



Amanda Tress

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Les McKeown: Hi everybody. And welcome to another episode of 'Scale! with Predictable Success'. I'm Les McKeown, founder and CEO of Predictable Success. And today I'm absolutely delighted to welcome, not just a client, but a good friend, Amanda Tress, CEO of FASTER Way to Fat Loss. And you're going to hear a lot about FASTER Way in just a moment or two. Amanda is a member of our Mastermind Group here at Predictable Success. Amanda, welcome to the podcast.

Amanda Tress: Thank you, Les. I'm thrilled to be here.

Les McKeown: Well, I, I know your story and it's just incredible. And I know a lot of our listeners know your story, but many of them don't and I'd love to just start off by having you tell us a little bit about you, about Amanda Tress, your background, what prompted you to start FASTER. Tell us what it does and give us a potted history your business.

Amanda Tress: Absolutely. Thank you for asking. Well, I started the FASTER Way to Fat Loss specifically about five years ago and time truly does fly, but I'll back up even prior to starting the FASTER Way to Fat Loss program. I struggled myself with health issues. When I was younger, I was actually on blood pressure medication. As a teenager, I had blood sugar issues. Both of my sisters are still, unfortunately to this day, morbidly obese. I don't have the best genetics when it comes to health history. and, and when I was in college, I decided that I was going to take my health into my own hands, really take ownership. I did quite a bit of research about how to wean myself off of blood pressure medication, which at the time I'd been told I'd be on for the rest of my life. I had been active in sports, but my nutrition was atrocious.

Amanda Tress: I loved McDonald's. I loved sodas, anything unhealthy I was going to grab. My sisters, my family was the same way. In college I did a 180 when it came to my nutrition and then I started working out simply to maintain a healthy lifestyle versus only to play sports. I was able to really take care of my own health and wean myself off of medications immediately after doing so, and feeling world's better. I knew I had to tell others about what I had figured out. I knew I had to help others be healthy as well. So I became a trainer in college. I maintained a fitness business as a side hustle for several years after college, I entered a career in digital marketing. When I, I was in college, Facebook came out social media was becoming popular and I dove in headfirst and actually used social media through college to ramp up my own fitness business.



Amanda Tress: And, and I immediately saw it as a way to build a personal and professional brand. So after college, as I was in the digital marketing industry and career field, I was able to continue using what I learned on the digital marketing side to grow my own side hustle before having my second baby, who is actually now seven, I decided to step down from my full time digital marketing career. And I actually launched a digital marketing agency for female entrepreneurs in the fitness industry on the labor and delivery bed. I landed my very first client when I was in labor. I still distinctly remember that particular client. I had a meeting with her for the first time, five days after I delivered, I, I grew my digital marketing agency that year. This was again seven years ago. and it was very exciting. I grew that particular business fairly quickly, but what I found several years or a couple of few years ago is that although I could empower my digital marketing agency clients to leverage social media and lead magnets and sales funnels to grow their business.

Amanda Tress: I helped these individuals, these clients get eyeballs on their content, but yet the women and men who are, they were bringing into their fitness programs, weren't seeing results. It was probably a programming issue. So long story short, five years ago, I said, you know what, instead of simply helping women in initially their, their wellness program or their fitness, I'm actually going to also create the best program on the market and then build a certification around it so that my agency clients can become certified to run my program with their clients. They will be super affiliates for lack of a different term and, and we'll be able to grow and scale together. So that is what I did. I created the faster way to fat loss program. Five years ago, I started the program as a test with 11 clients. the 11 clients did a fantastic job.

