

**Author Platform Rocket
-Podcast Transcription-**



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Announcer: Welcome to Author Platform Rocket, the highly acclaimed source for actionable business, marketing, and mindset strategy for authors delivered in 20 minutes or less, most of the time. In other words, this is how you sell more books while building a bigger fan base the right way. Here's your host and author marketing veteran, Jonny Andrews.

Jonny Andrews: Well, good day, folks. It's that Jonny Andrews guy -- super excited to be chatting with you again. Today's topic is something that has been coming up over and over and over and over and over again as I have ... I have talked about it a little bit, but I really want to dig into it today, and that's what you need to do before you get started with this. I know if you've been doing this for any length of time, this is probably not ... You could totally click pass this episode -- no big deal.

But if you are coming to this fresh, doe eyed, new as a newborn babe naked in the wilderness, then this is exactly where you need to be, and I want to be very, very clear about some things that there's just stuff you have to know before you get started because I have been spending oceans of time answering questions from people who have absolutely no idea about anything that has anything to do with publishing, self-publishing, publishing industry, whatever it is. So, I'm going to drop some truth bombs on you and none of them will be comfortable. So, are you ready for this? It's going to suck. Here we go.

Let me paint the scenario for you. I have been getting a lot of ... Since we got the new Author Platform Rocket site up and since people have been like, "Wow, that's actually kind of a cool thing. Most agencies don't put people with swords, and drinking wine in cups, and pictures like that on the back of their site." They're like, "Oh, that's interesting." Well, since I did this and since we kind of hung up the shingle and said, "We're taking people on," there has been a deluge of questions. There has just been tons and tons of people coming in presenting all sorts of different scenarios to see if we'd do it.

So, let me ... I'm gonna break down two things for you. I'm gonna start with fiction, but then I'm going to get into non-fiction, such as personal development, a lot of people from the business development, entrepreneurial sort of stuff -- like all of these ... the primary ones, and spirituality. There's one guy that I talked to that even wanted to ... I literally think he wanted to start his own religion. I only did the call 'cause I was really curious, and I was like, "I got to know, man. I got to know." But it was quite entertaining, and I had a good time, so it was worth it. But let's start with fiction really quickly because I think I could handle this particular subset of the literary market quickly.

All right, here's the reality of this. If you have no platform, meaning you have no subscriber base, if you have nothing to work with, if you have nobody who is waiting with bated breath to purchase your next book or even your first book, don't go for a publisher yet. It's one of those things where it's very difficult to get one in the first place, and, in most cases, they're not going to help you build the thing that's going to help you sell the books. This is a very unfortunate situation, and I've seen them out there really trying to fix this to the extent that they can, but the reality is they're focusing on their big ticket authors. You're not Stephen King or someone like ... and maybe you are. I don't know. Hey, Steve, what's up, man?

But, no, they're focusing on the big names and stuff like that. They're not necessarily going to be dumping scads of loot into your coffers to help you grow. The other reality is they've had a very difficult time marketing, and right now the self-publish crew ... I'm not gonna quite say they're eating their lunch, but they're getting close to it because what happens 90% of the time, and in my last show I interviewed a little over 120 different authors, and the only ones that were happy with the publishing deal that they had gotten were the ones that were on Amazon Imprints, and the reason for that is extremely simple. If you know anything about Amazon, it's you know they know how to sell, and that's what you need. You need to know how to identify the market, give the market what they want, and just jam it into their faces until they buy it. Maybe not quite that rough, but you get the point.

Publishers have been having a really hard time doing this, and so the reason I tend to say, okay, if you're brand spanking new, you're going to have your hopes crushed, and then if you are somehow picked -- that just 1% of the 1% of the 1% submitting manuscripts every 14.6 milliseconds to these folks ... if you are picked, there is a huge likelihood that you won't sell any books, and it'll completely destroy your career 'cause that's just kind of what happens in a lot of cases is the book ... it takes a long time for the book to get out, and then it goes out and somehow maybe something's off with the marketing or somebody has a bad day, and it just all spins out sideways.

I hate it because I hear it all the time, and most of the authors that my team and I work with are self-published. We have a few hybrid authors, and some of them are okay with it. I wouldn't say elated to be in that position because they see the money they could be making, but they're like, "Ah, okay. Fine," and they're just not giving the publisher any more stuff, or they're trying to rework a contract, so they get the digital rights, and the publisher can have the physical. It's just kind of a bad thing to even consider right now, and I know a lot of authors are doing it. There are reasons to get a publisher, and I'm not gonna talk about those today, but earning a living off your books is certainly not one of them because

most people don't give you that million dollar advance book deal unless you have some huge audience already.

