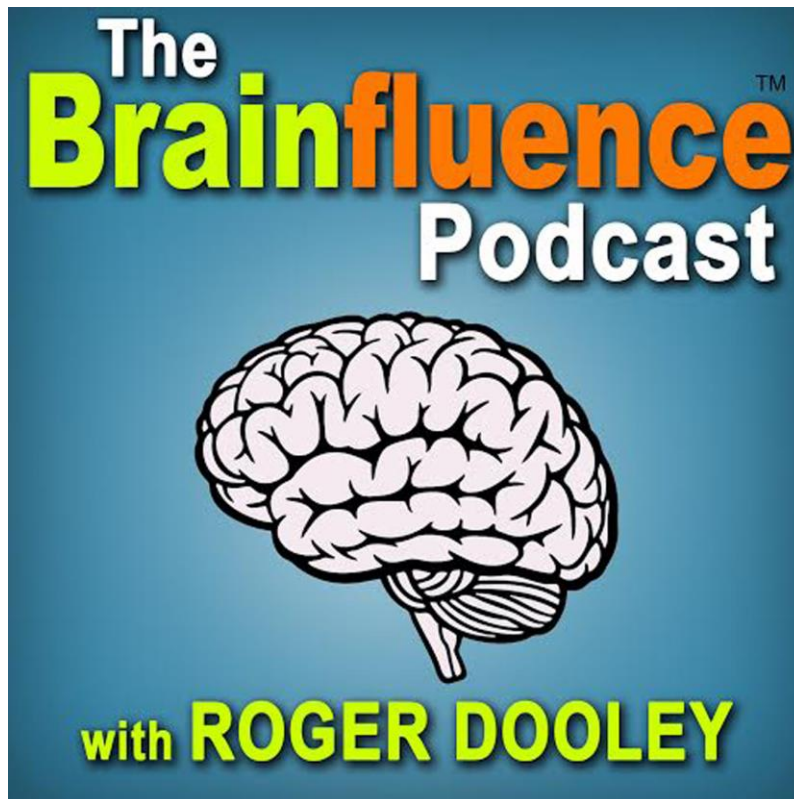


Ep #137: Publish and Market Your Book with Tom
Corson-Knowles



Full Episode Transcript

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Roger Dooley

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Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley, author, speaker and educator on neuromarketing and the psychology of persuasion. Every week, we talk with thought leaders that will help you improve your influence with factual evidence and concrete research. Introducing your host, Roger Dooley.

Roger: Welcome to The Brainfluence podcast. I'm Roger Dooley. This week we're returning to a topic that oddly enough was one of our more popular episodes, book marketing. Back in episode 70 we had book marketing expert Tim Grahl on the show to tell us how best-selling authors like Dan Pink and Tim Ferriss launch best sellers that hit the New York Times list. I guess this week has a different perspective on book marketing. He's an author and book marketer focused on self-publishing in general and Kindle books in particular. He's the author of 26 books including his best seller The Kindle Publishing Bible. He teaches authors how to publish and market their books and has an independent publishing operation to assist those authors who need a little more help. Welcome to the show, Tom Corson-Knowles.

Tom: Thanks for having me, Roger. It's great to be here.

Roger: Great. Well, Tom, you and I have something in common. The little community of Granger, Indiana. I lived there years ago. Perhaps too long to have encountered you. You're a bit younger than I am. Where are you located now?

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Tom: Yeah, I'm in Kauai, Hawaii right now.

Roger: That's great. Another refugee from snowy Indiana. I'm in Austin, Texas, and it's been a couple of years since we've seen a snowflake here. We do occasionally see that flake or two, but not much more than that. I have to admit I was never so happy as when I sold my snow blower and my snow shovels.

Tom: That's a great feeling, right?

Roger: Yeah. Yeah, just knowing that you're not going to be out there in February with the ice crystals blowing back in your face at 6:00 in the morning or 5:00 in the afternoon and it's 10 above out. That was not fun. I mean, snow is beautiful when you're looking at it from inside with a fire in the fireplace, and every has this nice white frosty coating, but when you've got to remove large quantities of it from your driveway the second time in a day then it gets pretty old.