Amanda Tress: They had incredible results. I then empowered those 11 clients to be micro influencers for the program. and then I built the certification, as I mentioned for my agency clients to complete. So they could run the FASTER Way to Fat Loss with their own fitness clients. And about two and a half years ago, after having my third baby, I decided to focus all in with the FASTER Way to Fat Loss, instead of maintaining agency clients, where you had other businesses and companies in addition to FASTER Way. And so in the past two and a half years, we've been able to grow from 1 million in gross revenue to about 55 million in gross revenue, which is very exciting. And we're not slowing down anytime soon, we are looking to establish scalability. And of course, I'm sure you've discussed that quite often Les :-). That's why I was drawn to working with you. What I feel we've done thus far is 'grown'. And I do want to scale, but we're still in a place where we cap registration. We close registration every month. we don't have what it takes to take on, you know, 100,000 new clients next month. For example, we are still getting all the systems and processes in place with your help.

Les McKeown: Well, that's just an incredible story. And, you know, the folks that don't, haven't met you, don't know you yet. I can just picture them. They're sitting and their hair is blown back on their head like in a wind tunnel. Cause here we have, you know, this period of time, college kids and 1 million to 55 million, which is just an incredible growth story. And to do that, you



know, and keep, your commitment to family, to your church is intense. You've done all that and remained incredibly normal,

Les McKeown: You know, approachable. you've got a vast span of attention. You've done so many things. What I'd love to hear is if you were to go back now, knowing what you know now back to the 1 million and look at that path, what has most surprised you? What's been challenging that you didn't think was going to be challenging? What was easier than you thought it was going to be? What's the journey been like compared to what you thought it was going to be like?

Amanda Tress: Oh my goodness. That is a fantastic question. And one that I haven't been asked yet before on an interview specifically, a podcast interview, the journey has been grueling. I am so glad I didn't know what the future would hold with this type of growth. When I first sought to grow quickly, we are the fastest growing company in all of Tampa Bay, which is where I reside. we just heard from the inc 5,000 yesterday that we are pretty high up on their list as well. which is... it's unique. Thank you. but growing quickly comes with its fair share of challenges. My biggest challenges have been in the way of staff challenges. I have absolutely stood in my own way when it comes to growth and scaling, because I do tend to be a bit of a control freak. I know that might be a shocker to you Les, you know, this lesson I'll share with the listeners.

Amanda Tress: I'm now pregnant with my fourth baby, but the business is, is really my fifth baby. You know, it's, it's, it's, my passion project and something I care so deeply about. So it is difficult to hire the right leaders specifically from the outside, you know, people who aren't just rising through the ranks within the company. only since last year, have I brought on a more substantial number of employees. We have close to 30 employees now. Last year at this time we had eight. we, we somehow continued growing even with only contractor around the country, everyone virtual for a series of many months as well. And now we are becoming just a little bit more, organized better with our org chart. Again, I owe, many, many things to you. I'm the typical, visionary entrepreneur who likes to just run my way up stairs instead of putting the systems and processes in place and finding the members who can make up the dream team. So, yes, it's been, it's been quite challenging. I'm so glad that I was ignorant about the challenges of growing a business, of this size. And now hopefully I'm a little bit more prepared for the \$100 million company, the \$500 million company, as we go,

Les McKeown: It's interesting. You just mentioning the, the leadership issues, you know, finding and developing great leaders. And, hasn't it been fascinating the degree to which in the Predictable Success Mastermind Group, that's just been a common theme to people with businesses of all types of organizations, of all types and sizes. You know, we had Jason on the podcast a while back - church environment, same issue, you know, I just had Russ, who, you know, on, on the podcast, same issue - developing the right people. And so many times you develop the people who are the right people on the bus for part of the journey, but then they're not the right people for the next stage of the journey. And that's, that's often the most difficult, right



Amanda Tress: It's excruciatingly painful. And I respect and love both Jason and Russ. And it's comforting to know that they struggle with many of the same issues. I think as a woman, as a female, it's even more difficult because the last thing I want is for someone to be upset with me or to have to lay a particular individual off. And I've had to make those difficult calls through the months and through the years. And, you know, those are the types of things that keep me up at night. I'm sure many listeners definitely relate with that.

