



Building a Lifestyle Business

Ellen Rohr and [Rasmus Lindgren](#)

Ellen: Greetings. It's Ellen Rohr and that was my sexy intro music. I'm The Plumber's Wife turned Business Makeover Expert. Welcome to Business Makeover 2014. Today, right now, this is our opportunity to consider what we really, really want and springboard into aligned action. We've got 21 days, 21 experts and I have more in store. There's going to be some additional bonuses, so check your email and we'll keep you posted.

I'm loving spending time with you and our experts. So, today, settle in, allow yourself to dream big, this is our breakthrough quantum-leap year. Business Makeover 2014 starts right now. Today's interview is Building a Lifestyle Business.

I am super excited about this topic because when I visit with clients over the phone and I do an initial hey, how are you doing, get to know them a little bit, I always ask this question. What do you really want? If all of your dreams came true, three years down the road you're looking at your life and you look up to the heavens and you say thank you, I got it, I've got everything I want, what does that life look like? Nearly 100% of the time the answer goes something like this.

I want to have freedom. I want to have financial freedom and lifestyle freedom. I want my business to run without me. I want to be able to do the things that I want to do and know that money is going to still come in and that things are happening without me doing it all the time. The expert in making that happen is my friend Rasmus Lindgren. I'm going to tell you a little bit about him and then I'm going to bring him on to the call.

Rasmus is the author of *The Lifestyle Business Rock Star* book: Quit your 9:00 to 5:00 job, kick ass, work less and live more! It's a guide for prioritizing your life and achieving work balance and starting a lifestyle business. Last year Rasmus worked – get this – four months of the year and traveled for months with his family. He lived in Denmark and Thailand and all the while he ran his six-figure business. So Rasmus, I'm really excited to have you on the call today. Welcome.

Rasmus: Thank you. I'm excited, as well. I love your intro music, I must add that.

Ellen: Yes. It's called 'Above the Clouds' and it came with the Instant Teleseminar Program. I just figured it was going to be easy and now I've come too really like it.

Rasmus: Now you love it, right?

Ellen: Right and I learned to love it. I want to share a little bit about how we met because I think this is interesting. I remember someone telling me oh, you've got to be on LinkedIn, you've got to be on Facebook, as far as your business goes. You can do business this way. I remember thinking I can't imagine meeting someone on Facebook and creating a business opportunity out of that. I can see creating a relationship and some branding and some other things, but I couldn't imagine it and, yet, that's how we met.

We were introduced by a mutual friend, another expert on our lineup, Clint Arthur. He veered your Facebook message to me and low and behold you brought me over to Denmark where I got to meet your wonderful friends at the JCI Program in Copenhagen. So, how about that?

Rasmus: Exactly. Things go fast sometimes. I mean you were pretty quick to say yeah, I'm just flying in and you got to see Copenhagen.

Ellen: Well, that's what a lifestyle business is all about. A few years ago I traveled a lot and I made a conscious decision; in fact, it happened when I was in Dallas, Texas. I traveled there for a convention and it dawned on me that I had not left the hotel for five days. I had not walked outside for five days and I said this is never going to happen again. What do I want instead?

This is the idea of a lifestyle business. If you don't want what you have now, what would you like instead? I thought well, wherever I go I want to do something that is of the vernacular that is unique to that area, even if it's walking downtown or going on a little tour or going for a run in the park, something that's going to be unique to the area that I live in. So I made a conscious choice to create a lifestyle out of my business because just being on the road all time sucks the life out of you. That's no way to live.

If you're on the call today, there are a lot of different businesses represented. As I visit with Rasmus, we're going to integrate into our conversation different types of businesses. Okay Rasmus? So as we chat, we're going to talk about your business. I want you to tell your story. Then as we share ways that you created this lifestyle business, I'm going to make an effort to leverage our conversation into different types of businesses. Are you with me?

Rasmus: Absolutely.

Ellen: All right. Well, tell me your story a little bit. You're still a young guy. I was laughing. In the JCI Organization, most of the members of the organization are like 20 and 30-year-olds. You're already an old man in that group. I could be your mother, so there's that.

Rasmus: I love it when people tell me I'm young, so that's good.

Ellen: It's just the people you hang out with. You're old compared to them, but compared to me you're a kid, you're a pup. Tell me, what was your moment of epiphany? What made you decide to live a life where you could be in all corners of the world and work only a few months a year? What happened to you?

Rasmus: I'm 37, just to get my age out of the picture, but still, I've been in the IT Industry for a lot of years. If you know anybody in the IT Industry, you probably know you can always work more, right? I mean there's always another big project coming up and you're struggling to reach deadlines.

At some point, I actually started an IT consulting company together with friends and you know what happens when you start your own company. Well, you make a little bit more money, but you also work a lot more, right? It seemed like the perfect decision, but then a few things happened to me and one of the things was that I became a father for the first time and that tends to well, at least, put some priorities in your life suddenly, right?