Tom: Definitely. I totally agree on that.

Roger: Yeah, so Tom, you are a grad of Bloomington's Kelly business school. How did you get started as an author?

Tom: I actually started my freshman year of business school just writing. It wasn't even meant to be a book. It was just like this personal manifesto of what I thought it meant to lead a

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successful life because my classmates, their dream job was to go to Wall Street and become investment bankers and work like 100 hours a week in a cubicle. For me that was like my nightmare, and I was really afraid of what my life would look like if I kept going down that path. I just instinctively opened up this document on my computer and started writing about what I thought it meant to be successful beyond just being financially successful but having good health and good relationships. Being able to do work that actually mattered and made a difference in the world. That's how I got started, and some friends and family encouraged me to get the book published and turn it into a book.

I tried that route. Tried going traditional publishing route for six years and just failed miserably. I couldn't get an agent or publisher to really even respond to most of my phone calls or emails or letters, so about five years ago friends mentioned offhand, "Why don't you just self-publish your book on Kindle?" So I did that and my sales just started to take off faster than I imagined possible, and that's how I got started.

Roger: Well, that's great. Had you gotten the proposal phase and what not as you were trying to shop your idea around to publishers?

Tom: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, I wrote the book proposal and went through that whole process, but didn't really know what I was doing. Didn't have a mentor to show me the way, and didn't have any success.

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Roger: It's certainly a real challenge, and I think that people don't always recognize. They think, you know, book proposal is something, oh you just put your idea down and float it to publishers. I've seen recommendations if you really want to go the traditional route you should spend probably three to six months just on your proposal. Which of course many people spend less time than that writing the entire book. I was fortunate. I didn't have to go through a really heavy duty proposal process with mine. It was a little bit accelerated, so it wasn't too painful. I certainly feel that pain because I got started with an agent who I could not produce a satisfactory proposal for the agent, much less a publisher. That was frustrating.

Tom: Yeah.

Roger: What was the original topic of your idea?

Tom: Originally it was just about how to be successful. Like I said, it was just my personal manifesto, and then it turned into ... I've since rebranded it, but it originally was called Rich by 22. That was kind of my dream. I wanted to be by the time I graduated from college financially successful, but also have the freedom with my own business to be able to do what I want to do with my life. Have good health and work a sane schedule and have good relationships.

Roger: Yeah, sounds almost like a four hour work week philosophy. Not necessarily involving four hours, but that sort of lifestyle

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driven location independent concept.

Tom: Exactly. Yeah, I mean it just seemed so obvious to me growing up and seeing my classmates at business school and seeing my parents friends who are successful financially but miserable in other areas of their life. It just seemed obvious to me that there was more to life than making money and that money was really important, but there's a lot of other things going on as well. For me it just seemed important to kind of get clear on what I really wanted to achieve with my life. Because it's easy to kind of get lost as you go through life and start to chase your career and chase your dreams, and try to just follow the heard and do what everyone else is doing. For me that was just not a fulfilling route to go.

Roger: Mm-hmm (affirmative) Yeah, so self-publishing gives you as an author a lot more freedom with your content. You make the book whatever length you want. You're not hitting some arbitrary limit that the publisher sets. You can choose what to include and how to illustrate it and so on. I'm thinking that's sort of a two edged sword. One thing that the traditional publisher does is bring sort of a level of quality, and you know that if it's got that imprint it's probably going to be okay. It may not be a brilliant book, but everything is going to be spelled right. It's going to look presentable. It seems like doing it yourself entails the risk of having the book appear to have been done by yourself. What do you think about that?

Tom: Yeah, I mean absolutely. There's a lot of authors who rush through things and don't hire an editor, and don't study writing,

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and make lots of mistakes, and that's normal. I mean, it's part of pretty much any business. I think if you're going about it and you want to be successful at it, like anything in business you have to either learn from your own mistakes or learn from other people's mistakes, right? You have to take those lessons and apply them and actually improve the product. You have to improve the book.