Okay? I know that's probably pretty harsh. Now, here's the second piece of this. If you do want to self-publish, that is awesome, but you have to understand that you are now in business for yourself, that publishers, once again, are not going to help you with this. You're going to be doing all of this anyway, and so all of the marketing, all of the infrastructure, all of those things. There's plenty of places you can go and get an editor, a cover designer, and you don't need to pay a lot for that kind of stuff. It's actually relatively cheap, and so that's not really a big benefit anymore. It's really not when you end up keeping just a small fraction of your royalties.

Now, let's look at the self-published kind of thing, and I've had a lot of folks who have come to me with this, and one gentleman in particular ... wonderful book -- science fiction -- super excited about it. Everybody was like, "Wow, this is really good," but he had not started on the rest of the things. His plan was to put this book into the world, see how it did before starting on the rest of it. This is a mindset that had completely missed the boat on every level. If you are going to get out there, you need to make a commitment to the action. If you're going to be a hobbyist, that's fine, but don't hire a marketing company to push you. That's what professionals do.

If you want to be a hobbyist, and you want to write for fun, so maybe at a dinner party you could like have a couple of cocktails and scroll through Amazon and show people your book cover, that's cool. There's nothing wrong with that. I mean, I've done that and that's fine. But please don't think that you're going to become a successful author just sort of tossing one out there and then saying, "Hey, we're gonna put some money behind this." It usually doesn't play well. Now, are there exceptions to all these rules? Of course there are, but once again, and I mentioned this in an earlier episode, when you hear me say these things, if they kind of get your hackles up a little bit then you have to keep in mind how I view the world. It's through a very specific lens.

I like to take the actions that the majority of the time produce the best results. In both of the scenarios that I have painted for you, neither one of those has a shining track record -- not even a slightly shining track record. It's more as if ... It probably shines about as bright ... I'm not even gonna go in there. I had a horrible analogy that involved carrion birds and cows, and we don't need to do that today 'cause what if you're in the car with children? That would just be horrible, and then everyone would be thinking about it. So, that's my point, is you have to have your head screwed on straight. If you're going in to be a fiction author, and you're gonna do this, and you're gonna do it professionally, you have to commit. You have to say, "I'm going to commit to a writing ritual. Every single day, I'm gonna put words on the page." You're gonna have these books getting out, and I understand it takes a while to build up. Once again, highly recommend the book, write, publish, repeat.

That is your new bible if you are going to be a self-published author, just in terms of writing ritual and how to do it. You pick a market, you find out who those people are, and you write to them. If you want to be successful, that is the best way to do it. Four books a year minimum -- try to even launch them with four books. I know if you're brand new to this, and you're hearing that, you're like, "What? Most authors spend years crafting a book." Guess what? Times have changed. It don't work like that anymore. Yes, it is very possible to produce extremely high levels, and if you read that book, they'll explain it to you. I'm not gonna get into it. I'm just gonna tell you what is more likely to work for you.

So, now that we're on the page, let's shift a little bit into the non-fiction thing, and I have talked about this a couple of times, but I really want to drill this point home. So, let's say you have some sort of personal development, whatever it is, or entrepreneurial thing, or maybe you want to start a cult -- whatever. It's super cool, like based around whatever it is that you do, or you think and that's awesome. You can go do that. You have to know who you're targeting, and you have to ... It's the same thing. You have to build an audience for these people, and if you're going to come to some sort of company and say, "I want you to do this for me," you have to be able to spend probably more than \$500 a month just on advertising, or you're going to be hiring them to help you build your infrastructure and strategize exactly what you're going to do.

In the past two months, I am not kidding you, through the various emails that I've been getting, that my team has been getting, and that they're often forwarding to me going, "Wow, this one. Let's ... I don't know," ... People who are coming out of the woodwork going, "I have a book on a subject," and their belief is that if they take ad dollars, and they shove it into the world that all of a sudden they're gonna be rich and famous. Then when I actually say that to them, they're like, "Oh, no, no, no. Well, I just would like to earn a living with this book." I'm like, "You're not ... No. You don't even know who you're advertising to." There is a process that this whole thing goes through, and you have to understand this. So, the first phase ... If you're brand new, and so many people have done this and it's completely backwards ... If you have a book, that's great. Okay, cool. Good for you. Awesome job. It's very difficult to write that. Yay. I get it. I've written a ton of books. I know this. It can be a very difficult process, so good for you. What do we call this? The emotion sandwich or something? You start with the positive, you sandwich in maybe a little negative, then you end with a positive. I'll probably get off track and forget to end with the positive, but that's okay. You can have a pickle. So, if you have a book, great. Congratulations. That's the positive.