Ellen: Right. I remember before I had a kid I heard the expression that short-term planning was lunch and long-term planning was dinner. I never thought beyond the day and then I had a kid and it was like I've got to be mature. What happened?

Rasmus: Well, that didn't quite happen for me yet.

Ellen: Maturity didn't come into it. Okay.

Rasmus: I could see my life didn't scale. I was working way too many hours and it was okay for the time being because it was my own business and I was making good money. I was making more than when I was employed, but I could just see that wouldn't scale. I really wanted to be there for my kids with them growing up. I wanted to be there as the perfect father, if you can use that phrase. You're never the perfect father, but at least I wanted to give it a shot.

So, basically, what I did was that I sold my shares in the company to my partner and the first thing I started doing was more IT consulting because that was what I knew how to do, but now I didn't have to perform to certain limits. I was my own boss, I could tell myself how much I wanted to work and in the end how much I wanted to make.

Being a consultant you make a little bit more than when you're employed, so I started cutting down a little bit on the work I had to do and I started to focus on building this lifestyle business instead because, basically, selling your hours doesn't scale. I mean you can only get up to a certain amount of money you make, just like being an employee. I wanted something that would scale better and that I wouldn't be involved in all the time.

So that was really my epiphany moment, getting kids and knowing I didn't want to trade my time for money the rest of my life but have something that would allow me to spend more time with my kids, whether that would just be in the normal day hours or... What do you call that in English?

Ellen: During the day?

Rasmus: Yes, during the day basically, or wanting to travel with the kids. As you say, now we have a house in Thailand and so we spend a few months down there each year, typically in the winter season, because let's face it, winter in Denmark is not that much fun. It's very dark and so cold.

Ellen: It sounds wonderful. I've seen pictures on your website of your place down in Thailand and I've been to Copenhagen now and I know that's awesome. Everyone has their happy place or the dreams they have and it's going to be unique to you, but how would you then define what a lifestyle business is. Let's help get some clarity on how you define that.

Rasmus: In my book I work with a model I call the 4-S Model because it's easy to remember if it's all S's, but basically, it's just a couple of words.

Ellen: Okay. See, everything you do is really simple. I love this. Okay, so four S's.

Rasmus: Also, when you've been in the consulting industry everything has to be a model of some sort, right? You can just remember there are only four S's. First of all, a lifestyle business is simple to set up and that means you don't need a lot of money. You don't need to take out a loan. If you wanted to start a franchise, you typically want to have hundreds of thousands of dollars to start up and it takes years at a time to set up. This is not for people who want to create the next Skype or the next Facebook because it should be simple to set up. So that was the first S. You don't need a lot of time and you don't need a lot of money.

The second S is that it has to be small, small in size at least. Again, this goes towards building a big business such as Facebook vs. building a small business, one business that is perhaps

generating you \$50,000 U.S. dollars a year. I think we can all agree it's easier to build a small business generating \$50,000 U.S. dollars a year rather than one where after 10 years do an IPO and you will have \$10-\$20 million in the bank. So the second S is that we are focusing on building small businesses; also, because you will fail early.

If you realize that you haven't been able to go into a market that was attractive after all, you can always close that business down and start a new one. So the risk is much smaller than creating a large business where you really have to work at it until you succeed, whether that is 10 years down the line or not.

Ellen: Okay. So small size and small risk then is the second one.

Rasmus: Yes, small in size and risk and we can talk about some examples afterwards. The third S is scaling built into it. That was what I mentioned before. We don't want to get into another position where we're just selling our time. For instance, if we are let's say a coach, instead of working one on one, perhaps you could work with groups instead. If you're working one on one you're still selling your time, but if you're working with groups of people suddenly you can scale it up to working with 100 people at a time instead of one. That was just one example, but we want to scale this into it. We want something that is automated where you don't work more.

Ellen: We're going to talk more about that automated piece because that works for all kinds of businesses and you are a master at that. So I'm making a little note to circle back to automatic systems that will allow you to scale. So that's number three in the S lineup. What's the fourth S?

Rasmus: Well, that's perhaps the most controversial. I know a lot of people who are on this corporate ladder and they don't know another way and they're just climbing the corporate ladder. The fourth is S is really that the business should be secondary to your life and a lot of people, especially entrepreneurs, tend to have their business as their baby and their life revolves around their business. I want to emphasize that what we're really focusing on here is building the life you want not building the business you want. The business should be secondary and only support your desired lifestyle. That's how I define a lifestyle business. Basically, it's a business that supports your desired lifestyle.

Ellen: So we're going to chat it up a little bit about creating lifestyle businesses and we're going to talk about different business models as we progress.

One thing that came up for me as you just shared that is suppose you're a plumbing contractor, you could create a lifestyle business in addition to your brick and mortar business. I know an HVAC guy who is creating a website that makes it easy for his customers to buy their furnace filters.

