



# Episode 95: Pastoring MarketPlace Professionals Part 1

**Featuring:** Mingo Palacios & Pete Sanchez & Robert Cortes

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## Transcript:

Mingo Palacios: Hey, welcome to the PD Podcast. My name is Mingo, the host, and this particular set of conversations – it's three parts; this is going to be Part 1 of 3 – is all about how to approach and to hear and understand business professionals that may be amongst your ministry.

Here's what I want you to pay close attention to: I want you to listen to the perspectives from both of our guests. I think it's valuable. It's something you can't graze over or fast forward through. You've got to hear the perspectives from each of these guys as they try to articulate where they've been in their walk with Jesus, and then as members of church. There's some definite gold inside of this conversation, but it's going to require your patience. Don't be rushing

to the point. You've got to listen and then apply what it looks like in your own world, with the people that Jesus has brought to your table.

I hope you enjoy the conversation. I'll talk to you guys soon.

Hey everybody, welcome to the PD Podcast. My name is Mingo, your host, and as always, we're trying to create conversation and awareness about things in your ministry or things in your church that maybe you don't know about, or things that you've yet to implement. Today we're going to be talking about how to steward the business professionals that you might have in your church – maybe that you're aware of or that you're unaware of.

Today I've got two people in studio. I've got the always everfaithful Robert Cortes, RebelFish Local and entrepreneur in every sense of the word. You know him as a personality if you listen to any of our other episodes.

But today, Pete Sanchez, across the table from me, Godcentered entrepreneur in the business world of real estate and also made quite an impact in network marketing. That's actually how I first got to know you, way back in the day when we were in young adult ministries. They were like, "This guy Pete Sanchez straight murdered the network marketing world."

Crazy, like a decade later, we're sitting across the table from one another. Now I'm occupying the chair of senior pastor in a church that has lots of business professionals. As I've had a ton of grace in my life with people like Robert, who have said, "Hey Mingo, don't just paint me in one stroke. Don't put me as a peg in one spot." There's

lots that we can come to the table with as business leaders, as entrepreneurs, as professionals who also walk with Jesus.

My ask today is, can we give pastors out there, ministry leaders out there, some key insights on how to be in ministry together with business professionals and entrepreneurs in ways maybe not that every person naturally thinks about? Because I'll say it first – everyone just thinks, “I want to make sure the guy making the most money at my church is signed up on auto-tithe.” [laughter] Everybody defaults to that, and I think that's a huge miss.

I do think there's obedience in tithing. I think Scripture is clear on it. I'm of the belief that you can't throw the Old Testament out. You've got the tenth, the tithe. You've also got Jesus talking about it in the New Testament, and you've got God saying “test me.” So this is clear theology. I believe in tithing.

But I also think there's a heartbeat of generosity that every person was built with because they're made in the image of God, and God is a generous God. So whether you've got a lot or a little, God calls us to be generous, and I think that people miss the total person when we come into contact with a business professional and entrepreneur, somebody who has had a great career in business, and they think “hopefully they give money.” I just think it's a huge miss.

So, welcome to the podcast. That's the problem. The solution is going to be from both of your vantage points of what it looks like to be in ministry and how you've seen the Lord utilize your own expertise in ministries that you've been a part of. Welcome to the podcast, Pete. Welcome to the podcast, Robert. Glad you guys are here. Pete, start us off.

Pete Sanchez: Super humbled to be here, guys. I want to thank you guys for this opportunity. We've known each other since 2006, 1825 Ministry. Very, very humbled to be here because when I saw people like you, Danny Camelot, that was when I was coming into the faith, and I was like, man, if I just had 10% of these guys' faith, that's awesome. I just saw you guys as amazing leaders and holding each other accountable.

I was coming in just broken. Broken from addictions of porn and partying and sleeping around. And not one of you guys ever judged me. You guys always embraced me and just spoke love into me, like "let me pray for you" and "hey, come next weekend." I felt so loved in that environment, so I wanted to share that with you.

Mingo Palacios: It's an honor that you use all of that, that it stood out. That's encouraging, because you wonder sometimes where all that effort and all that energy goes. Is it reaping a return? In your case, it's been a really amazing journey.

Why don't you unpack for our listeners, just to qualify how you ended up in business and what you did? I gave this big teaser about how you killed it in network marketing. Give us a little bit of that backstory as we get into this conversation.

Pete Sanchez: Again, my name is Pete Sanchez III. I'm originally from a small border town called Calexico, about 2 hours southeast of San Diego. I was raised there. Studied to be a software engineer. That's what I thought I was going to do.

