depending on the product and the audience. But I would say the pre-marketing is just as important as the evolution of the product itself because that's going to be your main audience that most likely hold your first backers and your most loyal backers. So that's something I would do differently. Again, I was fortunate enough to already have a minimum baseline audience who were waiting for this. And so, I would actually try to do more of that in the future if I was to go this route again.

**Balint:** So this is where you would improve on. And what you think went well during the campaign?

**Joey:** What went well during the campaign was basically almost all of the backers who verbally committed to buying came through. There was one or two that basically disappeared you know despite like promising me that I would hold this if they were all selling out. And that's human nature. That's life. Things like that happen that you know we never know what could happen to somebody, maybe somebody in the family dies, maybe they have to leave the country for something or what have you. So



there's always a percentage that will disappear or go silent. But surprisingly there are people that are following the story. They don't verbally commit yet. They show up and they support and they backed the project. When they see that there is a certain level of success and that this thing is really going to happen, they will step forward and be a supporter whereas they didn't tell you they're going to be a supporter ahead of time but they're still a loyal follower. They know, like and trust you. You may have helped them in the past with other products or services. And when the time is right for them their verbal commitment is actually during the campaign and they show up with the money to place their order.

That actually surprised me a little bit because I had a few people do that and then I had a few surprise people who I didn't know they were going to buy because I didn't even know they were going to come into the promotion. But they weren't even from Kickstarter either. So, for example, I was posting in a few of the mastermind forums that I'm a member of in the months leading up to the project, maybe even a year ago starting. And I had a few silent followers who were just kind of watching and seeing the questions I was posting and learning from those questions and the answers that people were sharing. And in doing that they realized they were prime clients of what I was going to be selling. And so they watched all the way to the promotion and basically several of these people bought in the last 12 hours of the promotion which was really exciting because I basically knew almost everybody who was going to buy and when I saw a few names that I didn't recognize, that was really cool. That was really good to see.

And so, I reached out to them in the update posts that you're allowed to post through Kickstarter and so far I've had one reach out to me and so the value in this is that I like to find out what lead that person to come aboard and back the project. What's the back story? What are the reason? Because if this person is an ideal buyer for this product, I need to know who they are, I need to know what made them want to buy it and spend over 2000 dollars for this because there are probably at least several hundred thousand if not a few million other people in the world just like that person with a similar story and similar needs. So, I don't want to get too far ahead but I'll circle back on this why that was important.

Another person... This is really interesting. In the last 24 hours of the campaign and this was more serendipitous than anything else but still very valuable because it's going to help the future of marketing. I jumped on Zoom to help some friends with a marketing campaign they were working on and they wanted me to take a look at it. So I jumped on to Zoom at a certain time but they had not finished their previous call before me jumping on Zoom to help them out. Well, anyway they introduced me to this person because we were all looking at each other on Zoom and they gave him the real time intro, "Joey's in the last 12 hours of his Kickstarter campaign. He's



launching this awesome commercial grade home gym system that he has in his studios and at his house.” And this guy's ears perked up and he said, “Wait a minute. Like I need something like that.” And I said, “OK, let's exchange info and let's talk tomorrow and then I'll hang up and let you guys finish and then I'll meet up with these guys after to help them out.” So we got on a Zoom call the next day and there was maybe I don't know eight hours left to go on the promotion. And I basically gave him a video walkthrough of the home gym system that I have here in the house and we talked a little more and he said, “Well, as soon as we hang up I'm going on Kickstarter to place my order. I've seen enough and this is exactly what me and my kids need.” And you know like wow, this is just perfect. This is too perfect.

So he ended up backing, we started a great relationship and there's a lot that I'm going to learn from him as well. And what's cool is that most of my buyers were women because most of my products that went viral a few years ago were for the middle-aged, well, not just middle-aged but mostly female market. And so, having a few men jump in in the last 12 hours and giving me the reasons why they're buying this and why this is exactly what they need and want was extremely valuable because that's going to help me even more now to build out the marketing campaigns for the male audience in addition to the female. So really, really neat experiences. And so, if I didn't do this on Kickstarter, those few examples wouldn't have happened and I wouldn't have gained those golden insights this early in the game.

**Balint:** Yeah, this is incredible story that you shared. So, to me one lesson could be that...You mentioned that after the Zoom call you had like a product walk-through via videocall in other time later. So perhaps for such a campaign with such a high price tag even more video presentations could be useful. You did have but maybe some kind of other...

**Joey:** Close-up.

**Balint:** Yeah, closeup or just longer format, just so that people become more familiar with the product.

**Joey:** Absolutely. Like to me I put myself in other people's shoes and really what I would like to see which was part of what I did with the gentleman who bought in the last few hours was I took my laptop right up to the unit and basically showed him the details, the gauge of the steel, how the attachments go on and off to create different variations of exercises and workouts, really up close view. And so, I realized OK, I'm going to make a video like that doing extreme closeups of the fine details of this machine to show you know beyond somebody being right there to use it, I'm going to get them as close as possible to see the exact details up close. So that will be worked on.