That's kind of one of the challenges in that particular industry is having the right size furnace when you go and visit with the customer. There's a whole bunch of different kinds and sizes and so he's creating a secondary Internet-based business. If people could do their own procurement of that little piece of the puzzle it would be a big win.

So I can see how you could add a lifestyle business to an existing business and strengthen your overall financial picture. I think you'd have to be careful, though, with that last S, which is really, really important. I so support that your business should serve your life not the other way around. The business is a vehicle for driving you to the life you want not for sacrificing your life, your relationships and your health and that happens so often.

Rasmus: As I said, it's controversial because a lot of small business owners are in love with their business, but I have also seen entrepreneurs and business owners who are just working 60 hours. Actually, a guy here in Denmark, who is often out speaking on entrepreneurship, he is working 60 hours a week and he had this kind of really bad disease you can die from where he was just, pardon my word, pissing blood and he had two small kids.

Basically, what he said afterwards was that well, I was going back to work after the hospital because I had to do this and that. I said you probably won't be there in five year's time if you continue. You'll die and you have two small kids. He's being pulled forward on stages here in Denmark as a good entrepreneur example and I'm like he's dead and he's left his wife and two kids. I mean people are going to remember him by that life. So I know it's controversial.

Ellen: I'm with you on it, though. The point of this Business Makeover 2014, Rasmus, was that I was looking at the end of 2013 and I'm looking at this blank slate of 2014. For me, this transition from one year to the next is so important to decide what do I really want, what am I willing to do, what am I willing to give up, and it is all about relationships, family, fun and happiness. So I don't think it's controversial here. I hope it resonates with some listeners, as well. In fact, you and I were both inspired by the same guy. We have a lot of mentors in common, but tell me about your experience with reading Tim Ferris' book *The 4-Hour Workweek* because I know this had a big impact on you.

Rasmus: Yes. It's funny, actually, because I read it in the beginning of 2008 and I had just started my company I mentioned before in 2007. So I read it at a really bad period of time because I had just started this business and I wanted to really build it up to something big at that point. I read it on a holiday trip to Thailand, actually, but just two weeks because I had to go back and work. So I read it when I was in Thailand and perhaps that also added to the whole experience of reading the book.

It's a really good book that has inspired a lot of people because that's what it does. It mentions Ferris' model for working less. He had this kind of business where he was selling nutritional products and he goes through how he was working these 80-hour weeks, something crazy like that. He couldn't take anymore and needed to find some way he could work less and how he got down to working four hours each week.

So, at least for me, that was a wakeup call because I have never seen anything like that explained on how you could leverage using outsourcing; basically, people willing to work for you for not much money. That's how he built his business model at that point, using outsourcing. He was traveling around the world and, basically, learning new languages, learning how to Tango in South America or biking in Europe or whatever.

So, to me, the biggest thing I took from that book was that you don't need to be a millionaire to live like one really. Basically, instead of money the currency we want to focus on is time and mobility because what we really want is to travel like a millionaire. We want to have time with our kids or time to take a few months out doing that crazy hobby we have or whatever, learning how to Tango, for instance. So I think the big takeaway was that we need to focus on the currencies of time and mobility instead of money.

Ellen: For those of you on the call who are in a job right now and are considering moving out of the corporate life, one of the tips I gave my son, inspired by Tim Ferris', is do what you can to work from anywhere. You might have to go into the office some of the time, but craft a proposal to your boss or to whoever you work with and say you know what, I can work from home one, two or three days a week.

I think that's an important thing to do if you want to be an entrepreneur, one, to test your discipline. Even if you're going to work just two hours a day, you've got to put in some activity during those two hours a day. That's the discipline required when you're an entrepreneur. Also, if you get done your work during different times of the day then you can have some freedom during the main part of the day to do some other things or to start building the platform, thinking about and writing your business plan for your own business. So I think an outstanding tip is to figure out a way that even in your real job you can work from anywhere.

What should we talk about first, Rasmus? I want to talk about the four different styles of business models that work. This is going to be interesting. I also want to dig deep into outsourcing. The way you teach outsourcing applies to absolutely everybody on the call. So which would you like to tackle first?

Rasmus: I think we should do the business models and we can try to put the outsourcing part into that. I have a great case study I think for you being The Plumber's Wife.

Ellen: Okay, good.

Rasmus: In the book I mention four different business models and let me just start out by saying I love business modeling because a lot of people approach me saying Rasmus, I have this idea or the other thing they tell me is Rasmus, I have no ideas for a business. The issue with ideas is that you don't know if they're good or bad. People come up to me and say Rasmus, I've got this awesome idea and I say you have no way of knowing that. I mean once you have worked on it, once you've put in the work and implemented your idea and you sell it to Microsoft let's say for \$100 million, then we can conclude that it was probably a good idea.

Ellen: Good idea there. I love that.

