

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. And here's your host, and author, marketing veteran Johnny Andrews.

Johnny Andrews: What is up, folks? It has been a minute. Yes. It's Johnny Andrews, here. Thank you so much for tuning in. No, I have not vanished. I have been very, very busy, and unfortunately, I lost track of time and didn't make you a show. Well, today, we're gonna talk about something that's near and dear to my heart. So thank you for sticking around with me, and I think you're gonna find this very, very useful, and it's all about product positioning, also known as the frame, and that is the context in which you present something. And the reason that we're going to talk about this today is because this is what I have been doing for the past few weeks, and why you have not heard from me on a regular basis, but that'll get fixed. So let's kick this off, shall we?

All right, so if you've been listening to the past few shows, I have been talking a lot about something that is somewhat controversial, and is a topic that comes up in a lot of these different author groups and whatnot,

and that is the idea behind selling books through your own website. And what I've found is, and what we're gonna talk about here, is how do you position something that has a lot of interesting connotations with it, when you bring this stuff up? And so here's why we're talking about this today, because let's say, for example, you have a product that you have put out a training course, or you have a coaching program, or you have something like that, and it's teaching something that is super, super necessary, but maybe the topic just isn't really that sexy. Maybe if you just drop it, people are like, "Yeah, I mean I'm interested, but I don't really know if I want to show up and learn about it on a webinar," kind of thing.

Well that's exactly what happened to me last year when I was first bringing up this topic, publicly at least. I had mentioned it in some different author groups, and had some conversations privately, but this was the first time that I actually kind of got up on a soapbox and was like, "All right, people, let's talk about this." Well what was interesting was I just went straight out and I said, "Okay, this is what this thing is gonna be. Here's what I'm gonna teach, and here's how much it is, and for those of you who want to learn it, I'm going to be taking on a maximum of 30 students." And guess what? I'm gonna tell you this right now. When positioned on a direct situation like that, it was the worst selling offer I have ever made. It was shockingly bad. There was tons of clicks, tons of listens, tons of watches, views I should say, let's at least use the right terminology, and so if people are interested in the topic, why, then, wouldn't they want to invest in some sort of course?

Well I luckily did have a nice number of people join, and the point of that initial thrust, that sort of live, teach it while it's happening kind of situation, was so that they could ask me questions, and what it would allow me to do is learn about how the market perceived this particular situation. And so what I learned from this is that, yeah, selling on your own site is a cool idea, and there's a tiny handful of authors that are doing it right now ... well I should say a tiny handful that are doing it successfully, but there's a ton of negative, false beliefs around it. A ton of them. And the biggest one that we have found, and if you've listened to previous episodes, you know I've talked about some of the findings, is that people will not buy directly from authors, because they will only buy from Amazon.

And so I started to realize, oh, I have to shift how I'm presenting this information. And so this is what's called a frame, all right? And so in this particular situation, the act of selling through your own sites has a large number of benefits, and has very few drawbacks. But in the perception of the market, there are an overwhelming volume of drawbacks, and almost no perceived benefits, and the reason for that is because the vast majority of authors just don't know what is possible, because of the situation with Amazon, where Amazon has given them 100% of the things they need, including basically a website to sell from.

So looking at this, it's like, wow, this is gonna be super technical. There's a ton of moving parts. It's gonna be really hard. I don't even know how to get traffic. Why would I even want to do this, if it's just gonna be tons and tons of work? So what I had to do, then, was frame this up. So the point here is that if you have a topic that is life changing, but it, just in its raw form, doesn't really look that great, because the marketplace has, the minute you say what you want to say, all of a sudden all of these objections just show up that are just kind of baked into the, let's call it the collective subconscious of the folks that you're selling to.

What you have to then do is take a step back and say, "Okay, well what is it that this thing I do does for people, and is there another direction that I could go with this?" And so that's exactly what I did. I'm like, okay, so the act of selling on one's own site isn't the sexiest thing in the world. I can accept that. So let's look at what this actually does. So the first piece of this was well, the vast majority of people who are going to buy a course like this are going to be authors who are actively purchasing ads, or if they're in the beginning stages of their career, understand that that will be necessary.

I'm like, all right, so being that I'm something of an author ads guy, what if I framed this in a different way? Let's not immediately talk about selling on our site. Let's talk about how to improve the effectiveness of your advertising, because that's exactly what happens. Because when you can put a tracking pixel, and when you can see the results of your advertising, which is what was happening with us, we're all of a sudden, now we can say, "Oh, this ad was the one that turned into a sale. This ad turned into a sale, here." And when I was talking about the fact that if you're setting up your ads to optimize for clicks, you're actually setting them up to optimize for the wrong thing. Training the artificial intelligence to do the wrong thing, and to send you, in a lot of cases, send you the wrong kind of people.