Came to San Diego for college, and my life was just radically altered by a coworker of mine in the marketplace. He sat next to me, and

there was just something really different about this guy. He was always reading all these books. He had the Bible on his desk. He had *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*. He had *Purpose Driven Life* on there. He was telling me about how his dad's a pastor. He also had a side business, and I was like, wow, this guy just thought differently. I really gravitated towards the things he was telling me. He's like, "Pete, I'm going to give you these two books. Read them and they'll change your life." He gave me the Bible and *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki.

I started reading both of them, and I was just so captivated, because I was raised in a Catholic background, being Hispanic, but I never really understood the concept of having a relationship with God. Since we have a lot of business owners on here, you guys are going to like this – we were more "CEOs," so we'd go to church "Christmas/Easter Only."

Mingo Palacios: [laughs] That's awesome.

Pete Sanchez: That was pretty much what I knew about God, and I got so fired up by the concept of being an entrepreneur, but a God-centered entrepreneur. I gave my life to Christ on December 7th, 2006. I told my friend, "Hey, let's go to church." We sat in the front, and for anybody, when you get saved, that message speaks directly to you. I was ready. I raised my hand and I was like, let's do this. That started a process of discipleship.

I've always seen myself as a hungry person. I've always been hungry for wisdom. When I was in high school, I didn't want to hang out with everybody and just party and stuff like that. I was going to junior college at night. I had two or three jobs. I was

grinding. I saw myself as being successful, a leader. So I already had that in me; I just didn't have the biblical side of it.

My first business was network marketing. Did that for my first 2 years and totally bombed at it. I think I made \$1,000 in 2 years. Just really struggled. Coming from that software engineer background, I knew that I had to work on myself, that there was a lot of mental baggage there that I had to work on. 1825 was huge because you guys introduced me to, hey, you've got to read the Bible, and prayer and meditation. So it really helped uncover a lot of things that were there that God needed to work on me in order for me to be able to reach the levels in business that I wanted to reach.

Got out of that and I was like, okay, what business am I going to do next? I gravitated towards real estate, but specifically real estate investing. I joined this one company that offers education and mentorship, and I was like, this is awesome. This is what I've been looking for. Got plugged in and immediately just took off. I had the right mentors, did what they told me, and I started flipping houses. I was like 24 years old. I was like, man, this is awesome.

The first property I flipped with my mentors, we made \$50,000, and I was jacked. I was like, oh my gosh, this is a lot of money. But with that type of money, not having the right foundation in Jesus, you're going to get lost.

Mingo Palacios: Yeah, that can destroy a person.

Pete Sanchez: Oh, absolutely. So here I am with confidence, I'm learning business skills, I've got money, I'm young, and life just took a whole different direction, a dark pit. Again, I was talking about the addictions that I

already was coming into. Porn was there. Now I had money, so I was traveling.

Mingo Palacios: They got magnified. Everything got magnified.

Pete Sanchez: Super magnified. When I was traveling, I was living this really dark life. I would go pick up prostitutes in these countries where I was at. I hit rock bottom once when I picked up a married woman on Craigslist. I'm really good at putting ads and attracting leads, so I was like, hey, maybe I can do this.

Mingo Palacios: [laughs] Born for this.

Pete Sanchez: I was like, maybe I can do this to seduce women. I fell into that whole lifestyle, the pickup artist lifestyle. I thought I was it.

Mingo Palacios: That's crazy, because although in I would say a fairly conservative circle that Purpose Driven serves the market to – Southern Baptist is the legacy that Saddleback has had influence over – that storyline is an everyday person, an everyman's storyline. It sounds like it would be "oh my gosh, Pete, you're living this crazy life." That's every person's life prior to Jesus. They're trying to fill a void, and they're doing whatever they can to arrive at a sense of satisfaction that they don't know yet is built specifically for Jesus.

So you make your way through this season of darkness and the Lord gets a hold of your life. Doesn't remove you from the marketplace. You continue to thrive in the marketplace. What does that lead you to? Where do you find yourself?

Pete Sanchez: The same friend who introduced me to the Bible and *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* was telling me about this school that he had just enrolled in at the Rock Church, Impact 195. I was like, oh, this sounds kind of cool. Again, I was always hungry for wanting to grow as a person, personal development, so I was like, wow, this sounds awesome.

I went to the open house and I was like, wow, this sounds like something I want to do – especially coming out from that dark pit. I know that I need to take a small break from the business world to go and renew my mind, to understand how God created me and my identity, the gifts that He's given me, so that I can get equipped. Then once I graduate, then I'll be ready to really understand what it means to build a God-centered business and the life that He would want for me, with the business skills He's given me.

Mingo Palacios: Right. And all the while, you're part of a church. You're a member at a local church. The program you talked about, Impact 195, it's like a gap year program. 9 months, it allows you to take classes and be engaged – and maybe if you're listening to this, you've got a church program that's like that. It's attractational to guys like Pete, guys like Robert, who may have experienced a set of successes or a series of successes in their own mind, but still hungry for that final piece. It'll drive them to places like that, hoping that they discover what they can't yet discover on their own.