Rasmus: You know I get tons of ideas each day, but I don't choose to act on all of them. So that's the first thing really. That's why I love business modeling because you can go out and model what is already working and what is already generating cash flow.

Ellen: Let's talk about that. Describe the different business models that could be potential lifestyle business models.

Rasmus: I want to mention the model of Drop Shipping. Drop shipping is where you have an eCommerce website so you can, basically, run it from anywhere in the world. You have a website selling some physical products, but you don't have any stock yourself. You don't have a warehouse full of products or anything like that. What you do is you make an agreement with the distributor or perhaps in the factory that produces the goods to ship out the products directly to your customers.

I wanted to bring this up because one of the big drop shipping businesses is Denmark is actually selling plumbing products. He was, basically, running a high five-figure business each month from home selling plumbing products, a guy in Denmark. Basically, the domain name in Danish is CheapPlumbingProducts.uk.

Ellen: I hate the word cheap associates with plumbing. You have to stop talking. Now you can speak in Danish because I don't want my U.S. friends to hear that.

Rasmus: Okay. You know that's just all the products like mixers, toilets and stuff like that. I'm not much into plumbing, so I don't know. You could probably tell me.

Ellen: It's kind of like the one I was talking about. The HVAC guy, the furnace and air conditioning contractor, is drop shipping furnace filters. He did it as a convenience for his customer, but it's that same model, isn't it? He's not touching them. They're just ordering them and they're going directly. But the convenience of buying them through his site, because they're his customers, he knows what kind of equipment he has and can steer them in the right direction, makes it worth it to them to use his portal as opposed to go and try and find them on their own.

Rasmus: Exactly. Also, you have to remember when we're building a small business you can specialize. That means if you only have one category of plumbing products you can specialize. Let's face it, if you're looking for something very special, a very special product like your friends, would you go to this big warehouse online that has everything or go to the specialist dealer who knows exactly and is only selling this one product. I mean you would go to the specialist every time.

Ellen: I love that.

Rasmus: It's a good way of building a couple of small online businesses using this Drop Ship Model where you specialize in just a specific product category or a product line. So that is a good business model if you already have some kind of knowledge in an industry and most small businesses do. That is a way to build a secondary stream of income online; basically, building an eCommerce site and then having a Drop Ship Model in place. Your activities would mainly be online marketing and you could do that from your physical brick and mortar store or from a beach in Bali. That's the difference in it.

Ellen: Love it. **Okay, that's number one is a Drop Ship Model, what's number two?**

Rasmus: It's the Online Services. It's a business model that I have done a lot of here in Denmark. In online services you sell some kind of service or product (let's call it service) online and outsource the actual fulfillment of that service. For instance, I'm actually selling eCommerce websites to small business owners here in Denmark. I make the initial sale, but then I have a company in Eastern Europe actually producing the eCommerce website for me and delivering that to my customer.

So, my Danish customers are dealing with a Danish company and they can talk with me, but they can't call on the phone or anything like that. They can only email me and then I have this company in Eastern Europe that's actually delivering the products to my customers. So you can say it's kind of a Drop Ship Model, as well, but it's not physical goods. It's with an outsourced backend.

Ellen: What's similar is that you're narrowing the choices and the focus. One of the things people don't like about using an outsource company in a country where English is not the first language is that the communication can be tough. It gets impersonal. It's hard to find your guy again. I talked to Suzette last time and now I can't find Suzette. You refined the search by saying you're going to work with me directly, but I love how you said we're not going to talk on the phone. We are going to talk via email. So you actually narrowed your customers to those who will deal with that relationship.

Rasmus: Absolutely. I call that Customer Expectation Funneling.

Ellen: Customer Expectation Funneling?

Rasmus: Yes.

Ellen: I love that. Okay, let's narrow down what you can expect here.

Rasmus: Yes, it doesn't work too well with all kinds of customers. Let's face it, even 20% of potential customers are just high maintenance and you don't want high-maintenance customers.

Ellen: Okay, my plumber friends need to listen up right now to this because so often I hear I don't want to lose a customer. You want to lose some customers. There are some customers who will suck the money, time and lifestyle right out of you. I love how casually you just said that, Rasmus. We're going to funnel down to those customers we can really be of service to and who I want to work with.

Rasmus: Absolutely. You, basically, educate your customers in what they want or what they require from you. A lot of companies in Denmark doing eCommerce sites are all saying we can do everything. Just ask us, we can do everything. I'm the opposite. I'm saying I'm only doing this, but if you can live with that I can give you a good price and really good products. So I'm telling them if you can't fit into this small basket I have here then I won't work with you and I will even direct you to some of my competitors because I don't want you as a client.

Let's face it, if I was a big company would I tell a lot of clients that I wouldn't want to work with them? No, I would just take them in and figure out how I could make money off of it. But because I only have to have a business where I'm making let's say \$30, \$40 or \$50,000 U.S. dollars a year, then, of course, the market is big enough that I can turn people away.