So that's what ... that was the foot that I led with. So what I did was I said, okay, well what are the major objections? What are the false beliefs that I have to shatter and then rebuild in order for this conversation to even happen? Because what has to happen is I have to set up a framework where the stories that are being told, that are incorrect, I mean the correct ones, that's fine, but if they're absolutely not correct, if they're just literally groundless fear, those things have to be destroyed. So that was gonna be that number one, this is a huge technical hurdle that you're gonna need tons of technology and all these different kinds of things, so I wrote that down.

The next one was that there were really no perceived benefits, and the reason there was no perceived benefits was because nobody in the publishing industry had ever talked about it, because almost nobody in the publishing industry even knew that it existed, but that was building a list

of actual buyers. Meaning if you were to use a shopping cart, the people come through and they buy from you, they're added to a list of buyers. So number one, it's not technologically difficult. In fact you have to drag your [inaudible 00:07:13] simple. So I have to show this. I have to shatter that belief. The next one I have to shatter, well actually I have to develop, is to show the frustration right now, in the market, where there's people that I've seen who have subscriber lists of tens of thousands, sometimes even hundreds of thousands, and the equation is very simple. You hit send, you sell books. Period, end of story.

But here's the problem with that. Almost nobody knows who actually has purchased from them, and so if you have a list of buyers, versus a list that you have sourced through list swaps, or even giveaways, and all that kind of thing, then you might not have the world's strongest email list, and so the entire industry has been sourcing their leads, not incorrectly, but has been skipping this vital step of actually then running them through a process of separating the buyers from the non-buyers. It can't be done, because you don't get your buyer data if you use Amazon, iBooks, Nook, [Hobo 00:08:06], or any of those places. You only get your buyer data by selling through your own site.

So this massive pain of everyone says I have to build a list, well what they can't tell you, and what they haven't told you yet, is what kind of list to build. So there was the benefit. So there's another narrative that has to be smashed and destroyed, and then you can see, oh, so maybe out of these 200,000 people that I have, maybe they're not all buyers. Maybe that's why, when I hit send, I sell maybe 10, 15 books. That's a common problem. All right, let's go to that one. So we have technological hurdle, smashed. We have, we can fix my list with this, awesome. First of all smashed, and then built back up, because it's only half of the conversation that the entire industry's been having, literally, since 2007, on these things. And really, just showing, okay, you can make your marketing far more effective, and these are the benefits to this. Not only that, but you can build an audience, now, based off of purchasing behavior, rather than interest targeting. Ah ha! That's a big one. Might be a little abstract, and so let's show this.

So these were the big ones that had to be overcome, and then obviously, other things came up, like well, about the GDPR, and what's going on in Facebook, and different things like that, that everybody seems to be just, I mean there's so much misinformation out there on all of that stuff, it's crazy. So I addressed that stuff, too. And it was really interesting to watch this happen, and so because I framed this as a way to repair and improve upon your marketing, because that's exactly what it is, and then after I'd shattered enough of those beliefs, and rebuilt them, then I say, "Would you like to see how I'm getting this information? Would you like to see how I get to see my ads work?" And then I say, "Well," the way that I ask

the question is actually, "Well how did I get all this information from Amazon?" And the answer is, I didn't.

Amazon will never give you this data. I got it through selling on my own site. But what's awesome about this is now their minds are opened. Their minds are open, and available, because if you see, so this is the power of the frame. If you just present something and say, "Hey, here's a webinar, we're gonna introduce you to the benefits of selling on your own website," nobody cares. Okay? Literally, nobody cares. But it's literally one of the most transformational things that you could do, as an author. If you've been in the Amazon thing since the beginning, to add this as a piece to your business, could change your life. It's incredible. So that's really where I came from with this, and said, "Okay, let's turn this, and give it a marketing spin, and a hook, to show what's actually possible, so that those immediate, negative, incorrect stories that boil up, I can smash them before I've even introduced them to the concept of the actual, physical, on-site sale.

So that is exactly what I did and, as you might imagine, this course has been selling like crazy. It's awesome. We're creeping up on almost 200 copies moved in the first, not even two weeks, with this thing. And I've been able to automate a lot of the process of it, automate a lot of the marketing. I have, probably, a couple hundred dollars a day ... not probably, I definitely do, I see the bill. A couple hundred dollars a day of Facebook ads going toward this thing, and the webinar has been killing it, and people are excited to see this. They're like, "Oh, all right!" These are some new things that authors had never really seen before, and it's true. Every aspect of that is true. So this is how you need to market, by using these ad platforms that have evolved past where the publishing industry is, at this moment in time.

