

The Art of Passive Income Podcast With Mark Podolsky and Scott Todd

Today's Guest: Jacob Morgan

<u>Transcript</u>

Mark: Hey, it's Mark Podolsky the Land Geek with your favorite niche real estate website <u>www.TheLandGeek.com</u> and today's guest is a futurist, the future of work. But before we talk to our guest I would be remiss if I didn't introduce my co-host, Six Sigma, the man that automates literally everything, Scott Todd from <u>ScottTodd.net</u>, <u>LandModo.com</u> and most importantly if you're not automating your Craigslist and your Facebook postings <u>PostingDomination.com/TheLandGeek</u>. You can always make more money but Scott you will agree, you can't get more time.

Scott: You cannot get more time Mark. How are you?

Mark: I'm great. I'm great. I'm really excited to talk to our guest about future.

Scott: The future is here man.

Mark: The future is here and it's the future of work and it is something that I think is really important. So let's talk to Jacob Morgan from <u>TheFutureOrganization.com</u>. If you don't know who Jacob Morgan is this guy having terrible jobs working for other people he went off and went off on his own to research and explore how work and everything we know about it is

changing. Today Jacob Morgan is one of the world's leading authorities on the future of work, employee experience, and how the workplace is changing. He is a best-selling author, keynote speaker, and futurist who advises business leaders and organizations around the world. Jacob's work has been endorsed by the CEOs of Cisco, T-Mobile, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Schneider Electric, Best Buy, KPMG, AARP, Pandora, and many others.

His latest book, *The Employee Experience Advantage: How to Win the War for Talent by Giving Employees the Workspaces they Want, the Tools they Need, and a Culture They Can Celebrate* analyzes over 250 global organizations to determine how to create an organization where people genuinely want, not need to show up to work. Jacob Morgan, you are big deal, welcome to the podcast.

Jacob: Thanks for having me. That's quite an intro.

Mark: Well, I think you've earned it my friend.

Jacob: Thank you.

Mark: Let's rewind the tape and let's go back to that first, or I actually I should have said, that last terrible job working for other people. How does the light bulb go off and you become Jacob Morgan Best Selling Author and futurist?

Jacob: The light bulb was actually a cup of coffee that the CEO asked me to go get him after he was running late for a meeting. So he runs out of his office, he hands me a \$10 bill and he says, "Hey go get me a cup of coffee and get yourself a latte as well." That was a big light bulb moment, I guess you could say a lightning bolt moment and at that point, I realized that working for other people sucks and I worked too hard in school to have to go get somebody coffee and I was immediately looking at other things I can do.

Mark: Scott Todd what do you think?

Scott: It sounds like the CEO picked the wrong guy to ask for coffee.

Jacob: I suppose I should be thanking him now because had it not been for that moment who knows what I would be doing. So, it's one of those bittersweet stories.

Mark: So, Jacob, tell us a little bit about your parents and what they think about all this.

Jacob: Well now thankfully they are much more supportive than they were before. But my parents are from the Republic of Georgia and I'm talking about former USSR Georgia not Georgia the state. And so I grew up with this sort of mentality of work hard, go to school, climb the corporate ladder. So, when my parents find out that I was quitting everything and moving to the Bay Area where I was originally in Los Angeles you can imagine that they were a little hesitant at first telling me that it was going to be a bad idea. The cost of living in the Bay Area is very expensive, I was going to struggle. But now my parents are much more understanding of what I do. It's been eight to ten years so they kind of understand the move I made and why I did it.

Mark: Yeah. Scott can you imagine Cole, your daughter saying to you, "Hey, the CEO just asked me to get him a cup of coffee and I'm quitting and I want to follow my dreams." As a parent, you would worry. You would be like, "Well, come on you've got to pay your dues." Wouldn't that be a typical parental thing to say?

Scott: It would. You know what Mark I think no matter what age you are, parents... Like I know my parents when I was basically saying, "Okay, I'm done. I'm going to do real estate." They were like, "Okay you don't need a job? Don't you want to work for a company?" "Ah, no." I think that the time is different too, but I think it will be kind of a shock to me too.

Mark: Yeah. Jacob do you have kids?

Jacob: I do. I have a seven-month-old daughter.

Mark: Okay, so if your seven-month-old daughter did the same exact thing that you did, how would you respond?