Ellen: If you want to make more than \$30, \$40, \$50,000 U.S. dollars a year, you add another small lifestyle business. That's your business model is to have like a mutual fund of additional businesses that are going to be fitting these criteria of being simple, small, scalable and secondary to the lifestyle.

Rasmus: Absolutely. You know I could probably scale my business even more where I do upsells or add another product to sell more products to my existing clients, but I'm just plain lazy.

Ellen: I love that about you.

Rasmus: You know that I call myself strategically lazy, right?

Ellen: Strategically lazy.

Rasmus: Yes.

Ellen: But that's what we want if we want a business that will run without us. I hope this hits you between the eyes. Are you someone who says that, but then will not let anybody do what you currently do? Are you willing to let go of what you're doing day in and day out? Unless you are, you're not going to have a business that runs without you.

As simple as that sounds, that's really the one I want to hit you right between the eyes here is that you're willing to let someone else do the work. Coordinate the work and keep the expectations simple and the scope simple so you can successfully outsource and delegate. I'm loving this conversation. All right, so we've got Drop Shipping and then Online Services. Anything more on Online Services or should we jump over to business model number three?

Rasmus: Let's move on.

Ellen: Okay.

Rasmus: I'll be brief with the next one because I don't think it's that relevant to your audience and that is Affiliate Marketing. Affiliate marketing is that you don't have your own products, you're just referring people to another product and you will make a profit if that customer or the person you referred ends up buying something from the other company. The good thing about this business model is that it's super easy to get started. Most of the time you just need a simple website and an affiliate agreement with someone who has the products and you can get that in five minutes online.

The problem is that you don't have your own customers. You don't own the customers and every business owner will know that it's a good idea that you own the customer, right? But it's a good idea if you want to get something online and try it out. It's simple to set up online, but again, the benefits lead to a lot of work for not that much money. Because you don't sell the actual products, you're only skimming a little bit of profit on each sale you refer.

I like it because it's easy to get started if you're a total online newbie, but other than that I don't recommend it as a business model if you want to actually replace your current 9:00 to 5:00 job, for instance.

Ellen: Well, this event, Business Makeover 2014, has an affiliate component to it and I have been a little intimidated by it because it looks complicated. You're strategically lazy, I'm strategically dumb. If it looks a little complicated I will veer away from it. However, as a business model it might be something supplemental to one of the other business models.

I wouldn't want to do strictly affiliate marketing, but I think it makes sense in light of this summit. You know hey, let's get together. You're going to bring people to the group. I'm going to bring people to the group. That's what we wanted with this Makeover Summit was to create a community who may not know each other yet and I'm introducing people. In that situation the affiliate part of it seems to make sense, but I can't imagine doing it exclusively. I can see it supplementing one of these other models.

Rasmus: Exactly. I mean I know people who have a full-time income on affiliate marketing, but again, it's taking a long time. Also, the reason why they can make a living is that they actually have a ton of small websites each making a little bit of money. I like just to have a handful of businesses, tops, because you can't really focus on any more. Also, you're not really providing much value to your customer. You're basically trying to hijack customers before they find the actual product page, right?

Ellen: Yes, I can see that. I've heard that people can do really well with affiliate marketing, but we get the basic idea that there is some opportunity to leverage relationships. I think what affiliate marketing can do is hey, I'll turn you on to some new customers and in exchange for that I get a portion of the sales. That's what sales commission is all about and that's fair. Let's move on to the fourth one now.

Rasmus: Yes, that is Informational Products.

Ellen: Okay, I like these.

Rasmus: What we're doing right now is the Informational Products and I know you have informational products, as well.

Ellen: I do.

Rasmus: The good thing about informational products is that they scale really well.

Ellen: What I like about information marketing is I go to a seminar, I hear the speaker on stage and sometimes it makes me want to sign up for some one-on-one coaching with that person or to join a group where they're going to be presenting. Sometimes I think I'll just get the book.

Is there an eBook?

Do you have a checklist I could buy for \$9?

Information marketing is nice because you can allow people to get as little or as much information as they want. If I'm not sure about somebody, I'll start with their book. Well, let me try their book or I'll subscribe to their blog and see if I like their voice. I like Informational marketing because it allows you to present a smorgasbord of help a little to a lot and from barely personal to very personal. So go ahead and describe it from your perspective.

Rasmus: You can reach a much broader audience instead of just working with a few selected clients. I have a few people I work with and they pay me thousands and thousands of dollars to work with them and help them build their business, but that's just a handful of people. I can reach a much broader audience with something like my book, for instance. A lot more people can read it and I can also record myself on video and distribute that to a lot of people. So, I can reach a much larger audience and it can be automated really, really well because delivery of informational products can be automated almost endlessly.