Les McKeown: And particularly whenever those people, you know, they become part of the culture, you know, they're deeply embedded from the really early days. And they worked through, they went through so many of the early battles with you. And, you know, you've heard me said many times, I share it with people. A lot part of my job, unfortunately, is showing people what the journey has going to look like. And I tell folks all the time, you know, if you're committed to really getting to scalability, you're going to lose up to a third of your best people because they're wonderful people, but they don't want to go on that journey. They want to stay where they are. And it's the kinder thing to let them go. So, you know, you're not alone. I wanted to just open up for a second or two, I don't want to spend too long on it.

Les McKeown: I want to move on to the impact of the coronavirus - economic issues on your business and talk about those primarily. But something would like to just touch on for a second is you've built a, so much of your growth on social media. It's been an incredibly powerful tool that you've really used to the max, but it has its upsides and its downsides. And I know that it's been on occasions, it's been tough for you. And a lot of our listeners are, are women who are using social media a lot and facing some of those similar challenges. And you know what I'm talking about. It's that people aren't always nice out there. You want to talk a little bit about just how that hit you in your world and what coping mechanisms, defense, defense mechanisms you have built to help you navigate through that?

Amanda Tress: Yes, yes. I appreciate the power of social media. I've been in the digital marketing industry for many, many years, really, since Facebook came out, I've been leveraging it for business and for branding. However, I would love to have a company that I could run without ever checking social, like getting away with running my business without having to be on Instagram or having to be on Facebook and YouTube and Tik-Tok and all the things I would be a much happier person overall. Unfortunately, that's not the nature of how we've grown. We have leveraged the power of micro influencers specifically on Instagram. and as you mentioned, not everyone is kind and especially in the marketplace right now, people are on edge. They are highly sensitive, they are angry, they are bitter, they are fatigued and they are going to act out and they are going to act out or speak out against influencers, against people who seem to have all their stuff together.

Amanda Tress: and I've had to be careful about what I post when I post, why I post, how I post all through my career. But especially now, anything you put out there can be twisted. Something I



say on video or on Instagram could be the quickened to my career. and so it is a challenge and it's exhausting. One of our very first Mastermind get togethers. I was dealing with some online haters and there's really no better term. It's it's online trolls, online haters, people who have nothing better to do than to, posts from behind their phone screen or, or computer screen, negative criticisms or hate toward other people just because they are hurting themselves. They are projecting their issues and knew me. and I remember Jason said, please, don't stop sharing your story. He said, please don't stop, stop speaking your message.

Amanda Tress: And, you know, posting he's like people are going to come out of the woodwork and to criticize you in all of that, but you have to just block it out and he's like, don't read your messages. He said, hire someone to read your messages. I will say it has been one of the least favorite parts of, of my career is looking to see, you know, what people might have to say about me or faster way, or my family even, which is just atrocious. but you know, unhappy people hurt other people, hurt people, hurt people. and it's just something that I've had to continue to overcome. And I have developed a more thick skin, but it never becomes easy. It's never, it's never going to be enjoyable to see what such and such or so, and so has to say about, you know, this, this business or, or a person who is just trying to do good in the world. So, yeah, it's, it's an unfortunate reality. And I admire the fact that you, you just have to have consistently stuck with and, you know,

Les McKeown: FASTER Way to Fat Loss is very much Amanda Tress, and you're there, you're front and center and you take all of that on your shoulders. And, as I said, I have admired the way in which you've worked your way through it. That's what I, that I got to say, you know, as one of the older generation, I remember when the internet, web, whatever it was back then when it was just emerging, just out of being a, you know, an academic military thing. And we were just starting to, communicate the first ever browser. And that meant we could actually, you know, go look at something. I remember when the Amazon website had the worst logo you ever saw in your life. It was a horrible little graphic of the Amazon river. Anyway, I do remember this cartoon, really way back in the early days, iconic. And it stuck in my mind in dealing with all the stuff you're talking about. It's this guy, and you got to remember this as you know, very early on. It's clearly like two in the morning, he's on his computer pre laptop and his wife is standing at the door with a nightie, you know, or PJ's. She says 'What are you doing?' and he says 'Somebody on the internet is wrong!'.