Jacob: Well, you know that's a good question. It wasn't just the coffee. It was the fact that I had an hour and a half commute to work every day. It was the fact that I went to school and graduated with a degree in economics and psychology. I worked my ass off, graduated with honors and I was doing drone work. I was basically lied to because I was told I was going to be doing a lot of exciting and fun projects, traveling, meeting with entrepreneurs etc. and none of that happened. So, if my daughter came to me in a similar situation where she was told by whoever interviewed her that she would be doing one thing and it ended up being another and it was putting a toll in her life and she was unhappy and stressed out I would say get the hell out of there. That's what I did.

Mark: I love it. I love it. I would like to think that I would be able to put my worry aside and let my children search for happiness and not sort of impose my anxiety on them but it's hard. I can imagine your parents, kind of freaking out about it. But now today it's all that hard work for Jacob Morgan has actually really paid off in a big sort of profound way and not just monetarily, right? You are actually making an impact in the world Jacob. So, what that transition like where you went from corporate lackey to entrepreneur?

Mark: Not easy. I worked probably, and I still probably work harder and more than pretty much anybody I know but it was easier at the time because I was single. I didn't have any outstanding debts. I didn't have a mortgage. So, the income that I needed to survive was quite low and so for me, I took jobs on Craigslist. I started doing all sorts of weird projects, writing articles for \$15 an article, doing search engine optimization work, online marketing stuff, pretty much anything I could do to prove to myself that I didn't have to work for anyone else and I would crazy hours. I was up till 2:00-3:00 in the morning pretty much every night trying to figure out a way to build my brand, build my business, get my name out there and get myself known.

As I started to see success, that motivated me even more. And I just started to see more success, it pushed me even more. Then there was a point in time where I started to see a lot of trolls pop up, people creating fake Twitter accounts about me, leaving me angry comments on my website, messaging my wife on Twitter in the middle of the night while I was sleeping, trying to tell her to break up with me. So, I had all sorts of interesting experiences and stories and every time something like that happens... I'm, first of all, an extremely competitive person, I don't lose well. So, all of that stuff kept pushing me to keep doing what I'm doing.

Mark: Scott Todd?

Scott: What was the biggest hurdle? You are here today but what was that first leap? You didn't just leave the corporate job and become the speaker and author. What was the hardest piece of getting that foundation to kind of build your overnight success for lack of a better word?

Jacob: Well, I was doing both at the same time. So, while I had a full-time job I was also doing side projects and once the side projects were bringing in enough money where I could cover my expenses, I switched over to that. So, there was a while where I was working completely crazy hours. One of the other hardest things about being an entrepreneur is the stuff that nobody ever tells you like the boring stuff, the mundane stuff. You need to

get good at taxes, you need to learn how you create proposals, you create templates for yourself, build a logo. You have to do all sorts of little stuff that is far outside of your skill set and your comfort zone.

You can be the best speaker in the world, you can be the best marketer or the best engineer whatever it is but when you become an entrepreneur, when you go off on your own you also need to be well versed at all these other things that you had no idea you would need to do. Learning about all these things was challenging and as my brain continued to grow the other big hurdle was learning to give control and let other people do things for me. So, hiring a virtual assistant was a big challenge for me. I was like, "What? I've got to give her access to my email? She's going to have access to that? It's crazy." So, letting go and not being such a control freak was another big, big challenge for me. It still is.

Mark: I feel the same way at points. There is times where I let go and then it works and it's like the greatest thing ever but that point of letting go it's kind of like bungee jumping, you know? You know you are not going to die but you are not so sure you are not going to die. Scott, do you have the same feeling when you hire a new VA and you are training them and then you've got to give that last password out and you just don't know?

Scott: Well, what's funny is see I always ease into with VA's. I always kind of like ease into it, I give them little assignments and then they kind of graduate. I don't just like, "Here is everything you need." I try to make it so that they are not going to destroy the place even if they try to. So, I'm not giving them the whole key yet but I think that it is scary when... Like a great example, Mark today I had a VA that does accounting work for me. She actually emails me this whole conversation she had with a customer. She's like, "Hey what do you think about this?" First, I'm like how did he even get her email address because it is an internal email address and what happened was she had sent to him an invoice for something. So, he's having a whole conversation with her and at that point, you are like, "Oh, well it took a totally different spin." But it is kind of nerve racking when you see something like that.