Ellen: I want to talk about informational products now and I'm going to add a little twist to our conversation, okay Rasmus? This is where if you were an electrician and you're thinking well, you know these lifestyle businesses, I like being an electrician. I want to create a cadre, a group of electricians who are going to work with me and maybe we're going to go multi shop. We're going to grow our brick and mortar business. That's maybe a U.S. expression, but that means there's going to be boots on the ground in this business.

Imagine if you were the electrician who did videos like Rasmus is talking about and you described situations and customers that you experienced today. Here are three tips for making sure that when you wire your Christmas tree lights this holiday season you don't blow the place up. If the lights go out during an electrical, what should you do? You can create information and even a product. Lessons Learned from the Truck by Bobby the Electrician.

Rasmus: Ellen, I can mention to you products from a plumber I would buy right now.

Ellen: What is that?

Rasmus: You know what? We have rats in our basement. Do you know how annoying that is?

Ellen: Is this in Thailand or in Denmark?

Rasmus: Oh, that's in Denmark actually.

Ellen: Oh, no!

Rasmus: We have a pretty old house. It's been a really bad experience getting to talk with all the different people about how much should we do, where should we look and who should we call, the insurance part and all that and someone with a plumbing company could pretty easily steer me through that process, both on how do I secure my house so I don't get them again, where should I look, who should I talk with, in what order and all of that.

I would buy that informational product right now. I would pay hundreds of bucks if I knew how to get rid of these. We have had them for over a month now and we're still calling all these insurance companies and plumbing companies and people with videos who have to go out and do whatever they do down in the sewers.

Ellen: Hey, I'm going to tell you something that is totally off piece from this conversation. There is a book called *Broken Harbor* by Tana French and it's a murder mystery. She's a murder mystery Irish author and she writes a great murder mystery, but one of the characters in the book has a problem just like you described and I think you're going to get a kick out of it.

But he's right, the potential to become a well-known informational marketer in the plumbing, heating, cooling, electrical trades is right there for you. It's right there for you. If you're the first one to lay claim to marketing in this way having a book or a product or a special report on goofy things that happen in plumbing and what you can do to avoid them, there is a market. The passion and the desperation in your voice, Rasmus, just underlined the need for that kind of business.

Rasmus: I crave the product!

Ellen: Hey, that's pretty cool. Now let's segue into outsourcing and automating. Let's take this last model of Information Products and Services and talk about the experiences you've had with outsourcing and automating that outsourcing for your business. Think in terms of a day in the life of Rasmus and describe to me which processes you automate as far as getting your company to run without you.

Rasmus: I will split it up into two things because we can talk about automation either utilizing outsourcing, paying someone -- and that doesn't have to be in another country, it can be in the same country where you live -- and it can be done through technology. You automate some kind of process through some kind of piece of magic computer or whatever. I use both, of course.

I had one issue where I was using PayPal, for instance, to take some payments and the problem was that people had difficulties showing the Danish sales tax on the receipts so I had to generate my own receipts, basically, to abide Danish law. I paid a guy from China \$200 bucks for creating this small magical thing that could print out these receipts to my customers and that instantly saved me hours and hours of time each month, just by paying him \$200 bucks for creating this small gadget that would print these receipts.

Ellen: How did you find that guy?

That sounds like a great idea, but how did you find a guy and then communicate what you needed to fill create that bridge between what you had and what you needed?

How did you find him?

Rasmus: There are several websites online where you can go and find freelancers like that. The one I used for this was Elance.com. A lot of people have absolutely been afraid to have other people helping you out with something because it can be kind of anonymous, but the good thing about places like Elance is that you put out a job description of what you want done and then people bid on it.

You can get like 20 bids or 30 bids for a single job and then you can see the rating that these providers have gotten from other buyers in the past and see feedback. You can perhaps see that

this applied here, he has hundreds of jobs before them and people will generally rate him five out of five. So okay, I'm pretty sure that he can help me, too.

Ellen: Is there another one you like?

Rasmus: I'm also using Odesk.com. But the good thing about these websites – I think Elance has it, I'm not sure if Odesk has it – is that you can put your money into escrow. That means, basically, you put the money into your Elance account. So the supplier can see that the money is there and the job has been paid, but he doesn't get the money until he has really delivered the work. So you don't just pay a lot of money and then don't know if your work is ever getting delivered because the supplier won't get any money. It's actually quite safe to do it that way and, of course, if you start with outsourcing to people that you don't know, I would always start out with some small tasks instead of going big to begin with.

Ellen: All right, so we're not going to outsource. I've got this idea for a whole new website that's going to revolutionize our industry that's going to integrate accounting and customer retention systems. Don't do that.

Rasmus: If you're not in the IT Industry, don't start there. I have a perfect first task for you, Ellen, which you can outsource.

Ellen: What?

Rasmus: I actually did this. I wanted to evaluate a virtual assistant company that supplies virtual assistants and I wanted them to book me an appointment with my hairdresser. How crazy is that? I got a guy from India calling my hairdresser over Skype and saying hello Mr. Hairdresser. I would like to book an appointment for Mr. Rasmus.

