

Author Platform Rocket -Podcast Transcription-



[Grow your platform with Social Giveaways](#)

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, Johnny Andrews.

Johnny Andrews:

What is going on? Welcome to Author Platform Rocket. I am your host, Johnny Andrews, and today we are going to be touching on a topic that I recently did a Facebook Live on, and it's not about Facebook Live, but it's about something pretty cool. In fact, this is something that I think, if you're struggling out there to sell your books, I want you to pay particularly close attention to what I'm going to talk about today, and, if you're killing it, I want you to pay particularly close attention to what I'm going to talk about today. The reason why is because it's about taking control.

There is a way that you can take control of your author business. The question ... I recently reached out to the authors and was like, "Hey, as the year is drawing to a close, I think it'd be cool. Let me help you out. What's going on? What are your questions? I'll just answer them, either on a

Facebook Live," and I've been trying to those almost every day, been pretty consistent with that, "and then also on the podcast." This is one that I wanted to do double duty with, because I think it could be that impactful. I think it could make that big of a difference in your business. I think this is going to be the thing that can change the game for just about everybody.

Let me describe the problem really quickly, and let's see if you can maybe identify with it. You've written some books. This is nonfiction and fiction both. Every author or anybody who's using a book as part of the gateway to their business, you're going to be able to relate to this very, very easily. That is, you are running some ads, and you're not quite sure which ads are performing. You have no way of knowing that.

You're probably sending the traffic to Amazon out of Facebook typically, or you're running AMS, and clearly there's not ... You kind of see which ones are turning into sales, but you have no idea what's going on with page reads, because they don't really track that. There's no correlation between any of these things, but especially inside of Facebook, and so the only metrics that you could look at are your relevance score and your click cost, your click-through rate, but here's the problem: those numbers are meaningless.

I mean, their relevance, yes, that's a smart one to pay attention to because it means you're running to good stuff. Here's the problem, you have no earthly idea which ads are turning into money, and which ads are sinking. So, I cannot tell you how many times I've worked with authors, or spoken to authors who have been in the forums and seen this exact same problem. It's like, "I don't know what's working. I don't know which ads are working."

Do you realize that in this particular industry, people are spending ... probably spent billions of dollars running ads into this black hole called Amazon. You don't know ... you could get like 300 clicks to the page, you don't know what's going to convert. You don't know who's doing what. What's happening is, Amazon's essentially bribing everybody to use their platform exclusively, and they will take everything you throw at them and give you nothing in return.

For authors who are struggling, this is why it's so important, hear me on this. I'm going to give you the solution in a second. It's not an easy solution. There is no easy fix for this, okay? I want you to understand that in almost every other industry, this is what people have evolved to. This is why I don't like using companies like You to Me and stuff like that. Even though they have their own traffic and I've put courses up there over the years and have done very well with them, I don't like doing it because I don't get my data.

What do I mean by this? This is where you really need to dial in and pay attention, okay? It's super, super important. If you are not getting your buyer data, you are going to lose. This is so funny and so timely because last night, my wife was kind of hungry for this ravioli from this place called Maggiano's, a couple of minutes down the street. I'm like, "Yeah, no problem. I'll go get you some food," because I like to take a little time in the car and listen to my personal development podcast and stuff like, just look in the rear view mirror and go, "I am special."

I'm kidding, I literally have never done that in my life, but that would be funny if that was the case. Anyways, so I was a little early so I sat down at the bar. It looks like they brought up my favorite Pinot. I'm like, "I will absolutely have a glass of that whilst I wait." It just so happened that the fellow sitting next to me owned his own business. As I am wan to do, I struck up a conversation with him.

It turns out he is in a print and ship company, meaning they do direct mail campaigns for some of the largest companies around. As we got to talking, he started lamenting a little bit that while his company was doing very well, he wasn't as big as some of his buddies in the industry. I'm like, "Why is that? Are you not marketing enough? How are you closing deals?" He's like, "Oh, I had nothing to do with that. It has everything to do with the fact that I don't get to keep the data, and they do."

This is what we're talking about here. He was probably in the 10 million range, but his friends were in the 50 to 100 million range. Think about the difference there. One factor: that is you got to keep the data. If you keep the data, you have the control, you have the knowledge, you have the power. Amazon does not give you the data.