Les McKeown: That genie's out of the jar and will never go back. So tell us a little bit about how the last four months have impacted FASTER Way to Fat Loss. And just one of the things I've been asking each of our guests just to reflect on, and obviously there's a broad range of the degree to which there's been an impact - a lot of your folks were already consuming your material from home. You get, on the other hand, you got a lot of folks who've got Gyms - tell us just, you know, what have been the big moving parts from Ute for you since March that have changed.



Amanda Tress: Yeah, absolutely. It's been an interesting few months. I'm now tired of the word unprecedented, because life is unprecedented growing a business, scaling a business is unprecedented, right You know, we've had some highs and lows highs would be the fact that listen, it is not a bad time to be in the digital fitness and nutrition space. People are in need of an at home workout program to follow. We provide an at home workout. we've been doing so for years and years. And so we're not new to the game. We aren't just simply a company that said, we're going to now within two weeks launch our virtual option. We had already been working through that and establishing ourselves in the industry as a virtual option. you know, we absolutely have been dealing with challenges when it comes to understanding how COVID would impact our bottom line, right from the get go.

Amanda Tress: My team immediately decided to make some strategic decisions about staffing and, those were tough decisions. You know, some of the hardest decisions of my life are related to staffing and finances. And so, you know, we made some moves and I'm very grateful that we made those moves to feel more confident moving forward, you know, as we considered the coming months and, and wondering if we were going to see a lot of cancels, one thing that we did as a team is we immediately shared with our community that if someone was struggling due to COVID, if they lost their job, if their spouse lost their job, they could join our program for free for a couple of few months, or they could maintain their membership for a few months. So we still have many, many people who are enjoying free access to the app.

Amanda Tress: they will be billed soon - we'll remind them, of course, but, you know, we felt that was important to do. We never want financial reasons to prevent someone from being able to transform their lives physically. So we offered that particular scholarship option. Additionally, we offered a special round of the FASTer Way to Fat Loss for healthcare heroes. That was an extremely exciting round. We offered round two teachers at a discount. We said, listen, if you are teacher right now, and you're struggling with virtual school and all of this, we want to it give you something that you can control that you can enjoy. And that is the FASTer Way to Fat Loss. We also offered scholarships to gym owners or wellness professionals who are out of work due to COVID. And we brought on about 220 new certified coaches into our community via scholarships, which was exciting.

Amanda Tress: We've continued to grow our member base through this time. We aren't earning income hand over fist, but we'll continue to see a small incremental growth, which is always my goal. I know Russ, you know, has had a bit of a different situation with just extreme, exciting, incredible growth. that hasn't been our reality. We're just kind of, you know, moving forward and, remaining stable and doing the very best that we can during this time, I do feel that our community members are looking for, or needing something to, to bring positivity to their day. And we have been that for them, our 30 minute workouts, our meal plans, our challenges have truly been encouraging. and many clients have said, Amanda, if it wasn't for FASTer Way to Fat Loss, I would have really struggled during this time. But thank goodness for the community here that continue to lift me up, over the past few months.



Les McKeown: And I'm quite sure that what you just described of has piqued a number of folks' interest in the service offerings that you make. And we'll obviously link on the show page to FASTer Way so people can go look, but tell us a little bit about, you've got at least two avatars. There are the folks who actually let's call them the retail folks that consume your programs. You know, they're at home when they're doing the workouts, following nutrition, et cetera. And then you've got what you call your, micro-influencers - talk a little bit about those and any other avatars, a lot of our folks are like me business model nerds. And we'd love to hear, you know, what's your business model? What are you selling into?