Ellen: You know I have said before, Rasmus, that if I could get someone to brush my teeth for me I would do it. I love this conversation. So you actually have your outsourced overseas virtual assistant do your personal scheduling for you.

Rasmus: Well, I mean I can call my hairdresser today, but I really wanted to test this company out. I needed to test a few things out. I wanted to test could they actually call in Danish business hours to a Danish company using a Skype account I supplied them with and could they also take a look at my calendar and figure out if there are some available slots in my calendar. So it was really about testing out this company and this task I gave them really tested them out from a communication standpoint, a coordination standpoint and stuff like that. It was also just fun.

Ellen: That is really fun. So you outsource from all kinds of different companies. Someone like Elance represents people from all over the world.

Rasmus: Exactly.

Ellen: This is really exciting. One way is to outsource and find people who will either develop fixes for you or do projects for you or actually provide services for you and you recommend Elance or Odesk. Let's talk about automating with technology. I was talking yesterday to one of our experts. She's very good at Twitter and she said well, you know I automate all that. I use Hoot Suite and I schedule these things. So that's one thing you can do is to automate your social media and communicate. Why don't you talk to me about some significant things you've done with technology that have really allowed you to live a lifestyle business.

Rasmus: Well, I can take an example with one of my other businesses. I wanted something that was kind of hands off, but I come from a background in IT so I know a little bit about the outsourcing part. Outsourcing was also part of this business, but I wanted something that was going recurring where I billed my clients each month automatically until they canceled their subscription. I wanted some kind of subscription-based model because then I only needed to get my clients once and I could continue to bill them each month.

So here I built a service company where, again, I used a company (this time in the Philippines) who actually supplied the actual service. I won't bore you with the actual service because it's kind of technical, but they actually fulfilled the service I needed and the whole technology part they actually made sure that my clients got billed every month. They got an invoice each month and all that.

So I could add this company and even though I had one client or if I had 100 clients, I would still only have to work one to two hours each month because all the billing, all the ordering, all of that was basically run by the website. All the current billing and all of that ran automatically. So that's possible with technology today. You can put all of this billing and all this receipt and all of that and automatically put it all together.

Ellen: One of the challenges I've had is I've got some clients who want to do service agreements with their customers and then bill the customer \$9.95 a month or whatever. The issue I've had with it is that it becomes this big accounting mess in the office when their credit card bounces and they're doing it all manually. So one way that I could get behind this approach is if we could actually make it automatic in such a way that it's truly automatic.

My issue with it has been yes, we'll bill your credit card every month, but it's a manual activity that takes too much time for \$9.95 when I'm spending more in accounting to get it handled. But that's the kind of repetitious activity that we could actually automate.

Rasmus: Yes. Also, I can give you an example with my own book. Of course I'm selling the book from Amazon, but I also have some fulfillments myself and I actually have a girl in the Philippines doing the book fulfillments for me. She goes in and orders each book as they come in and ships it out through my shopping system, basically.

Ellen: Do you use like Create Space for your book so there's a print on demand?

Rasmus: Yes, it's a print on demand.

Ellen: Okay. That's what we do, too.

Rasmus: So my girl goes into Create Space, orders the book and that is just billed to my credit card or my company card directly and then goes into my shopping system and marks the order as fulfilled. My shopping system will automatically send out all the receipts and all that to my customer and update them on the order saying now your order is on the way, you can expect it in a couple of days and all of that. Once they get my book they also get onto my newsletter list automatically, so they start getting my newsletter. Not a newsletter, but I follow up with them and give them some additional training on the stuff in the book. So there you have all the fulfillment basically going automatically and I don't even have to touch that.

Ellen: Do you have a recommendation to a customer relationship software that you're really fond of? I won't hold you to their performance, but do you have some that you like or do you want to talk about some of them?

Rasmus: Yes. I mean I used to use Zoho CRM because if you're not a techie like me it's really easy to get started with that. It's online and you just create an account and you're ready to go. It's actually free up to three users, I think it is. So for someone like me who is a bit cheap, that's perfect.

Ellen: You are cheap. I didn't know this about you.

Rasmus: No.

Ellen: You're frugal.

Rasmus: Yes, I am.

Ellen: But when you talk about the lifestyle thing, this is kind of circling back to what we started in the beginning. If you're after a lifestyle, part of it is creating more wealth. There is a lot to be said for creating less outgo. Sometimes we have so much stuff we're maintaining every month that that can be limiting to our freedom. Not only that you have this stuff to take care of, but you have stuff you have to maintain and buy. By pare stuff down and reducing your expenses you can make \$100,000 a year go a lot further, so I don't mean to discount that. There are always two sides of that income statement, there's the revenue and the expense and it makes sense to manage both. I appreciate that about you.

Rasmus: Yes and you know, Ellen, I do have two small kids and a girlfriend that doesn't want to work.