I know I've made hundreds of updates to my book since I started publishing five years ago and made new improvements as I learned along the way. Yeah, it's definitely an obstacle to success because if you have a book that is poorly edited or poorly formatted or a terrible book cover design, you know these things are really going to impact your sales, and you're not going to have the kind of success you're looking for.

Roger: Mm-hmm (affirmative) Maybe you can get to some of those things that you found you could improve as you gain more experience, but I guess one reason my conversation with Tim Grahl was so popular with the audience was that I'm sure many of our listeners have some kind of a book idea in their head. They may not have gotten very far with it. They have that idea, and they think that given the opportunity they could write it, and people would be interested in what they had to say. If a perspective author came to you and said, "Okay. I've got this idea, and I've tested the concept a little bit with my friends or business associate, and it seems reasonable. Where do I begin?" Where should that person begin?

Tom: Yeah, it's a great question. When someone comes to me with

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that question I like to step back and actually go back to the idea generation phase. Because I've kind of broken down the creativity process, right? It really starts with idea generation. A lot of people what happens is you have a great idea in the shower. You have a great idea in a conversation with someone, and you just kind of fall in love with your idea, right? Like the typical entrepreneurial dilemma is you fall in love with your idea. You think it's your baby, right? You want to take care of it.

For most people you have more than one book in you, or more than one book idea in you. I found that for creative people it's really important to step back and get clear and organize all of your ideas. All of your thoughts, so spend 15 minutes, 30 minutes just brainstorming all the different topics you could write a book about. All the different book ideas you have. You have this list of 20 or 30 or more book ideas, and even if you never use any of those other ideas and you just go with your original idea, that's fine. What I've found is that by organizing everything, getting it down in a list, it prevents that kind of shiny penny syndrome, right? Where you're kind of halfway through a project, and then you get bored, and you have this new idea and you go chasing that new idea and you never really finish anything.

I found that just the simple act of writing things down, having everything organized, allows you to really express your creativity to the utmost and not get distracted, right? Because once you have all those 20, 30 ideas, then you can narrow it down to which ones are you most passionate about. Which are you most excited about. Which make the most sense from a business standpoint, kind of a market research standpoint.

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Then once you've done that research you can get crystal clear on, okay I'm picking this one book idea because. Instead of saying because I think it's great, or because you love it, or because you had a good conversation with someone about it, you actually have some kind of market research and data behind it and some other things to compare it to, to say, "Yeah, it is better than all these other ideas, so that's why I'm going down this one route."

It allows you to move forward with a lot more commitment because it does take a big commitment to actually write the book and get it published and start marketing it and continue to market it through its lifespan.

Roger: Right. Well, Tom I think you're making a good point because a book is in essence a product, and we see the exact same thing when companies come up with product ideas and develop them. All too often a company will say, "Oh, we've got this great idea for a product. We know people are going to love it." Without really researching whether that product is meeting a pain point for their customers or that there's really demand for that exact product, or what that product should look like or the features it should have, they just sort of forge ahead because it's so exciting. Perhaps it's using some cool idea or technology they have and then when the product is done it fails. It doesn't get traction because there wasn't really a need for it. I can certainly see that books are the same way.

One thing that you can do I guess is treat a book as sort of a work of art. That I'm going to create this thing for myself even if

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nobody else cares about it. It's what I want to write about. I think probably most of us want to not lonely scratch our own itch, but also in doing so to meet the needs of other people and provide them with a benefit. What you're saying really doesn't just apply to books. It's anything. Before you invest a lot of time and effort into that development process and creation process, step back and make sure that people are really going to want that.

Tom: Absolutely. Yeah, I mean it's a simple economic principal of opportunity cost, right? If you're going to write a book or create a product or a service, it takes time. It takes a big investment. There's a cost to that investment. If you haven't explored what other opportunities for available for you, and you just have one idea, and you're just following that one idea down the rabbit hole, you don't really have a good basis with which to make a decision. In fact, you're not even really making a decision at all. You're just following the latest thread, but you haven't actually stepped back to look at what are your other options? What are your other opportunities? And comparing those opportunities to figure out which one is actually best for you right now.