Let me spell out the problem even further. You could be running Facebook ads to your books, and everyone is like, "Oh, I have cheap clicks." Guess what? Cheap clicks have no correlation whatsoever. In fact, Facebook has come out and stated this ... I've mentioned this in different shows, and some of the Facebook Lives that I do.

Facebook has even said that click costs has nothing to do with the outcome. You have to bid on outcome in order to get it right. What you could do is you could bid on leads. You could say, "Give me these leads." I'm not talking about running lead ads, I'm talking about bidding on leads. You optimize for the outcome you want.

Let me give you a quick case in point on this ... where I have the power, for example with a lot of the agency clients, is when we're going to develop these lists of people that download the book for free, and then it's a great thing we have this conversation with them through automation and email. Then, they go on to buy better and better stuff. That's one of the big things that we do sort of with the nonfiction people as we bring

them in, is we look at the entire sales funnel, and what's the cost per lead acquisition.

In this particular case, what we've been able to do is split test these landing pages to go from just over nine percent to upwards of 40 percent. What was crazy was, when we were looking at the costs per lead acquisition, the ad that was performing the worst in terms of it had the highest cost per click, actually had the lowest cost per lead.

Think about that for a second. A click cost is high, but the lead cost is low. Do you care about the cost for click? A pause for a dramatic effect. The answer is no, you do not care about the cost per click. You care about the cost of the action that you want that person to take. We killed all these ads that were getting super cheap clicks, because they weren't turning into money. They weren't turning into leads at an appropriate cost for this particular genre.

It's mind blowing. The same thing is happening when you send raw clicks to Amazon or iBooks, or anything like that. If you're going on cheap clicks alone, there is less ... this is an actual statistic published by Facebook, there is a .0007 percent correlation between click cost and buy intent. That's almost ... there is none. There is the most infinitesimal correlation to that.

That's why sometimes you want a more expensive click, because if you can pay 60 cents to acquire a \$2.00 buyer, or a \$3.00 buyer, or if you're selling it for \$10.00, I'd pay that all day. If you're getting ten cent clicks, or something like that, and less than one percent of the people are actually buying, you're wasting your money.

Think about that, if one percent of the people at 10 cents, you're spending what, \$10.00 to get a sale? That's crazy. My math might be a little off, but I think you get the point there. Here is the solution to this, and this is why I kind of want to bring all this stuff up, is because there is spectacular confusion in the market as to what's working.

Authors are saying, "It doesn't work for me. Advertising does not work for me." That's not right. What's not working for you is Amazon is not working for you, because you have no idea what's working. Now think about this, if you have the ability to track the effect of your marketing, would you be more inclined to push a little harder? Hell yeah, you would.

Here's the solution: This is the big question, should you be wide, or should you be dedicated to Amazon? The answer is you need to be wide, but you need to be spending money sending traffic to your own website. I'm not talking about having people click through to buy that on Amazon. What you need to be doing is sending people through your own shopping cart.

The technology exists now. They can buy it directly from you, but then read it on a Kindle.

It's super cool. We're actually working on some technology right now for people that's going to help a lot with this, that's really going to go a long way in kind of revolutionizing authors' ability to really see what's working. First of all, let's just look at this for a minute. If you are going to your own page, you now have control. You can split test those landing pages and you get to keep the money, like if you're processing through Stripe or PayPal, or something like that, you get to keep that money.

Here is the most important thing, rather than letting somebody else sell your book for you and hoping that this infinitesimal number of them click the call to action at the back and then join up on your newsletter, so you're like, "Oh, I've got buyer data," now you get 100 percent of your buyer data. Beyond that, now that they're inside of your own compartment, you're going to be able to track what's happening with these people.

You can see, are they buying more books? What is the long-term customer value? You could start bidding for that. You could start advertising and optimizing your advertising to get more people that say buy multiple titles from you. The answer to the big question here is, you should be wide. You absolutely should. You should publish everywhere, because in my opinion, that is free money. You can be Amazon, you can be in iBooks, you could be on Nook and all those things. Absolutely.

That's just a bunch of free money. That should become an afterthought to you selling through your own website, through your own shopping cart, and through your own merchant account. That is where it is. That is where the industry is going. If you haven't thought about that yet, I want you to really think hard about that.