**Balint:** Yeah. You recently I read finally the book *SPIN Selling* so this is targeting high priced products and it's based on analytics. This guy was analyzing 30-35000 sales calls in 12 years of research and especially for big-ticket items, he defines it's anything above 100 bucks. And this is a fascinating book and I found really a lot of lessons from it and that I can apply even for my job because I'm doing sales as you know it, high-tech products, very expensive products. You know when you do that, when you want to sell it, it's critical to ask questions, right questions that drive the problem deeper in the eyes of the buyer, of the potential buyer. Also, talking more about the benefits that person will get, translating the benefits into...You know normally benefits one can call advantages but benefits are like the real benefits that translate into solving the problem, solving the real problem each person has. So maybe in his eyes he saw his problem in his family and how your device can solve the problem.

**Joey:** Absolutely. That was it because he was telling me straight up you know, "We've tried this and then you know my friends were getting rid of this other thing. So we took it and tried that. But you know it was cumbersome, it was awkward. We couldn't really come up with the right way to train. And there were too many parts and pieces." And so ultimately that means you're not going to get results. If it doesn't work and you really can't use it, nobody gets results.

So it's all about the results and the outcome and how easy and simple you can make the process to get those results and outcomes and that's where the real magic of this is because it simplifies and makes the fitness training process so much easier and enjoyable compared to the traditional methods that it's like, "Oh, OK this is actually what I would like. I don't want to have to punish myself in my workouts. I would love for my workouts to be easier and gentler on the body." So, when you start removing those obstacles and the things that prevent people from taking care of their fitness, you've made the process simpler and you've brought them that much closer to the results.

**Balint:** Yeah. Talking about results and outcome, how did you come to these outcomes, these results meaning now? Can you talk about the tools that you used during the campaign and even before of course?

**Joey:** Absolutely. So it's really again, going back to the concept of simplification and picking your biggest leverage points, I've been fortunate enough to be doing this online stuff since 2006. So since 2006 I've been putting out newsletters and videos and blog posts and selling my own fitness information products. And in doing that you develop a following. So that following is mostly house in an e-mail database and if you communicate on a consistent basis with that email database not always trying to sell them things but help them with helpful content, with sharing the things that are going on in your life, sharing behind-the-scenes of your business and things you're



working on for them and experiments you're doing personally to make what you bring them even better. When you nurture the audience that way, that's the tool because not only are they going to raise their hand as you're traveling the journey and they're a part of it but all you're going to need to do is send them out the proper e-mails when time comes to release the product and that e-mail database the system you use for that that's one of my most powerful tools.

The other part is simply asking them to share what you're giving them along the way with any one friend, family member or a co-worker that they can think of who can also benefit from whatever it is I'm sharing that day. And believe it or not, that simple ask which is I'm asking them to help somebody by sharing my free stuff with somebody else. So they end up looking good, feeling good and helping somebody in the process. So that's really the main tool is the audience and growing the audience by helping them along the way and letting them know, like and trust you more along the way.

The other tools were very basic. Basically, turning to email replies people along the way had questions about the unit. All types of questions. And so, I used those questions in prelaunch and launch emails that I was sending out during the launch campaign as the funding level was going higher and higher. And so I would do those specific Q&As as part of the e-mail content that went out during the launch period. And some of them in the prelaunch as well. Beyond that, nothing really more elaborate than that. I didn't do any kind of crazy PR scraping, no analytics to see what was happening. I knew what was happening. I sent my people emails, one or two would buy on each day after the initial launch. I would share with other people. I would keep you know sharing what was going on with my friends and my online marketing pals and circles. And one thing led to another and it was simple communication of what was going on in real time. Really nothing more than that.

And so as you know there's a lot of articles out there and methodologies on how to you know make the biggest bang with your Kickstarter campaign by doing a really long list of things that require lots of people to be helping because it's unrealistic for one person to do all that themselves. So for me it was a matter of simplifying what's my biggest leverage point. I had a big list where most people coming in to launch a product don't have a big list. And that's really where my focus was going to be instead of going out to try to bring in new people that will come later which is the evergreen phase.

**Balint:** Yeah. So can you talk about the evergreen phase? Because that's going to be your next steps. I believe it will be before this interview be started and talking about it but I think it's great to hear more about the next steps where you want to focus on, where you want to put most of the focus because you see a lot of growth opportunities there, right?





**Joey:** That's the whole point of getting this off the ground is you know not to have a 12-million-dollar Kickstarter launch. That was to light the fuse. All right. The big stuff happens now in evergreen and beyond. So evergreen is basically going to be building out various funnels for various buyer demographics and avatars. The funnels will be content, really valuable content on the front-end that logically would lead somebody closer and closer into my world with free materials, paid info products at the you know 30-40-100-dollar level. And naturally just like all the buyers who were my founder backers in the campaign launch we're going to build the campaigns to mimic the same exact funnel steps. We're going to bring in new people with my materials free and paid info products and they're going to discover that, "Oh, well this guy also has this unique pending machine. He has them in a studio. He has them in his house and all these other people actually have bought them already on the Kickstarter launch and now we could buy one too."