In this conversation, the idea of having these gems that are hungry, entrepreneurial, gifted leaders who are doing well in the marketplace – they're sitting amongst us in our churches. From my own perspective, my own vantage point, oftentimes we give a very boxed-in exchange with everybody. We blanket everybody together and say, "if you're a part of this church, you should be doing something



with this church.” It doesn’t really articulate or it doesn’t give specificity to the kind of people that might be inside of our church.

Did you ever find yourself in that zone where you’re like, “man, I want to give what I’ve got, but all I’m looking at is either holding babies or being in a parking ministry or leading a small group, and maybe there’s more”? Did you find yourself wrestling with that?

Pete Sanchez: Absolutely, even to this day. My mind’s always thinking of ideas and “oh, that would be cool, I want to do that.” Christ-centered entrepreneurs, we’re definitely – not brushed to the side, but there’s just so much talent there that’s not being used.

I remember being in different church circles and wanting to give – and I would fund missionary trips and stuff like that, and I was like, this is awesome. I remember one time being told, “Hey, you’ve got to go in the mission field.” I’m like, “I don’t know if I’m called for that right now. My heart’s in business and I want to go reach business owners.” And one of those leaders – that person, I don’t know where they were at at that time, but they called me a young rich ruler. That really affected me, because that’s not even close to where my heart was at. I was like, I’m not called to the mission field right now. It hurt hearing that from a church leader. They didn’t see the potential in me.

Mingo Palacios: Right, like a misappropriation. Well, it’s a shallow view of missions, because you realize that missions really starts with the person closest to you, and then it can go as far as the person on the other side of the world. If a person is trying to accomplish an agenda – let’s say that they’ve got a missions trip they need to fill the spots for – somebody will try to coax you into thinking that you’re actually being

disobedient by not doing that instead of saying, “Hey Pete, what does the mission field look like in your own context? Who are you uniquely set up to reach with the gifts and the shape and the experiences that God has given you?”

That I think is the mark of a really great leader, to say “help me understand who you are, and I’ll help you understand who your mission field is.” It’s not just boxed in because “we’ve got a Uganda trip coming up in April and I’ve got to make sure that those spots don’t get thrown out the door.”

So, if we could give insights – and Robert, I’m drawing you into this conversation right now – there’s pastors who are probably listening and they’re compelled. They’re going, “If I do have a guy like Pete or a guy like Robert inside of my ministry, where do I begin to engage them, and how do I best engage them, knowing that their time is so valuable? I’m not even sure if they want to be a part of what we’re doing.”

What would you say is unique or something that would engage you, your mind, your heart? If you could speak collectively to hundreds or thousands of pastors, what would be a way that you could give them an insight and some keys as to how to best engage the entrepreneurs and the business leaders sitting in their own circles?

Robert Cortes: Wow, that’s amazing. I know Pete’s story and I remember Pete graduated Impact when I was in my first term, and he was graduating out. So we became friends, and his wife and my wife. I remember that program was very impactful for me as well. It actually was the stepping stone that catapulted me into doing business the way God wanted me to do business.

I remember way back when – just a little bit of history, a tiny bit – I’ve been in a place in the last 30 years where I’ve had access to an opportunity that I didn’t have mentorship for, that could’ve been hundreds of millions – it became billions of dollars that, if I’d had the right mentorship and the right backing, was amazing. That was in prepaid calling cards back in 1993.

Mingo Palacios: 101021, right? Is that the number? Is that the call number? [laughter]

Robert Cortes: It’s crazy because I remember recording on our custom system, “Press 2 to be connected to Guatemala.” [laughs] It was just a funny, weird business to be involved in.

Mingo Palacios: Kids today are like, “What is a calling card?”

Robert Cortes: It’s amazing – I’m aging myself drastically here, but I went from owning multiple cellphone stores in the LA area to being inside of UCLA, inside of their bookstore. I was the first Hispanic entrepreneur to be inside of their bookstore, and I was actually competing with the computer department and I was kicking their \*\*\*. [laughter]

Mingo Palacios: Business owners on today’s episode. [laughter]

Robert Cortes: We’re competitive in that way. It was a really fun environment to be in.

Mingo Palacios: I love it.

Robert Cortes: Anyway, it was a very interesting environment to be in. I was very much business-oriented, as you can see from my competitive spirit. I remember going into multiple entrepreneurship after that. We sold

that to Verizon a long time ago. Got out with the skin of our teeth with no debt. We made some money, but we knew the market was changing. They were actually removing resellers and agents because they knew they could acquire a cellphone user for less than \$400. Back then, they'd buy the phone. They'd literally subsidize the entire phone for the user, and then they'd pay out a fat commission to the business owners.

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