Ellen: She works plenty. We know what she does all day. I always laugh about that. I was talking to a friend of mine, one of the other experts, Ally Loprete, and she talked about bringing her business home to her family and that really works for her. I thought of you because while you can work from anywhere, you don't like to work at home all the time, do you?

Rasmus: No. Don't get me wrong. I love my kids and my family very much, but again, if you need to do something business wise or just send out a few emails it can be a little bit hard working from home. I tried that home office thing and it wasn't working for me. It could probably work for someone else, it didn't work for me.

My girlfriend came in sometimes with cookies, sometimes with a rat from the basement, whatever. My kids would come in and I had to play with them and all of that. It's great, but you don't get much work done. So I have this office five minutes from where I live. I can just walk over to the other side of the road and I have a small office there. That's where I'm actually recording this right now.

Ellen: That's so funny. That's my favorite line from our interview today. So, yeah, it worked from home, except for my girlfriend would interrupt me, sometimes with cookies and sometimes with a rat from the basement. Yes, that's when you say just give me a minute, hon. I've got to do this video. You put together a package for us, thank you, and, as you know dear listener, it's going to \$97. I completely worked on my experts to lay into this \$97 as much as I could possibly get them to offer and you put together a really terrific package. So would you mind describing it for us a little bit?

Rasmus: Absolutely. It's, basically, if you want to build these lifestyle businesses and if you want to go into more of the modeling part that we discussed because we only touched the surface here on the call. If you want to go into different business models and create your own lifestyle business then this is the program for you. Basically, it consists of hours and hours of me teaching you on

video on the steps that you need to go through and I can briefly touch on the content that is in there.

We'll start our working with the mindset that you need to have when you're building this lifestyle business, then we go into the whole business modeling part that we discussed and then we go into the actual creation of this business model. Next, we go into how we market these kinds of lifestyle businesses and we'll end up with some advanced strategies and some real cases for you.

I also have a ton of interviews in there with people who have already built lifestyle businesses so you don't only have to take my word for it or the way I'm doing stuff. Also, if you are interested in this outsourcing, I will also throw in my Outsourcing Course as bonus for this. I have an Outsourcing course also spanning several hours actually on video that can get in this.

Ellen: This is awesome. You're also going to make a little of your time available. I'm super excited about this.

Rasmus: Absolutely. Normally I charge \$67 a month and in this package we're going to create here you're going to get, first off, two months of access to the program. You will also get the Outsourcing Course that I normally charge \$197 for (so almost \$200 bucks for the Outsourcing Course) and you will get my book *The Lifestyle Business Rockstar* as an eBook download.

Ellen: Yes!

Rasmus: We discussed this, right? I'm not quite sure how many I can do of these, but at least for the first 20 people I guarantee you will also get a 30-minute strategy session with me so we can discuss your explicit situation that you have with your life and your business. So that's the Outsourcing Program, my eBook download and also 30 minutes of a strategy session with me for \$97 bucks.

Ellen: You are so wonderful and your perspective is so fresh and interesting. You're a world citizen and it's fun to have you on the call to expand our minds. You mentioned as you described that product that you start with the mindset. It's fascinating to me how many of our conversations during this Business Makeover 2014 have been about that. I mean once we create new thoughts and we set down old thoughts, you know drop the baggage of what's held us down and allow ourselves to think in bright, new, exciting ways, then everything changes. Wayne Dyer has a great quote. He says "Until you change, nothing will change for you. Once you change, everything changes." That's how it works.

I've enjoyed this conversation so much. I'm going to start the sexy outro music here in just a moment, Rasmus, so any parting thoughts for us today? I've enjoyed our conversation so much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Rasmus: I've enjoyed it, as well. It's always great to talk with you, Ellen, because you are such a spark of energy. If you want to get started with outsourcing, I would recommend that you visit a site called Fiverr.com. Fiverr.com with two R's at the end. That is absolutely crazy, people put up jobs that they want to do for \$5 bucks. There are some really crazy jobs out there, geeks as they call them, that you can buy for \$5 bucks.

So I've spent a lot of fivers in there, anything from wishing my girlfriend happy birthday with some kind of hand puppet. Some guy has to record a five-minute video with a hand puppet saying anything you want for \$5 bucks, or whatever, having a dancing hotdog, anything. Also, business related, they will put up a website for you for \$5 bucks. So if you want you to get started with outsourcing, you need to visit Fiverr.com and go crazy with your fivers.

Ellen: You know what, that's a good way to kind of lose your virginity with it, right? Come on, let's try some things. You're not going to put your fortune at risk. Let's just go have some fun and introduce ourselves to the world market in ways that people across the globe will help you make things happen in your lifestyle business. You are the best. Thank you so much, Rasmus. I enjoy you so much. Let's say goodbye, everyone.

Rasmus: Bye-bye and hope to see you all in Denmark or Thailand some day.

Ellen: Yes!