So we're not going to be building funnels that take people from say an ad to the machine and have them buy the machine right away. We'll test that of course but it's going to be more of a gradual funnel where we have to assume this person on the other side is a total stranger. They never knew about me before in their life. So, we're going to be having them find valuable, unique helpful content that they can implement right there at home that same night whether it's a quick and healthy recipe or a very short you know little training session they can do on their living room floor or if it's some you know a helpful fat lost tip or if it's an exercise they can do on the couch you know whatever you name it. There's so much free stuff I can give out and produce that way that we're going to cast a wide net to start creating awareness and engagement and then retarget all those people who have engaged with what I'm sharing and bring them closer and closer, get them onto an email list for even better and better free materials. They'll have the options to buy any of my info products that they want and then they'll also see that I've got this whole big unique system that they can have at their home, their office or their vacation home and then also access to the back-end video continuity program where they can access all the personal training videos they need to know how to use the machine and the system you know for the rest of their life basically. That's the big view of what the evergreen marketing system is going to look like.

**Balint:** Yeah, I'm looking forward to hearing more about this...

**Joey:** Yeah. Happy to share.

**Balint:** ...in the future with the progress. Yeah, yeah. I think we covered many topics in this interview. I think we can certainly skip in this episode, in the second one, the ultrafast round where we you know cover four questions because we already had it in the first session. But I think it's been fascinating being part of this journey that you have before the campaign, during when I was following it and also now after the



campaign. Learning also about you know lesson learned, what you improved on, what you liked and what the next steps are where you are going to put the focus.

**Joey:** So I want to share one more thing that could be valuable to any listener either in business already looking to expand their marketing or going into business with a product launch. Here's one thing that's going to become very important in the marketing beyond this launch. The founder backers who have already placed their order for the system what I'm going to do is make them all ambassadors as founders of the group who bought the first production run. And what I'm going to present to each of them is the opportunity to be interviewed by me and that the interview is going to consist of questions that tell their specific unique story of their life, their health, their fitness habits, their pursuits, their ups, their downs, their challenges, how they found me, why they like my methodologies, my unique approaches and what were the factors that made them want to spend the money and invest in this machine system.

And we're going to record all those and all of those are either going to go into my podcasts or as audio clips on the website, they'll go into the email evergreen funnels that people will come into an evergreen marketing sequences. We're going to share all these stories for eternity basically so that various people who come into the front-end of the funnel will be able to hear various stories of different people who've invested in this system for them and their families. And when they hear these free stories at some point at least one or two of those stories of these various buyers are going to sound just like that person and they're going to say, "You know what? That lady sounds just like me." And I'm going to do follow-up interviews with how people are progressing with the machine and their fitness and health.

So these interviews will become part of the marketing materials that people in the future will be able to access. And most of the marketing is taken care of by this content that's produced once but then it can be reused over and over and over for every single person that comes into the front-end marketing funnels. And this what I'm explaining here can be applied to any business. It doesn't matter what product you're selling and it doesn't matter who your customers are and whether it's B2B or B2C, it doesn't matter. People are people and they buy for various reasons. So if you interview them and you tell a good story in that interview and why they decided to open their wallet and make the investment, that's your sales material that's what's going to make other people say, "That sounds like me. I'm going to buy this too."

**Balint:** Yeah. It has multiple effects or uses. You learn from each person why they bought so you can use that knowledge for selling the product to similar people but it's also good as a convincing point, as a sales material as you put it for other people to realize that actually they need that. Plus, the third one that you mentioned as a follow-up, if you follow up with the people who are using your product, you can again show it that people are actually using it, it's not just standing in the corner.



**Joey:** Absolutely. And people, not everybody but most of them they kind of feel honored, they feel special when you're going to celebritize them as one of your ambassador featured customers. So most of them will be all for it and feel really good about it.

**Balint:** Yeah. I think that's a good way to come to an end in this interview with this positive note that you're going to work on this even more to grow this in a sustainable manner.

**Joey:** Absolutely. This was never about money and making millions or billions or whatever. This is about having a positive impact in the world with something unique that I'm able to bring to it. And yes because, it's a business we have to have enough profits to support and grow the business but the whole motivation and the fuel for driving this forward is to help people in a society that needs help with a unique way of doing things and so I have big goals, big plans, a big vision and you know who knows what lies beyond the horizon. If a large company comes along and they see what we're doing here and they want to you know put more rocket fuel into it faster because it can be part of their portfolio, all that means is that we can help more people faster instead of taking a longer time. So impacting the world is really what it's all about. So that's what we're going to be building toward. And there's going to be a lot more good stuff to come in the future.

**Balint:** Excellent. Thanks a lot, Joey, for the interview.

**Joey:** Thank you, Balint. Total pleasure. Thanks for having me. I appreciate it.

**Balint:** I enjoyed it. Thanks.