Mark: Yeah, absolutely. Jacob, I know you are sick of this question but I have to ask it. Are you ready?

Jacob: Of course.

Mark: What's the future of work?

Jacob: You know, that is one the biggest questions that people always have. A simple way that I always respond to that is there many futures of work. The big common assumption that we always make is that A, there is one single future of work and B, the future of work is something that happens to us instead of being something that we actually create. So there are many potential scenarios for what the future can look like. This is part of the job of what a futurist is, is to be able to help organizations not be surprised by what the future might bring.

So we take something like AI and automation for example. I can't tell you in the future every human is going to be replaced by a robot. I don't know that. That is one potential scenario. That is one potential future that might happen. Another one is that plenty of new jobs will be created and humans won't get automated. A third potential scenario is that ... You know the White House for example just recently made an announcement that they are not worried about automation or AI for the next 50 or 100 years which is a completely ignorant thing for them to say. But another potential scenario is that the government is going to block any potential AI and automation developments that happen.

So my job is essentially to work with the organizations and say, "Look these are potential options and scenarios for what might happen and we need to be prepared and have a plan for all three. By the way what is the future that you would like to see happen and how do we work towards building that?" So when I hear the question of what is the future of work it's not really something that I can predict or answer. My response is always there are several futures, we need to pick the one that we would like to see come to fruition and build towards that one.

Mark: That's a great answer. I have to ask a question about *The Employee Experience Advantage* and I know the book just came out and you have analyzed over 250 global organizations to determine how to create an organization where people generally want to work. Jacob Morgan, of the 250 that you analyzed, if you had to dust off your resume today, where would you submit? What three organizations of the ones that you analyzed would you submit your own resume and why?

Jacob: I would not submit my resume to any of them. Interestingly enough I have been offered many jobs since I have been off on my own, fairly prestigious jobs at various global organizations and I always turn them down. A, because I'm doing quite well on my own and B, there is something to be said about having freedom and flexibility to, well as you guys know, control the life and build the life that you want.

Mark: I know but let's just pretend.

Jacob: All right, all right, alright.

Mark: Yeah, I know. I know it's not a realistic question but just so that we know. Like okay not maybe for Jacob Morgan but if someone out there was looking a great organization to sort of model their own organization.

Jacob: So, some of the highest scoring organizations I will phrase it that way, they were 15 organizations that scored well out of the 252. So that alone gives you some context around how screwed up the corporate world is. Is that only 6% of the companies did a good job of the employee experience rankings. Some of them were Facebook, Cisco, Google, LinkedIn, Riot Games the popular gaming company scored quite well. Airbnb was another one and Microsoft and eXtensia were two others if I didn't already mention those. So those are all great organizations that scored highly across culture, technology, and physical space. As much as I love all of them and I have worked with all of them I wouldn't take a full-time job working for any of them.

Mark: Okay fair enough.

Scott: What makes these companies the ones that you've just named, like what is it...? You just kind of said three criteria, was it work, space, technology and?

Jacob: Culture.

Scott: Culture, okay. What is it about these companies that becomes kind of like that best in class or that global best in class that allows them to stand out? And why are more companies not doing that?

Jacob: That is another very common question that people ask. Not to sound corny but these are organizations that they care. These are organizations who go above and beyond investing in perks to actually redesigning workplace practices around their people.

So, it's one thing to go to an organization, let's say you have two companies: company A and company B. Company A you commute to and from an office. You sit in a cubicle. People are taking credit for your work. There is a lot of bureaucracy. You are using technologies that looked like they were designed in the 80s and 90s. But at the same time, you get free food. At the same time, you get access to various training programs. You get yoga on site, massages. A mechanic comes on site to change the oil in your car.

Then you have another organization and the other organization they don't have as many if these perks but you are treated well. You have modern relevant technologies. The annual employee review is gone and is replaced by something that's a little bit more catered to the year that we live in. People aren't taking credit for your work. You have managers that are supportive. You have a flexible work environment. You have more accountability and say in how your work gets done. You have more of a voice in the company.

