

**Author Platform Rocket
-Podcast Transcription-**



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Voiceover:

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:

Howdy. The title for this episode is How Giving Something Away For Free Can Make You Millions, Or At Least Make You Rich. I don't know, whatever your definition of a lot of money is.

What we're going to talk about today is something that I hear from a lot of author folk. They come around, lots of times, going, "Well, I don't understand this whole free thing. I don't understand why authors give away books for free, or give away stuff for free. Why would I possibly want to do that?" Today I'm going to answer that questions, and I'm going to give you real world examples, directly from my own business.

All right, then. Let's talk about free stuff, shall we? In today's day and age, authors are struggling to get noticed, be discovered. I'm not talking about

being discovered by publishers, or agents, or movie studios, or anything like that. I'm talking about discovered by readers. Not to beat a dead horse on this, but with the invention of the Kindle ... And we've talked about this before. I think everybody's pretty familiar with this, but I have to say it. With the invention of the Kindle, they literally turned the industry from this massive juggernaut of lunacy, with tons of gatekeepers and stuff, literally into a button. So the barrier to entry's gone. Anybody with an idea and an editor can get a book out.

What that does is it floods the bottom of the marketplace. I want you, in your mind right now, to picture a pyramid. Not a Ponzi scheme, but just a pyramid. We're not going much past this analogy. At the bottom of the pyramid, you have oceans of people. It's huge. People are just dumping their books into this. It doesn't matter what marketplace you're in. It doesn't matter who your readers are. It's just there. Everybody's just flooding it, and flooding it, and flooding it, and flooding it, and flooding it.

What happens? Now that you have, in every single market ... I mean, think romance, for instance. Even if you're a non-fiction, and aren't familiar with the fiction genres, I mean, you could kind of just imagine what's happening there. Romance is kind of like the Petri dish of publishing, because there's so many authors pumping so many books. It goes through generations. It's literally like bacteria, going through generations. Everything's just evolving and changing in it, but it's choking. The bottom level of romance is choking on its own excrement, essentially, because so many things are getting flung in there.

It's much more difficult to write in other genres. I'm not pooh-poohing on romance at all. Romance authors, I love you. I really do. You're one of the main reasons we've become so successful. But the volume of stuff ... And it's not bad stuff, either. That's the big thing here. There's a lot of really good books being pumped into that genre. But if you think about the readers, they can't have children fast enough to keep up with the demand. One reader might be inundated with 500 books over the course of a week. I'm pretty sure there does not exist on this planet a human that can digest that much literature. That's what I want you to picture at the bottom of the pyramid, just dumping it in, just floods, and floods, and floods.

Now, you go up a couple of levels, and what starts to happen? Well, what starts happening is it starts thinning out a little bit. There's less room. There's less competition. It's starting to breathe. The difference here, what's the difference from being at the bottom to crawling your way up to the top? Well, there's actually a lot of reasons, but one of the big reasons is discoverability. That's what it comes down to. The techniques authors are using for discoverability.

Now, by the way, if you're listening to this, and you're not in romance, or you're in a different genre, this is universally applicable to fiction and non-

fiction. This is a huge, huge, huge reason why most business books can be used for, to give away for free as well. A lot of people say, "I don't like this free model." Well, it's interesting. If you look at Smashwords, they've published this data that people who give away, the authors that are giving away the first book in the series, or even a short, tend to earn ... And if I'm wrong on these numbers, by all means, correct me, about 30% more than authors that don't.

Now, I'm not saying this is the perfect thing, but I'm saying the mindset. You have to at least comprehend why somebody would want to do this. You don't have to do it, but I do recommend that if you want to get new readers, if you want to hook them in, it usually behooves you to give them something that costs no financial money in exchange for their name and email address, or if you're using a chatbot, to send a chat to your page. That's getting to be, although it won't be for very long, I promise you, that's kind of getting to be the lowest barrier to entry right now, to use the bot, and things like that.

By the way, if you're looking for a model to be able to get both the bot and the email, what you do is you use BookFunnel, and you send a BookFunnel link, or an Instafreebie link that requires them to give their name and email address after they have chatted you. You've nailed them on the bot, and so you can use that for your audience, and you can use it to message them. It has a really high open rate. Then, when you deliver the book to them, you can ...

Now, that's just a suggestion, if you want to get both. If you want to wait for later, to do that, and if you're running a backend business, it would probably be a good idea to give them the book without the opt-in, and then follow up with a webinar, where they're required, then, to sign up for something. You don't want to keep them in Facebook all the time, but that is a very low barrier to entry.