Roger: Mm-hmm (affirmative) Right. One thing that you've got if you're self-publishing is the flexibility to make the book how long you want it. You don't have to deliver a 60,000 to 70,000 word manuscript to the publisher which is what they might think a commercial book should run. I guess one piece of conventional wisdom that I've heard, and you're much more in the Kindle space than I am, is that if you do one book in a space you're actually much better off doing several books in that space so that you can have that follow on sale and sort of develop a

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reputation as an author in that niche. Do you agree with that strategy? Rather than writing the 60,000 word manuscript with it be better, if the topic allowed you to do that, to break that into perhaps multiple books?

Tom: Yeah, I mean, in certain situations it definitely makes sense to do that, so it really just depends on what your goals are as an author. What your goals are with the book. At any business if you only have one product to sell it's going to be tough to really grow that business and scale that business, but if you start adding up sells and down sells and monthly memberships, and you start finding other ways to add value to your existing customer base you're just going to increase your profits more, right?

It's a very similar principal with a book. If you're an author, and you have one romance novel or one self-help book and you have nothing else to offer your audience, then it's great if you have a thousand copies or a million copies sold. But if you can add some kind of other thing to offer them. It doesn't have to be a book. It can be coaching services, or an online course, or a supplement. There's all different kinds of things you can add based on your particular business and industry to add more value to your existing audience. It really does make sense once you have your first book out. It makes a lot of sense to kind of look at what the next step is.

Even before you write the book you can take a look at what your plans are and figure out if multiple books make more sense for you, or if just one book is good. I think one reason to

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be cautious with the multiple book approach is that you don't want to get in this kind of habit of just writing a whole bunch of me too books, right? You don't want to write the next Think and Grow Rich which is really just another me too book. You want something that's going to be unique, that's going to stand out, that's going to really fill a need in the market place that people are going to be buying not just when you launch the book but a year from now, five years from now, 10 years from now or more.

Roger: Right. Say one of our listeners now has the book concept pretty well nailed down. They've tested it a little bit, researched it, and think that it's potentially got a place in the market and it can help readers. They've begun the writing process, but we know the books don't market themselves. You just sort of push the publish button, and it's probably just going to lay there on Amazon and never be found. What are the steps that that author should be doing even before the book is ready to go to start building either the platform or whatever else is needed to promote the book?

Tom: Yeah, so there's a lot that goes into it. I think the first thing once you have your idea is you really have to do your market research well, right? You really have to understand your market. Who is your customer? Who is your reader? What do they want? Right? Easiest way to do that. It's so easy today. You can just go to Amazon.com. You can type in key words related to your book, right? If you're writing about dog training, type in dog training. Find all the best, best-selling books about dog training on Amazon, and read their reviews because customers are telling you everything single day in your

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particular niche or market what they like and what they don't like about the existing products on Amazon as well as books on Amazon, right?

You can go and find out exactly what readers like about existing content, and what they don't like about the existing content. You can create this list of the most common things that your readers are saying they really like and they really don't like in your market, and then you can start to see where the gaps are in that market. You can see where the opportunities are to add value that no one else is doing or no one else is doing well or no one else is doing the right way, right? This is just a huge book marketing hack that it shocks me that more authors don't do this, but there's just so much information out there. There's not just Amazon reviews. There's Good Reads. There's all these different ways that you can find exactly what your readers will want if you're just willing to put the time and effort and energy into it.

Roger: Once again, there's that similarity with other kinds of products because there are in every product category reading the reviews and looking for those pain points is a recommendation. If you're going to make, say, a kitchen utensil, a pancake turner, what's the first thing you do? You go out and read about the existing pancake turners. See if they're not all that well rated. If there's a bunch of five star pancake turners with great reviews, and they're at or below your price point you're probably not going to be successful. If you're fortunate you can find a lot of people really don't like their pancake turners, and here's why. Again, that's a lesson that doesn't just apply to book marketing but could apply to just about any kind of product.