Most people would prefer to work for company B because company B has actually redesigned work practices around you the individual. You might not have free food. You might but you might not. You might not have yoga, but the core workplace practices have changed. Most organizations today in the world are very obsessed with this short-term idea of, "Let's give employees perks so that they shut up and keep working." It's much harder for an organization to say, "We've got a bigger longer-term problem here and we need to focus on that." That's why you have some great organizations and many that are not.

Mark: Scott Todd worked for a Fortune 300 organization.

Jacob: I'm very sorry to hear that.

Scott: Yeah, me too

Mark: So Scott which organization was your organization, was it more like A or more like B?

Scott: Well it pivoted when leadership was kind of changed, right? The company that I worked for, the leadership that I worked under for the most time was really about building technology, more so for customer facing issues than for the staff. The staff kind of worked on the stuff that's from the 80s. I mean, that's true. There was a huge investment in employees. This company took the top cut employees worldwide on trips and invested in true meetings for educational experiences. There was no free food but this whole thing was like, "Hey let's educate and empower our employees." I got a lot of benefits from that and you could see the benefits to me as an employee.

As the new leadership came in his pivot was, "Hey we are not going to do these trips and we are not going to do the employee education and we are stopping that immediately. We are going to pivot and start focusing on kind of our employee facing technology." The feeling when that pivot happened was not very good. We spent a lot of time building a culture that kind of with leadership just crashed almost immediately. That company I don't think it's still back financially from... I know it's not back financially from where it was. It performed much better when that emphasis was on the employee and not let's build it for systems or other pieces.

Mark: Yeah. It's heartbreaking to kind of go through that.

Scott: That stock is down 85%. That's the impact.

Jacob: I also think the reality, unfortunately, is that most organizations and leaders who represent them are cowards. It takes a special kind of person to go in front of stockholders, shareholders, in front of your company, in front of your management team and commit to creating a place where people want to show up. That's a hard thing to do. It's much easier to be the coward that says, "I'm going to keep things the way they are. I'm going to collect my big bonus. I will be here for only a couple of years and then I'm going to leave and to hell with this place."

The reality is that I think that most organizations we have done an excellent job of creating the coward factory, where not only are the managers and the executives there, are cowards, but so are a lot of the employees who work there because that is the environment that we create. We want people to shut up and not ask any questions and to do their monotonous job over and over again. Those are the organizations that we are going to see continuing to struggle. That's what we have seen with companies like Sears. That's what we have seen with organizations like Blockbuster and it's what we continue to see with plenty of other companies today.

Mark: It's really interesting.

Scott: I read an article and I forgot the exact rate, the exact number but I kind of chuckled at it because what it is said was back in the last century the lifespan of a Fortune 500 company was, I forgot the exact number, 50 years. The lifespan of a Fortune 500 company today is 15 years so like you will see a lot more turnover in that Fortune 500. You will see these companies that were once very large crumble a lot faster, Sears, these companies that are no longer ... Sears is circling the drain I think but...

Jacob: Hey, and S&P 500. Those on the S&P 500 those have been shrinking as well, Fortune 100 like you said shrinking. Look let's be honest these companies deserve to disappear. If you... There is no nice way to say it. These companies are organizations that deserve to not be in existence. The

same is true in a relationship; if you do not treat your spouse well hey you deserve to be alone. Nobody deserves to deal with any kind of abuse that you are going to give them. So if you don't treat your people well, you don't treat your spouse well, you should not be surprised when you are single or when people don't want to work for you.

Scott: Yeah I agree. The other thing that I really as an employee of that A example that we had one of the things that I thought was really interesting was the fact that we did quarterly, we called them pulse surveys where it was like the health of the employee. It was 10 questions that we answered. It was a big initiative, we want everybody answering these 10 question. It was on a scale of one to five and you were shooting for best in class or world class which is a 4.0 or higher.

There was a lot of emphasis put around, "Hey, how do we create an organization that's better from the employee's standpoint or view?" I'm telling you day one of the new regime, gone. "We don't care about the employees." I'm telling you, it is heartbreaking and it is painful when you see this culture literally just get dumped. I agree. I think if companies can't be relevant to their employees they probably won't be relevant for much longer either.