I'm digressing a little bit, although I'm not. No, because you need the logistics behind all of this stuff works. Listen, the reason you're giving stuff away for free is to build your audience, and to be able to establish touchpoints, and be able to repeatedly reach out to these people, and stay in front of them, because the reality is, if you focus just on selling books, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, iBooks, all these things, none of them are giving you buyer data. You have no ability to contact these people again. That's why the power of these lists is so massive.

Case in point, here. I give away a ton of information. I have free videos, free training, I do the podcast, all this kind of stuff. Tons of free things that I'm just blasting into the marketplace. Here's what happens with that. I get emails every single day, I get agency applications every single day, from all sorts of authors who are listening to this show and saying, "Wow. This dude actually might have a point. He sounds like he's kind of been doing

this a while. Googled him, and he checked out, and I think that this might be something I want to do."

That's literally all it is, because what you're doing when you give something away for free is you are breaking ... It's a low barrier to entry. Let me just be very blunt about this. If you can't even give something ... If a person ... I should make this more about them than about you. If a person won't take a thing that you're trying to give them for free, they're not your customer, okay? Don't worry about them. I know there's this thing where it's like, "Ah! It's the one that got away!" Let them get away.

That old adage, there's a million fish in the sea, it's true for dating, and it's true for you and your audience. Don't worry about them. If they get your thing and leave, or if they don't take your thing at all, whatever. It's no big deal. That's why people get so bent out of shape about unsubscribes. It's like, "Get over yourself." People are going to come and go out of your life. People are going to come and go off your newsletter as well. It's just how things work. If you can't accept that, you're in the wrong business. Go cut hair, or something like that, where you don't need ...

Actually, you do. I shouldn't have said that, because you absolutely should have a newsletter if you're cutting hair. I mean that for all the local folk, especially Amy, because I'm coming to see you next week. I know you don't listen to this show, but my wife told me I look like an angry bird. She's got to fix my head.

Anyway, I'm digressing. The reason you give this stuff away for free is to deliver value. A guy named Frank Kern likes to call this results in advance. What that means is if you can give them something that solves their problem, or in fiction, makes them feel the way that they were hoping to feel, you win. You're on your way now to establishing a customer.

What I do is I call this conversational conversion. What that is, is you talk to people. You engage them a little bit. Once you've given them something for free, you ask them, "Can I help you a little bit more? What are the problems you have?" and then you solve those problems for them in the best way that you possibly can using free information. As I've said, in my own business, this is literally responsible for thousands, and thousands, and thousands, and thousands, and thousands of dollars in business. Just giving stuff away for free. It's crazy, but it works the same with your books.

I'm not telling you that this is the best way to go. You don't want to give away a full book? I understand that, but you should have something. If you're in fiction, and you don't want to do the first book in your series, I recommend do a prequel or a short. If you're in non-fiction, I highly recommend you come up with something like a podcast like this. I know. The market's flooded with podcasts. Who needs another freaking

podcast? Well, the answer is you do. I don't recommend podcasts for fiction authors so much, because there's not a lot of readers out there who are also listening. Not unless you're going to do, maybe, an audio series, or something that's maybe a limited run. Johnny Truant did that, with, I think it was Fat Vampire. It was a really good story. It was hilarious. I love their writing, by the way. Absolutely excellent. But yeah. You can give stuff away for free in almost any format.

What's cool is, right now, in the process of going through ... and everybody on my team ... I'm a huge proponent of continual education, so we are going through an epic master class right now on the hybridization of Facebook social combined with advertising, where you have a sequence, and you have themes that are delivered each month in Facebook Live. You can do the same thing on Instagram. You can do the same thing in YouTube. It's all about the psychology, and the mechanics, and the planning behind all of this on how you deliver this conversational conversion, results in advance concept to then get people motivated to then buy the thing that you actually are selling.

A lot of folks, I've heard this before, it's like, "Well, if you give it all away for free, or if you talk about it, or if you share all your secrets, then no one wants to buy." The reality is completely the opposite. If you go through this show, if you do, if you are an author who is struggling, or if you're an entrepreneur who's struggling, and you go through this show, and you actually apply the stuff that I'm talking about ...

Case in point. In 2016, after I had put out the Audience Hacker podcast, which was sort of a different version of this one, I had an author write in that said, "I applied what I learned on your show," and I believe it was within three or four months, was earning \$100,000 a month from their book, just because they listened to the stuff I told them to do, and then they did it.