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Tom: Absolutely. Yeah, you just have to understand who your customers are and what they want. It's like the simple formula in business is find out what your customers want, go get it, and then go ahead and give it to them and let them know you have it for them.

Roger: Right. Back to the question, though. Are there some marketing things that authors should be doing to prepare for the launch day? Because eventually that launch day will come. The book will be written and edited and formatted and ready to go, and it seems like that's a little late to start planning for it. That was practically my process with my hardcover. Not quite that bad, but close enough. My platform wasn't particularly strong, and I hadn't done a lot of prelaunch activity. Certainly I could see where a better preparation job that I'd start much earlier, could have resulted in more sales right out of the gate. Rather than the sort of gradual build. What are some things that should be happening early in the process?

Tom: Yeah, absolutely. Once you've done that market research you should have this good idea of kind of where the market is, what the existing offerings are, and where the opportunities are. That's when you want to start to really create your brand, and your brand is just simply your message. What is your promise? What is the one thing that's going to set you apart from everyone else? It's tough for a lot of authors to do this because they think, well you know there's so much in my book, right? Your book Brainfluence is a great example. There's tons of information there, and it's applicable not just to fortune 500 CEOs but to PR firms to small business owners to artists to

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anyone, right?

It's really easy to come out and say, "Oh, well. I'm going to teach you marketing for everyone." Right? And it's just this very boring brand that just tries to appeal to everyone rather than honing in on what is that one thing that makes your brand unique. Like right for you. It's neuromarketing. That's what makes you unique, right? You have to find that message. Everyone has to find what makes you different, right? It doesn't have to be better. Everyone's trying to be better, better, better, but really you just have to be different. You have to stand out in people's minds, so that when they see your book, when they see what you do, they see that you're different from everyone else out there.

That's crucial that you get that messaging right. Once you have your messaging everything falls from there, right? Once you have that brand strategy that's when you figure out okay how are you going to build your audience? How are you going to build your platform? How are you going to market and promote yourself, and what message are you going to share? Once you have that then I think it's time for the author to really focus on what are your strengths. Okay? Because there's millions of ways to market now days. I've seen authors literally create six figure, seven figure businesses just almost exclusively on twitter or almost exclusively on LinkedIn or almost exclusively on Pinterest or Facebook or YouTube or all these different channels, right?

It can become really overwhelming if you try to do everything.

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Just like with the brand strategy where you want that one unique feature to stand out that separates you from everyone else, you want to focus on that one unique strength you have and then use that to create a content, to create education, to create marketing around attracting a fan base to your work and to what you're doing, right? If you love speaking then you should probably be doing public speaking YouTube videos. Maybe podcast interviews like this.

If you love writing you should be writing. Writing guest articles and writing in Forbes and Huffington Post and all these different websites, right? It comes down to really getting your brand right, getting your messaging right, and then aligning your marketing strategies with what your actual strengths are. Because your end goal is essentially just to build fans. You just want people to know who you are, to understand your message and to resonate with that, and to follow you whether that's on Facebook or Twitter or your email list or your website or where have you, right?

I think that's the most important thing is to really just focus on what is that one core strength you have, and how can you make the best use of that one strength? You can take that skill for speaking and turn that not just into a career speaking at events and selling your books at events, but also online by recording that content and repurposing it on videos and podcasts and other things like that.

Roger: Right. I'm sure that choosing that channel depends a lot on your topic and your audience, too. If your book is about cake

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decorating then probably Pinterest or Instagram would be good choices. On the other hand if it's a business book, not so much. Even there I've heard of folks effectively leveraging Instagram by doing sort of business motto things and what not and ending up getting huge traction. Although when Tim Grahl was on his opinion was that social media is not ... I mean it's great for developing familiarity with an author, and sort of building the rest of the platform, but it's really hard to sell books that way. In other words an author might have 50,000, 100,000 followers, but they're just not going to move a lot of copies through that channel compared to their own mailing list where those folks tend to be much more engaged and much better prospects. Of course building that mailing list is a lot tougher than, say, building Twitter followers.