Jacob: Yup, and you as an employee everybody needs to make a decision like you clearly did that you don't want to be part of that and you are going to leave that environment and go do something else. For some employees, it's worth for them to battle it out and try to change the company from the inside and for others, it's worth for them to leave. So it's one of those things where everyone needs to take a step back and if you are working for an unpleasant organization is it worth the battle to have and make that choice.

Mark: So Jacob, I have got a question. It's kind of a personal question. I've got a buddy who hates his job. He's in a role that he doesn't like and he's kind of a fairly young guy. I think he's 30, right? He wants to be a developer but he is in a support role right now and he's just miserable. He's been miserable for a while but he is also living month to month. What advice would you give this guy to get out of that situation? Where the problem is that he is drained by the job so he doesn't have the energy to look for another job nor does he think he has the resume to get the job that he wants. What advice would you give him?

Jacob: Quit, live with your parents for a while and build up that resume. There is, unfortunately, sometimes you have to take a step back in order to take two steps forward. A lot of times people will either stay in jobs that aren't a good fit or they will take projects that are not a good fit because their mentality is that they want to keep up with their current lifestyle, they want to have things the way there are. Unfortunately, you only have so many hours in a day and so much effort you could put in a day. So if all of your time and effort is spent at a job that is sucking the life out of you or working in a project that is sucking the life out of you there is no time or effort that you are able to put towards something that you want to see come to fruition. Sometimes what you have to do is cut away the bad parts so that you can focus on the good parts.

Now there are some people who can do both at the same time. I mean what I did. I had a shitty job working for somebody else and at that same time, I was using every spare moment that I had trying to build up a profile for myself so that I could then later take a job that I wanted. So you've got to decide what the best course of action is for you. For me my backup plan was if everything goes to hell, I'm going to move back in with my parents. I lived with my parents for a while, while I built up my skill sets to be able to go off on my own.

So if I were this person I would say you have two choices. Well, three actually. You stay at your crappy job and stop complaining about it. Choice number two is, you quit this job and you take a step back, move in with your parents for a little while. Take a deep breath, distress a little bit and build up a profile for yourself in the area that you want or C which is the hardest option is you do both at the same time. So you have that job that you don't like that pays your bill and covers your expenses and in your spare time you go out and you build this brand for yourself.

Do a couple of project at discounted rates, find things on Craigslist, build a website that you can show off to others and then look for those types of roles and opportunities that you can get. But none of these options are... How should you say rosy? None of them are cheerful, everything is going to be fine. Whichever option you pick it's going to suck for a little while until you can go in the direction that you want to go in and that's just the reality.

Mark: All right, I love it. Scott any more questions for Jacob before we go to the tip of the week?

Scott: No, I think we are good.

Mark: I think we are good. I think we are good. Although, you know what I would like to know Jacob, what do you believe about the future of work that other people think is crazy?

Jacob: Well, so we are very obsessed in general with this idea of AI, robots and automations. So one of the things that I still believe is that even in that kind of a world no organization on this planet can survive without people yet every organization in the world can survive without technology. Technology is a great thing to have but you can survive without technology.

So even in a world where we have AI and automation and all these wonderful tools and technologies you still need to think about people, you still need to think about talent. That conversation is often times very lost in the discussions we are having around the future of work. We are very much obsessed with tech and AI and losing our job and nobody even talks about the actual humans, the actual people that are still dominating the workforce.

Mark: You know while you were talking Siri and Alexa both threw rocks at my monitor so it's weird to have that happen.

Jacob: No, they do that stuff. As much as I love Siri, well actually I hate Siri but I love the Amazon Echo. As much as I love the Amazon Echo you still need... You guys work with VA's, with assistants what not, there is something to be said about having a human that you can engage with to a point where they can kind of relate and empathize and do the things that... It's almost like you feel that they can read your mind sometimes. We are not getting to that point for AI and software automation at least in the near future.

Mark: Not in our lifetime you don't think.

Jacob: Well, not in our lifetime. A lot of predictions say by 2045 we are going close to replicating the human brain but most of these AI and automation discussions tend to focus on the next five to ten years and I don't think in the five to ten years period we are going to have that level of AI.

Mark: All right, well, now is the time we are going to put you on the spot and Jacob your mentorship has been amazing but I'm going to ask you for one more last tip. A website, a resource, a book, something actionable where the Art of Passive Income listeners can go right now improve their businesses, improve their lives, what have you got?