Now, who are you marketing? Who is going to read this book? Do not say everybody because everybody wants to say everybody. They're like, "Oh, this book can help so many people. It's gonna change lives. It's gonna this. It's gonna that." Well, you need to pick one person, and here's what the natural counter-argument to that is, "But then it's going to exclude everybody else." Yeah, that's actually the point. You want to. Here's why, because if you think this is gonna help everybody ... You've got an 18-year-old high school girl who's maybe a little depressed because she's having some boyfriend problems or something like that versus a 65-year-old woman who just lost her husband to whatever. They're completely different, but maybe they're experiencing the same level of what they believe sadness to be, and your book helps with that. That's awesome. But guess what? Those are two completely different conversations, completely different.

So, what you need to be able to do is focus on those people and pick a specific subset of that humanity and drill this stuff ... and this happens all the time with people who do romance novels, or people who do "Rich Dad Poor Dad", for example. Amazing infrastructure, super good. "Chicken Soup for the Soul" -- there's now a Chicken Soup for everybody's soul. Seriously, there's like "The Lover of Labradors Who Lives in Louisiana Chicken Soup for the Soul", like a whole book. I'm sure that's totally true, and if it's not, it's pretty close. But this is what you could do, is it gives you the opportunity now to have a conversation with a specific person, and what happens, more times than not, is that conversation reverberates outward and it starts to resonate with more and more people, and more and more people who you didn't initially target start coming to you.

This happens in the entrepreneurial space all the time, where there's like some sort of ... maybe like a "How to Do Facebook Ads" or "How to Do Something" kind of whatever it is with business that ... They

say, "Oh, well this is how chiropractors could do it," but then these other people start coming and buying that course, too, because they're interested in that same kind of information. They're like, "Well, if chiropractors could do it, I can too 'cause I'm an orthodontist," and that's how it works. Now, the next piece of this is ... it's like who are you targeting? Please be very specific, and you create an avatar. I've mentioned this before. This is the thing that Eben Pagan does. I'm gonna keep repeating these things, too, because they have become so pervasive in my literal daily conversations with people that I almost feel like I need to do the same five shows over and over and over and over again to kind of get this message out there because ... It's out there.

This is the other part that kind of blows my mind is there is so much info, and data, and people blogging about this stuff in the author sphere -- both fiction and non-fiction -- that it kind of breaks my heart a little bit when a lot of starry-eyed wonder children kind of approach and go, "Can you help me?" I'm like, "Yeah, but, first, before anybody's gonna take your money, we've got to get on the same page about what this is gonna mean." Now, let's also look at what it means to build a business because this is fiction and non-fiction. This is both. If you're investing in growing your business, you don't just have a book and go and shove it out there into the world. That's like inflicting something. You need to have a business. You need to have an audience. You need to have a message. You have to go out there and test that message.

"Am I saying the right things to the right people? Is the targeting correct?" This is why Facebook ads are beautiful. You can do slow cookers five, ten bucks a day, just kind of like see if you can build a subscriber base around this, have a conversation with them, and then maybe launch like a live coaching thing or something like that, or a short for 99 cents or something -- whatever you want to do. But if you can get people to move on that, guess what? That answers all the questions. Yes, you have the right people. You now have an audience of them that you can easily reach, and they're willing to spend money on you. Now, you have not earned back your spend yet, and this is not in the first 20 minutes. This is like 30, 60, 90 days deep in this because you're gonna be doing a lot of testing. You can use that leadpages.net to do those landing page tests that I spent a lot of time talking about.

Now, you're not gonna get that money back right away because now you have this ... you've monetized to a certain extent, but you haven't built your business yet. Now, let's say you do sort of like a live coaching thing where you record the training and then turn it into modules that you then create an online course, now this is something where you don't physically need to be there every minute of every day to build it. So, you take the action once, you then replicate that in another form, and then you go and sell that. So, you have the data from that first round that you spent all that time, effort, energy, and money building. You monetize it to a certain extent, now you have your product that you can go out and sell on the backend.