If you've been struggling to see any results whatsoever from your advertising, I would really recommend shifting like this. I really, really recommend it. Once you can see ... what you're doing right now in terms of your advertising, is you are spending money. You are blindfolding yourself, and you are throwing it at a wall, and your kind of lifting up a quarter of the blindfold going, "Did any of that stick?" And then you go, "Dammit." Put it back down, pick up some more money, and throw it again, and hoping that something sticks.

I want to be clear on this, I am not anti-Amazon. I'm really not. I think that they are a phenomenal company. I use them like crazy. They're super cool. They literally have helped build the careers of thousands of thousands of authors through something that never would have existed beforehand. My point is, it's time for everyone to begin the next phase in evolution because the likelihood that they're going to give you the ability to track

your data conversions, to track the conversions, and the likelihood to give you your buyer data, is zero.

There might be some sort of infinitesimally something way below one percent that there might come a day where they can say, "Okay, you can put a tracking pixel on like a Facebook or Google ... tracking pixel on the thank you page. That's possible. But, for them to give you the buyer data? Nope. They will never, ever, ever, ever do that. That is the most important thing that you will ever have in your life.

Think about this, if you've sold 100,000 copies of your book, or they've been downloaded and read, or whatever it is, and you only have a list of 5,000 people, that is the percentage of people that clicked the call to action to that. But, what if you had that 100,000 person list? Think about how much more powerful you would be right now.

This is not without danger, don't get me wrong here, because when you do this, you take responsibility for your business. When you take responsibility for your business, now you need to put up the pages, you need to build this situation. You need to test it, you need to optimize. You need to learn to do stuff, but this is where every other industry is right now. Everybody else is doing this except authors.

Authors have taken this ... and I'm just going to tell you straight up, you guys be taking it easy. You guys have been sleeping on the job. Consequently, you've handed the keys to your kingdom to these massive multi-billion dollar companies. You've done it willingly, and you really didn't think about it because it was like, "Oh, I guess Amazon invented the self-publishing industry for the most part." Guess what? They didn't.

I was self-publishing extremely successfully a long time before Kindle came out. You could do the same thing. In fact, if you sell your book at .99 cents through your own stuff, you're probably going to lose 30 cents, plus 2.9 percent, which I believe comes to something in the neighborhood of like 34 cents. Meaning, you're keeping 60 cents instead of the 35 that Amazon gives you.

Even on that infinitesimal level, you're making more money to drive people into a paid sales process that you can then follow up with your series with 100 percent of the people that buy your book. When they buy, you can automatically put them into an auto-responder sequence that will follow up with them with the following books in your series. Whether your fiction or nonfiction, it doesn't really matter.

This is why, for example, with a lot of the Thrive and Inspire stuff that I'm doing, the books that I'm putting out for Author Platform Rocket and for Thrive and Inspire, we're going to distribute them wide. Absolutely, those are eyeball farms. I would never poo-poo the free traffic that Amazon

sends me, but I'm not going to be exclusive to them because I want my buyer data.

I'm going to drive traffic and sales through my own site. I'm going to sell it at the exact same price that I'm selling it on Amazon, but then I keep the buyer data. I have control of my ads. And then, I know what my long-term value for my customers are going to be because they can go through the book and then I can push them to another product and I can make them another offer, because we have products that are going to be info training courses, and things like that, that are going to be \$200.00-\$500.00, so I can sell a book at a loss but then make it up as I follow up with these folks. That's really how you do it.

Fiction or nonfiction is completely irrelevant because the process is exactly the same. The goal is for you to increase the lifetime value of your customer because the other problem you have ... let's look at how the walls are squeezing you in. Your head is going to be squashed like a melon between these two facts.

The first fact is that you're not getting the buyer data from Amazon. You're leaving the entire follow up sequence to say 95 percent of your readers up to a company that doesn't care about you, and that's not giving you your data. The second piece of this is ... how do you do it? How do you even attempt to do that? You don't. You lose. That's what it is. You have lost.