Tom: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, the email list I think is kind of the most crucial piece to the puzzle today. Once you have the branding and the strategy right. Because if you mess up the branding, if you mess up the strategy, if you mess up the writing process, it doesn't really matter how much of a budget you have for marketing, your rest isn't going to resonate with people and it's just going to drop. You're not going to get the results, right?

Once you have that honed in you have to have a way to connect with your audience long term. The problem with Twitter and Facebook and Instagram is you don't own that platform. You don't own your Facebook fan page, so Facebook could rip it down tomorrow. The website can change. They can change their algorithm which they have recently, and now instead of 10s of thousands of people seeing your post only a few hundred people see them.

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All these different things can happen if you're using what's called rented media, right? You're using these other websites to build your platform, but you don't have your own platform. The email list is the one thing you can control really. That and your website is to build your audience. To have people sign in, sign up, and stay in contact with them no matter what happens, right? You're always going to have that data base.

One of the problems with being an author whether you're self-published or traditionally published, anytime you sell a book to a retailer whether it's in a physical store, or online like Amazon, Barnes and Nobles, you are never going to get the customer's information. You're not going to get their name, their phone number, their email, nothing. If you're not actively building your data base then you're missing out on the number one asset in business which is your list of customers. The email list is really just the simplest most effective way to do that. The email marketing institute released a study a couple years ago that the average return on investment for email marketing is 38X, so for every \$1 the average business owner spends on email marketing they're getting \$39 in revenue. I've just never seen anything else out there that's getting that kind of return on investment consistently across almost every single industry.

Roger: Mm-hmm (affirmative) You know, I've heard probably dozens of author podcasts, and one of the most common things that they're asking, "Well, gee, what would you do differently?" Or, "Tell us a mistake that you made." Almost to a person it's I did not start building my email list early enough because initially might be blogging and you're getting traffic, but the importance

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of capturing people and making them part of a tighter knit community that you can stay in contact with really just doesn't seem that important. Particularly if it's not monetized, or you're writing for your own benefit or just because you like influencing people and so on. Then suddenly it comes time to market the book, and you realize that you've got 327 people on your mail list, and that's going to kind of limit the impact it will have.

Yeah, I would certainly recommend to any would be author to think about that. Particularly if you already have some type of a platform like a blog or a website that people come to. This raises the next question, Tom. How as an author do you balance these activities? Because I know that I run into this conflict constantly where I know I need to keep building my platform. I need to keep engaging the folks that listen to me or read my stuff and what not. Which means creating now content, creating now podcasts, creating now blog posts, maybe occasionally guest posting other places and so on. That conflicts with other activities such as writing the next book, and there's this constant sort of tension between how much time do you spend on a platform and both maintaining and building. How much time do you spend on writing?

Then of course many folks have other activities, too. They have a day job. They have a consulting business or something else that actually pays the bills. Because for most folks being an author is not going to be a full time well-paying job. It may be a full time job, but the well-paying unless you're very lucky will be questionable. You'll have to have either other products or other services that you're offering, or perhaps if you're doing it on a part time basis have an actual job. You've got this balancing act

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going on. How do you sort that out?

Tom: Well, I think again it comes down to your branding and your strategy and your market and the market research, right? If you're a romance novelist you probably don't need a marketing strategy per se. Your marketing strategy is probably going to be having your email list, maybe having a website, and then just focusing on releasing more books because the market is so big. Once you have some readers they're going to buy every book you put out, right? It's different for every author and every market, so you have to figure out what's going on in your market. Where are the opportunities in your market?

If you're a nonfiction author it's really going to come down to education, right? If your customers or your potential readers know enough about you, who you are, and what you do, and how you can add value to their lives, they're going to buy your books. In that case it's more about how do you build that platform. How do you get people to find out who you are, connect with you, sign up for your email list outside of Amazon and other retailers. It really varies from market to market based on what your strategy is going to be. At the end of the day most authors are going to have to definitely have that balance like you said between writing the next book and marketing and platform building.