Not only that, all sorts of different free ways, 'cause there's lots of authors that are on a budget, and so you've got to address that, and those kinds of things. So it was a very interesting process to go through, to walk out in late 2017, have a lot of interest shown, but then have the reality of that be, "No, I don't think I want to do that," and to say, "Oh, why is this?" So then I learned why that was. So initially, I thought this was gonna kill it, and it was almost a complete flop until I figured out, oh, the language going on, the stories that are in the heads of these folks, of these authors, was completely different from what I was expecting it to be. And so I had to create the right frame. I had to set the stage, and frame this picture, and what I painted in the picture was very, very, very specific.

And it was specifically designed to educate them, while at the same time smashing these negative beliefs and these false stories that almost everybody seemed to have, and then rebuild them with the reality of what it is, and so once that happened, now we can have a conversation where it's not adversarial, at this point, because there's so many negative things

in their minds. Now it's positive. Now they're excited. Now there's like, "Oh, this actually sounds kind of awesome," and then we take them step by step by step through the entire process, that you can see, and show all the benefits to this thing, and it worked like a super champ.

So this is something just, I wanted to give you sort of a breakdown from my own experience that, if you have something out there that you have put it out there, pitched it toward the masses, let's say, and maybe it wasn't very well received, what I would challenge you to do is talk to the people who have bought it, and really dig in there. Almost do a one-on-one call, 'cause I did that, with a few of the authors who were in the group. I had that conversation with them, and what ended up happening was it opened my eyes to the reality of, oh, I need to present it this way, 'cause if I don't, then we'll have this happen, because I was on ... I still am on, very much, a mission to have this become the next evolution in self publishing. I think it's very important that this is there.

So if you have something in your business, or if you're about to release something, I would say, test the conversation that your marketing is having with your prospects. That's gonna be probably one of the most valuable things that you could possibly do, because when you do that, you're gonna know what those negative beliefs are that might be preceding your ability to even get to the benefits of what it is that you're selling. And consequently, I can tell you this right now, is that the webinar, it has been edited many, many times since I've done it, I do it live quite a bit, now, but beyond that, what's happened is now I've learned how to have a better conversation, even after learning all this stuff, I've now continue the conversation, and continue to ask the questions, and answer the questions of the authors, while live, because all of that is a huge chance for growth.

It's a really awesome chance for you to grow and develop, or in this particular case, just for me to do that, and to learn about maybe I can present this even better. Maybe I can help even more people. And so it all comes down to how do you frame this. If the conversation ... it's like delivering the punchline before building up the joke. It doesn't work, and especially not in this particular sense, especially when the solution to the problem that most people don't even know they have is not particularly sexy. You can see how that might work. It's like, "Oh, well this is ... it's kind of a boring subject." Well let's make it exciting! Let's actually show the reality of what this does for you. Getting paid instantly. Getting a list of actual buyers that you can pull off of your list, and now, when you hit send on an email, to sell a book, and 300 people unsubscribe, well they're not on the buyer list, so why do you care? They were just people you were paying to have on your auto-responder in the first place. Congratulations, you just saved yourself money, time, and hassle. You can delete them now.

There are huge benefits all over the place. So anyway, I'm really excited that this is going on right now. So if you want, you can take a look at this stuff. It's AuthorPlatform.com forward slash register, and you can go through the webinar. You could see the evolution of that process right there, everything that I've been talking about today is right there. You can just see the thing, and sign up for ... I do this every night, 7:00, and then a couple others randomly throughout a couple of days and things like that, so check that out. You might learn something. Look at it with an ear and an eye for what the frame up process is, so that a transformational outcome that no one even knows they need can be delivered correctly. And from a sales perspective, it works really well. So try that also in your business. I would very much challenge you to look at places that, if something isn't performing maybe as well as you would like it to, how can you change the framework so that maybe make it a little more sexy, and a little more palatable, and a little more exciting to those potential end users.

Especially if you have something that can give you such transformational value. That's a really big deal. That's a really big deal. If you could change lives with the thing that you're doing, you actually owe it to them to figure out how to best communicate your idea. And I know these shows are very stream-of-consciousness, but that's what it is. That's all this boils down to is effective communication to the right group of people at the right time. And if you're off on that, then you're not gonna do as well as you could. All right? So act on this! Really, get up there and write it down. Write the frame down, figure out what your correct frame is, figure out what the negative beliefs are that you need to smash and then rebuild with the realities of them, and get out there and give those things a try, and see if you can't move more people that way. All right, I'm Johnny Andrews, Author Platform Rocket, thank you for being so patient. I will see you in the next episode.

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, and 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. 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 Johnny Andrews, and that's it for today. I'll see you on the next show.

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