The next piece of this whole situation is that the cost of advertising is increasing. That is simply a fact. For some people it's increased faster than others. Some markets, like there are some sub-genres in romance, where the costs are getting kind of big. At the same time, you don't know what your cost per acquisition is, you only know what your cost per click is, and your cost per click has no relevance on your cost for acquisition. That's a big deal right there. That's a huge deal.

So, you're throwing money into a black hole. You're getting squeezed between two horrific situations because the time is coming, my good author friend, where getting 20 cent clicks won't be possible anymore. This happened to Google. It wiped out entire businesses that were getting penny clicks when Google Ad works first came out. I was there to watch it. I ran some of those businesses. I got bullied over. I'm like, "Wow, I can't be profitable anymore."

Same thing is literally coming, and it has come, for so many. If you could take a dollar click and within 30 days have that reader ... so, if you get a dollar click, and you know that every time you send that person to that first book that 60 percent of the time, they're going to be buying five books deep because they really love it, because you have your buyer data. You can follow up with them. You follow up with everyone who buys, not

just that tiny little portion that clicks the call to action. You're going to win, because you're going to be able to grow your business in spite of the fact that the ad costs have increased.

This is what it means to run a real business. Right now, most authors are kind of just like ... it's a bunch of money makers. You could even stop giving your books away at this point, because the only reason authors are giving away tons and tons of books like this is because they don't get their data. The only way that they're going to make any money is to hit send. I'm not saying it's the worst thing in the world, I mean it's super cool, that's a great way to grow your business, but you really don't know. You don't know whose buying. You can't. But, with this you can. Now, you have the control. You have the data, you can adjust the page.

You could use something as simple as Lead Pages, PayPal and Book Funnel to deliver your stuff. There's three peas ... that's kind of like duct tape and chewing gum. Don't get me wrong, but it works. It absolutely works. You can deliver that stuff directly to your customers, they can read it on whatever device, and then you have the ability to follow up with them.

There you have it. Some of you are going to hear me on this. I would say that if you are absolutely crushing it ... I've seen this too many times, some algorithmic shift happens, or you put out a book that the market just doesn't resonate with, but because you don't have your buyer data or you don't know who to really push this to ... in fact, we had a client who had a book absolutely bomb. It had nothing ... this is when you know the book is bombing is when you have partners mailing for you, and it still sucks.

Like, that is when you know. It's like, "Uh-uh." That happens a lot. It's like, okay the market didn't go for that book. So, what do you do? Well, you get back up on the pony, you make some modifications, you learn about what happened, and you go again. But, if you have the buyer data, there is a good chance you could have made that book work. A good chance, because you could find that audience based on the ads, and go to poke into the darkness and look at what's converting.

You could sometimes save those kinds of books. So, if you're killing it out there and you're making a ton of money, what you want to do is go get that back catalog that's been sitting there for maybe six to nine months without you paying a lot of attention to it, look at what is older, and get it out of exclusive.

Go wide, and then set it up on your website and create a sales funnel for it. I would say probably put the first in series at 99 cents, and start tracking that and following up with that. Develop your sales funnel on your own terms. Publish everywhere, but focus your traffic on what you can command. If right now, everything is sucking for you because maybe you ran an ad and it worked, then it stopped, or it never really worked, the

reason why is because you're shooting into the darkness wearing a blindfold.

I would challenge you that if you aren't making a livable wage off of your books, even if you're exclusive, guess what? You're not going to miss the money. You're probably not paying your mortgage with that money. I would get out of exclusive, I would go wide, and I would start learning how to do this. Build your career the right way, because you can go find that audience.

Maybe your covers are super wonky. I had someone that messaged in, and I took a look at it. "Well, the reason you're probably having a slump is because your covers are horrible." I'm pretty direct with that kind of stuff, typically. You could go find the people that are going to read that. That's fine. It kind of changes the game in a lot of ways, if you're able to see the results of your marketing and your advertising.

There you go. That's what I have for today. I highly recommend that you take action on this. This is so applicable to every genre and everybody. If you're using your book as a legion for business, publish everywhere to get those extra eyeballs, make sure you have the call to action, of course, don't skip the fundamentals, but then focus on driving traffic to your own site. I cannot stress this enough. It is so freakishly important.

All right. Thanks for tuning in. Go make some money. I'm Johnny Andrews. Talk to you soon.

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