What I found is really helpful is really stepping back and putting important tasks in your calendar, right? If you know you have to write your book, and you're having trouble and you're procrastinating and you're not getting it done, schedule that

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writing time in your calendar, right? If you're having trouble building your platform, you haven't set up your email list yet, and you've been putting it off for weeks or months, schedule in your calendar. Say hey next weekend I'm going to figure out from 9am to 2pm on a Saturday I'm going to do whatever it takes to figure out how to get this to work and how to take that next step along with your business.

I think that is a great tool that people fail to use. We make an appointment. If you've got an appointment for 9am next Tuesday to see the doctor you're going to show up. You're not going to miss that appointment. A lot of times we don't make that same level of commitment to our own success and our own dreams, and I think that's what's really acquired. In this business and pretty much any business if you want to be successful you have to commit to success. You have to commit to doing the activities that are going to make you successful. The easiest way for me to do that is just put it in a calendar. That way you lock that time out, and nothing else can get in the way of that. You know because it's in your calendar you're going to show up, and you're going to get to work, and you're going to get it done.

Roger: Let me change gears a little bit and ask you about reviews. Reviews are really important part of selling stuff these days. They probably affect Amazon's search algorithm. Also they certainly affect potential reader perception if you have very few reviews or if they're not good you're probably not going to sell too many books compared to a larger number of largely positive reviews. Do you have any good hacks for getting people to review? Because I think that I've seen best-selling books that

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really have very few reviews on Amazon, and on the other hand often books that clearly aren't necessarily mass distribution or really huge audience type book may have a much larger number. Are there any tricks or techniques that you can recommend?

Tom: The easiest way to get great reviews, and one important thing about reviews is you want good reviews. You don't want to ask your neighbor and your best friend to leave you reviews on Amazon. For example, if you ask someone in your own household to leave a review for you on Amazon, Amazon is just going to delete that because they're going to check your IP address and see it's the same and they're going to know something fishy is going on there. They'll delete that review right away. You really want high quality reviews from your ideal readers. The easiest way to do that, it takes work but it's going to be really quality and lots of reviews. It's just go to Amazon and what you do is you find the top books in your market, and you can look at the reviewers who have reviewed those other books in your market. You can click their profile, and in their profile about five to 10 percent of Amazon customers have in their Amazon customer profiles their email address.

You can either hire an assistant to do this for you. You can do it yourself which takes a long time, or there's actually software out there which we can link ... if you want that will do this for you. They'll essentially just scrape all those emails into a data base. Then you have this email list of people who have reviewed books in your market. Then you can send them a personalized email that says, "Hi, Joe. I saw you read 4 Hour Work Week." Or whatever. "And my book is similar to that. Here's what my

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book is about. If you're interested in a free review copy I'd love to get your honest feedback on it and see what you think. Just let me know and I'm happy to send you a free review copy. Thanks so much." Add your signature and you're good to go.

Then you just send out those personal emails and then you'll get a ton of people responding to you who want that review copy, and you'll get a ton of reviews that way. The good thing about this is that you're getting reviews from people who actually care about your market, right? They actually are your ideal readers, and that's one big mistake a lot of authors make. Especially self published folks. When they go to market their book and try to get all these random people to buy their book. They just want anyone to buy their book, and the problem with that is that the algorithm on Amazon uses data science to find out who is the best person most likely to buy your book.

If you have random people buying your book you might have a book on marketing, neuromarketing, but if all the first 25 people that buy your book are just random people there's going to be the section underneath your book that says customers who bought this item also bought, right? If that list of books related to yours ends up being unrelated, like untargeted lists, then what happens is now you have your book on marketing is being recommended to readers who are reading romance novels.

What happens is your clicks to conversions ratio on Amazon goes down dramatically. Instead of having one out of 10 people who click your book buying, you have one out of 100. Now Amazon looks at that and says, "Hey, no one actually wants to

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buy this book, so we're going to stop promoting it." That's how you kind of have this Amazon kiss of death, right? Because you've messed up the algorithms that are essentially their job is to find out who are the ideal readers for your book. If the first people who are buying your book are untargeted readers, random readers, you're going to get really bad results. That's definitely how I would start is just targeting your ideal customers to be the first people to buy your book until Amazon picks up and starts promoting it. Then you can do a bigger wider book launch. That's what I would recommend.