Now, you could use your book for two things on this. You can either give it away for free in exchange for their name and email, or you can use it as a lead generator out there on all the distribution platforms, or Amazon by itself, or whatever you want to do, and the point of that book then becomes, "Hey, this is the first step of your journey. Click here for some awesome free stuff," and maybe give them a couple free videos and things like that, and then email them, move them around, maybe do a couple of Facebook Live things, and that sort of stuff. So, now you have something of a business, but you're 3, 4, 5, 6 months deep, and this is why it kills me so often is that this takes time, and the likelihood that someone who has never done this is going to be able to figure it out on their own in any stretch of time is terrifying.

This is one of those things where if you want to see a dude who really did it right, and I don't do coaching, so I'm not trying to say, "Hey, I'm gonna pitch this, and you're gonna buy it, and it's gonna be

amazing." But if you did buy it, it would be great. No, I'm totally kidding. But John Lee Dumas, the guy who does "Entrepreneur On Fire", that podcast, I want to ... It's not necessarily about his show. It's about how he'd launched the show. It's about the wisdom that he used to come to that space. What he did was he realized that he wanted to be in this game, and so what he did was he went and found somebody who had been in this game and he paid the money -- quite a lot from what I understand -- but it was so well ... But it jump started his career by years because if he hadn't done that, if he had tried to go on his own, if he had tried to bootstrap that, most people at this zygote level stage don't even know what questions to ask.

They think that, "Oh, I have a book. This is gonna be the thing," and then when they email this to the team, the response is typically, "Uh-uh. You're not even close to there yet," and this is why it's important to check out somebody who has maybe done this a few times, that is knowledgeable, that is familiar with what that infrastructure looks like, that understands to go from the concept, to the audience identification, to the initial monetization, to the scaling. What kind of ads does that take? What kind of media does that take? Can you do a podcast circuit? How do you take a media pitch and edit that so that it's going to help you? Those kinds of questions, and it will cost you money. This is one of those things.

We have people that we're helping with this, and it usually starts at three grand a month just for the service because it's a worth it kind of thing, and this isn't like a coaching thing. I'm just telling you, this is ... If you're going to hire somebody at that level who understands that game that intimately, this isn't a \$20 service. This is building, helping to create and craft and make this business with you, and for you, and to help you get there, and to keep you psychologically stabilized while you go through this path because you don't see that return on that investment right away. You're not just bathed in cash that flies out of the computer screen simply because you ran a Facebook ad to a book. That's not how it works. This takes time.

You can read books on this. You can go to Amazon, or whatever platform you read on, buy a ton of books -- that's awesome. That'll get you one place. You can go to live events. That'll get you a next place. But there's lots of people out there that are good at helping people get from point A to point D, E, F, G and all those things. So, I recommend it. Find someone who can help you, especially if you're at that zygote level, but expect that you're going to pay for that. If you're broke, guess what? You can bootstrap it. I did. Looking back though, I should have hired somebody a long time ago, and I have since fixed that. I do this stuff now. I have groups, and masterminds, and that kind of thing that really keep me on track and helpful. But that's something that you need to consider. Definitely if you're struggling, find what you can afford. I'm not saying bet your mortgage on it, but definitely learn from someone who has gone before you.

At least read a book on the subject matter before you write your book and try to sell it, 'cause there is a much larger ecosystem out there, and your expectations when you begin ... If you know that it will take you a long time and cost you a lot of money, you're going to be a lot more calmer, you're going to be in that center of zen kind of situation than you would be if, for example, you were going in with these high hopes of becoming a popular author with your first book and a \$5 marketing budget, okay? So, please understand the business that you are getting in, that it takes ... both cases can take years to get to the point where you're really seeing a healthy ROI either way, and you have to commit. You have to commit, but, even beyond that, you need to learn the world that you're about to operate in, okay? So, that's all I have for you today. Looking forward to seeing you on the next one.

All right, that does it for another round of authorplatformrocket.com. Remember, we're here to help you with your business, marketing, and mindset, so if you have a question, want us to cover a topic, or interview a special guest, just shoot over an email to show@authorplatformrocket.com. As always, we need your reviews and support. If you like what you're hearing, please leave us a glowing review on iTunes and forward this show to an author friend who might need the love and assistance. But most importantly, if you're an author who needs help with marketing, why not let us do it for you? Check us out at authorplatformrocket.com. Always affordable, effective, done-for-you author marketing, so you can get back to writing your books. I'm Jonny Andrews, and that's it for today. I'll see you on the next show.

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