Jacob: Well, there are a couple of things. If it's a piece of actionable advice that you can take, it's not a website specifically but it's an action that you can do. If it's at your company and you have a full-time job the best piece of actionable advice that I can give you is to speak up. It's to have a voice inside of your company, participate in beta programs around workplace

initiatives if they have them. If they are internal collaboration tools that your company deploys, use them. Build your own personal brand inside of your company and outside.

If you are working in an organization and you are unhappy best piece of actionable advice is simply go start small and create a profile on a site like <u>Upwork.com</u> or <u>Catalent.com</u> or <u>Freelancer.com</u> and see if you are able to make or to generate some sort of income on the side in addition to the full-time work that you are doing and see how it goes. I think a lot of us are very much obsessed with reading things, looking at things, talking about things, and not as much actually doing things. So best piece of actionable advice is, stop talking and start doing.

Mark: I love it. I love it. Scott Todd, what is your tip of the week?

Scott: All right Mark, I would like for you to check out this website. It's called Co, C-O, Schedule.com.

Mark: I know CoSchedule.com very well.

Scott: Oh man. It's a marketing ... Well, if you know it maybe you should just tell us about it.

Mark: You can tell Jacob. He probably doesn't know because he's not geeky like me.

Scott: It is marketing... How do I explain it? It is a marketing kind of calendar and it brings in all your content marketing, your social media marketing, all your marketing projects, your blog management all onto one platform. You can write your blog post from there. You can send them out to social media. You kind of manage this whole like content empire right from this one dashboard. and it also does do some automated marketing for you, so kind of cool.

Mark: I think it's really cool and actually on the webinar that I gave, I actually talk about <u>CoSchedule.com/Headline-Analyzer</u> as a way to create really compelling headline for your Craigslist ads. So I think CoSchedule is great. Another competitor is <u>MeetEdgar.com</u> which is also great. Jacob, have you heard of CoSchedule and MeetEdgar?

Jacob: I have heard both of those, yes. Even though I do a lot of speaking and advising for organizations part of my job is to keep building a brand for myself. I use things like Infusionsoft. I am constantly looking at ways to optimize Facebook ads for content that I create. I am constantly looking at

all these different technologies and tools that I can use for my team to improve the way that they are working. So I am familiar with MeetEdgar and CoSchedule. I can't say I use either of them but maybe I will revisit both of them.

Mark: Yeah, yeah and also friends don't let friends write crappy headlines. You can download their ultimate Power Words worksheet as well so very cool. Sorry guys but my tip of the week is the best one because it is to learn more about Jacob Morgan at <u>TheFutureOrganization.com</u>. Check out the latest book *The Employee Experience Advantage*. Jacob this has been great. It really has been. I want to thank you. So are we good?

Jacob: I'm grateful that you guys brought me on and I appreciate the plug for the book and the website. Yeah, unless you guys have other questions for me I am just grateful that you guys thought of me to bring me on. It's not a topic that I get to talk about frequently. Most of the time my day is spent looking at the future of XYZ and so talking about the entrepreneurial aspect, the building your personal brand aspect, are things that I'm really passionate about but I don't frequently get to talk about so this was a refreshing discussion for me.

Mark: All right, fantastic, fantastic. Were there any questions we should have asked you that we didn't?

Jacob: Oh men, that you should have asked me? No, I don't think so but if you can think of one right now go for it.

Mark: Well we will just have you back on if that's the case.

Jacob: There you go.

Mark: Scott, are we good?

Scott: We are good. We are good Mark.

Mark: All right, all right, so I want to remind the listeners the only way we are going to get the quality of guests like a Jacob Morgan from <u>TheFutureOrganization.com</u> to come on this podcast is if you do us three small favors. You've got to subscribe, you've got to rate and you've got to review the podcast. Send us a screenshot of that review to <u>Support@TheLandGeek.com</u>. We are going to send you for free the \$97 Passive Income Launch kit. Today's podcast is sponsored by PaymentGeek.io, automate your payments, manage your borrowers, all

within one beautiful software experience, PaymentGeek.io. All right, are you ready Scott?

Scott: Let's go.

Mark: One, two, three.

Mark and **Scott:** Let freedom ring.

[End of Transcript]