Roger: Mm-hmm (affirmative) We're just about out of time. Let me ask you one last question particularly for the Kindle market. What about free days, discount days and that sort of thing? I've heard sort of mixed reviews on that from authors that whether they have any kind of lasting positive impact, or whether they're worth doing or not worth doing. What's your take?

Tom: Yeah, I mean, the thing is you're going to get mixed reviews on everything, right? Anything in life some people are going to try it and it works. Some people are going to try it and it didn't work. There's two key kinds of promotions you can do on Amazon Kindle if your book is in KDP select which is an exclusive program for 90 days on Amazon where you can do special promotional opportunities.

One of the is a KDP select free promotion where your book is offered for free for five days. The other one is like a Kindle countdown deal where your book is at a discount so maybe 99 cents or \$1.99 or \$2.99 for up to five or seven days. These

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promotional opportunities are great. The Kindle countdown deals first and foremost, that's what I recommend for most people if you have an audience already. Because what's going to happen is you're going to get a whole lot more sales at 99 cents during that short window. Amazon is going to have this little countdown button next to your book that's going to have that sense of urgency to get more people to click your book and to buy it and to convert. You're going to jump up your sales ranking on Amazon really dramatically in the paid Kindle store.

If you have no audience yet. No following. No platform. You're just starting out. It's probably going to be pretty tough unless you have a good marketing budget and a good marketing plan to get a bunch of downloads doing a promotion like that. What you might want to do is do a free book promotion. Give your book away free for five days, but make sure in your book at the beginning of your book and the back of your book you have a call to action asking them to sign up for your free newsletter or free report or whatever it is you're getting people to sign up for your email newsletter, so you're building email leads.

You might get 5,000 or 10,000 or more free downloads and a couple hundred, a couple thousand new email subscribers, and that's how you can launch your platform really, really quickly. Is it right for everyone, every author? No, but you have to find some way to get your list built, right? To build up your audience. To get fans. If you're brand new with no audience, doing that for your promotion can be a great way to get started.

Roger: Right. I think that's a tip that probably applies to just about any

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book situation. If you can include a call to action. Even in a paper book you can do that. Although you obviously can't click it, but give people a reason to go to your website. Offer them a free work book or bonus materials or something to get them to your website where you can then hopefully convert them into part of your list and platform.

Tom: Exactly. Yeah, I mean you have to ... It's like the simple principal of marketing, right? You have to ask people for the sale. If you're in a sales meeting you have to ask them to buy. If they're on your website you have to have a button that says buy now. If you don't have that, if you don't have that in your book to ask people to sign up for email lists no one is going to do it. Then you're going to say, "Oh, well email marketing didn't work for me. No one signed up." Well, if you don't ask anyone they're not going to say yes. You want to take advantage of every opportunity without spamming people and being really annoying, but take advantage of every opportunity you have to ask people to take that next step to connect with you more. To come deeper into your business and more connected with your business. That's how you build a real business and a real brand is by asking people to get involved.

Roger: Great. Well, let me remind our audience that we are speaking with Tom Corson-Knowles, book publishing entrepreneur and the other of The Kindle Publishing Bible along with 25 other titles. Tom, how can our listeners find you and your stuff online?

Tom: You can check out the blog with tons of free checklists, downloads and resources on writing publishing and marketing

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books at TCKpublishing.com. I also have a podcast show where every single week we interview a best selling author to share what's working right now in the industry to build their business and build their fans at publishingprofitspodcast.com.

Roger: Great. Well, we will link to those places along with any of the other resources we talked about in our conversation in the show notes page at rogerdooley.com/podcast. Tom, thanks for being on the show, and enjoy the weather there in Hawaii.

Tom: Thank you so much, Roger. I really appreciate it.

Thank you for joining me for this episode of the Brainfluence Podcast. To continue the discussion and to find your own path to brainy success, please visit us at RogerDooley.com.