This show is no different. It's just a little shorter. My goal is to cut out as much of the crap as possible, save for trying to book an appointment with my hairdresser in the middle of a show. But that's what it is. So case in point, you give stuff away for free, you help people, and guess what? They will come back to you over, and over, and over again.

The goal here is to be front of mind. I want you to think about that. Front of mind. When somebody says, "Who do you think of when you think of X, or personal development space, or whatever space. When you think of erotic, bad boy biker, military romance, who comes to your mind? Who's the best science fiction writer? Who's the best business development writer?"

My mind, when I look at people that have no backend, but have done an amazing job being extremely profitable with books, I think Steve Scott. He

writes under SJ Scott. That guy's front of mind for me, because that dude is doing what he loves, and skipping everything else. I so deeply respect that. I've talked about him on a lot of shows, because I think he's awesome. You should check him out on Amazon, and literally buy all his stuff, or read all of his stuff. They're great books. He's got an awesome formula for it, and I really respect everything that this guy is doing.

Anyway, that is why you give stuff away, is because it comes back to you tenfold. I love doing this show. I really do, because it's gotten amazing questions from authors. People write in pretty much every day, sometimes a lot. There's been a lot of conversations, and lot of people have come into the agency program, and have also bought a ton of other stuff. For example, when these courses come out, I'm pretty sure that they're going to kind of rattle the cage like they did when I put stuff out back in the day, because people listen to this show. They do this. They take action, and then they buy things.

You can have the same, similar kind of thing, but you have to figure out the methodology for yourself. Are you going to give away a free book? If you're in the omni entrepreneur end of this thing, in whatever space, how are you going to put stuff into the world that attracts people to you? I'm not trying to get on the secret, or anything like that, because this is very strategic.

The other piece of information that you want to talk away from this is that no single piece of content, usually, is going to be that big, viral thing. Once again, let me bring up my superhero, Captain Workaholic, Gary Vaynerchuk. That guy, awesome. Awesome dude. He's got tons of views. He has a massive, massive, massive following. I think he released some shoes a couple weeks ago, and literally sold out in a couple of hours. Most insane thing I've ever seen. Shoes. Really. Shoes.

This dude is killing it out there. He just has a person following him around with a camera. If you see what he's doing, he's just giving away free stuff. Most of this stuff is total gold. So I recommend doing this. Figure out what your version of that is. You don't need to be ... I had a conversation with Tom. He's the fellow who's going to be doing all of the personal development products, and he's the guy engaging on social media, and stuff like that, in our other ecosystems, and I was talking to Tom about this. I'm like, "Man, we need to Vaynerchuk what you're doing. Not to the point where someone's following you into the bathroom with a camera, so you can have a conversation at a urinal about whatever you're doing. Not quite to that extent, but close."

Document and release. Document and release. You don't need to do how-to stuff all the time, but just get out there. Put things into the world that help your target market, or that entertain your target market. That needs to be, when you think about this, really think about who your

audience is. Remember how I always start these things? Who are you, who do you serve, how do you serve them? That goes for fiction as well as non-fiction. Really know these things, because when you really know who you serve, you can start to kind of morph that, "how do you serve them?" There's some things that maybe you don't want to do, because you just don't know how to do it yet. I get it. But never let that start you.

Just get out there. Even if you execute poorly, execute. Hopefully you heard, a couple of shows ago, where I was talking about how flawless execution is neither required, or nor even possible. Don't even bother. Just go. Just do. Put out. That's all it takes. Over the course of time, as you broadcast, and hurl these things into the world, the fruits of your labor will come back. It is not an instantaneous return. That is another big thing that I want you to take away, here. This takes time. It takes effort. It takes consistent application of process. If you don't consistently apply, and you don't consistently have output, you will not get the fruits of your labors.

Hopefully this is making sense. Once again, if you have any questions about this stuff, you can always hit us up. Me, the team, show@authorplatformrocket.com. I'll say it right now. Leave us a review on iTunes. I love to see those things. I haven't been pushing that enough, just because I've been pretty chill about the whole thing. But I think I might start asking for some reviews. Maybe we could have some fun around that. Who knows?

I'll talk to you in the next episode. In the meantime, put stuff into the world that helps the people that you want to serve. Keep doing that consistently. I would say, give it four months, and watch what starts happening. It's pretty insane.

All right. I'm Jonny Andrews. See you in 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. 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 the show to an author friend who might need the love and assistance. 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. That's it for today. I'll see you on the next show.

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