Amanda Tress: Yeah. First, let me share the business model, which is very simple. And then I'll speak about the audiences or the avatars. Our business model entails that you, as a consumer, as a client, go through an initial six week orientation program of the fast way to fat loss, we pair intermittent fasting with carb cycling effective 30 minute workouts with a strategic food log. You go through the initial six week orientation program have incredible results. And then you transition seamlessly into our VIP membership. The VIP membership is \$79 per month. That's on auto bill. It's recurring revenue. Once you go through the FASTer Way to Fat Loss six week orientation program and transition into the VIP membership, you are eligible to apply for our coach certification. Now we only open up the coach certification three times per year. We actually are opening up the certification in July.

Amanda Tress: We'll have enrollment open for a limited time and to a limited number of individuals in a marketplace where we could have 70,000 coaches, we choose to have 2,000. We do not want to oversaturate the marketplace with reps. It's just not in our business plan. It's not part of our vision. We look to bring on the best of the best. You have to go through a fairly extensive interview process. At this time, you need a referral letters. You need a video interview as well. and so we are passionate about bringing on people who will represent the brand. Well. we have another track in addition to the certified coach track, where you can apply to become an influencer. So this is for an individual who, for example, is a fashion blogger on Instagram. If you're a fashion blogger on Instagram, I will not hire you into my certified coach community because you do not have a fitness background.

Amanda Tress: So you can apply to be an influencer for the brand. Now you still have to go through the process to be approved. We do not comp affiliates or comp influencers, celebrities, or anything of the, like to join the FASTer Way and promote it. You must pay for the FASTer Way. You must go through, see incredible results and then apply and be accepted into my influencer program. So we're very specific and exclusive about both the certified coach community and the influencer track. And then as you mentioned, we have the consumer track. So many of our active participants, simply VIP clients in the, and we have close to 30,000, if not, a little bit more active clients right now, total.



Les McKeown: Very cool. And, your thoughts for the future. Amanda... let's talk a little bit about FASTER Way and Amanda Tress - to most people I would say five years down the road, but I know for you, five years is like six lifetimes away. Let's say just a couple of years from now. What are your hopes and dreams? What would you like to see?

Amanda Tress: Oh, great question. Well, first and foremost for Amanda Tress, the most important priority in my future is to deliver a healthy baby girl in October. So that is number one on the priority list. We have five initiatives for the company that we are pursuing. Many of which have taken a bit of a pause through this time. We are going to be ramping up our men's programming right now we serve women, and we're looking to really expand into the male markets, which will be powerful are our male clients who do come through right now, which is a very small group of primarily spouses. They see incredible results. So now it's a matter of starting to market to men and finding some male staffers who can help us really take that program to the next level. We are looking to expand into meal kits.

Amanda Tress: So when you're on the app and you see our, our food log or meal plan for the week, you'll be able to click and buy a meal kit that will be delivered to your door. That will be a private label or white label type scenario. We're also expanding into functional medicine. We have health coaches who are now meeting with our members, via health coach packages we have at home lab testing that we recommend in addition to supplements. So we'll be ramping up that vertical in 2021 and 2022. And we have some pretty aggressive plans for our apparel lines. We have found through COVID specifically that our ladies love to online shop. So we are going to solve that problem and provide solutions for our ladies who are looking for better workout gear, cute items to wear around. So that'll be a very fun initiative as well.

Les McKeown: And athleisure has just been accelerated and credibly. I can't see us going backwards in that regard. Sadly, we've seen the other side of it. So many what we might call conventional clothing retailers that just, you know, Brooks Brothers yesterday - gone. And just one of any number, athleisure is here to stay. It was always a growing part, right? But not, it's just enormous. Well, Amanda, I'm gonna hold you to come back in two years time and tell us where you're at, because I know one of two things. One is it will not be anything like the picture you've just painted -

Les McKeown: - you're too curious, too intellectually diverse. And secondly, it will, whatever it is, it'll be an incredible success. It's just been a pleasure getting to know you over the last period of time. Thank you for coming on the podcast.

Amanda Tress: Thank you, Les. It was my pleasure.