

# Write Publish Market.Ep 132\_Maddy Osmund\_mixdown

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

book, style guide, writing, work, book publishing industry, clients, authors, publish, publishing, people, style, read, process, writers, recommend, chicago, freelance writer, business, business owner, maddie

00:05

Welcome to the right publish market podcast. If you're an entrepreneur considering writing a book to serve your business, you're in the right place. Or maybe you've already decided that's even better. I'm your host, Jodi Brandon, book publishing partner for entrepreneurs and 20 year veteran of the book publishing industry on the right publish market podcast. In addition to learning from me, you'll meet entrepreneurs just like you and hear about their experiences as we explore all facets of Writing, Publishing, and marketing a book that will help your business grow in ways you might not even have dreamed of yet. Maddie Osman is the best selling author of writing for humans and robots The New Rules of content style, she's a digital native with a decade long devotion to creating engaging, accessible and relevant content. Matt is journey from freelance writer to founder and CEO of the blog Smith yielded numerous insights to share about content creation for enterprise b2b technology brands. Her efforts earned her a spot in SEM rushes and Buzzsumo is top 100 content marketers and the right life's best 100 websites for writers. She has spoken to audiences at WordCamp. US search con and Denver Startup Week and we are lucky to have her here today. Thanks for being here. Maddy. I'm super excited to talk to you about your book today.

01:20

Thank you so much for inviting me, I'm always excited to chat a little shop.

01:26

Let's start with like, can you kind of give us the lay of the land like what you do, like who you serve? And then tell us a little bit about your book?

01:34

Totally. So I'm MADI Osman, I guess French now since I changed my name, but decided to keep it simple for business sake. Just too hard to change all the handles and all that. So I did the same. I did the same, like, so I run a content agency called the blog Smith, we work primarily with b2b technology companies. The book was very much related to the types of things that we do for our clients. And really, the reason that I decided to write it was because we had developed this sort of writing style guide our approach to how we create content for the web. And I thought that there were a lot of things that we have learned that would be useful to share with other people that sort of transcend the industry, and

industries that we work with. It's also maybe a little bit of a factor of things like a lot of people, especially those who are listening to this podcast are probably familiar with the book, *The Elements of Style*, which was written in, I think, 1918 or 1990, and something like that. And while it is, you know, still a very useful book, I mean, some of that advice is so timeless, there are aspects of it that obviously could not have anticipated the internet. Sure,

03:01

sure. That's Yes, I would imagine our listeners are familiar with with that book. But yes, agreed. There's lots and lots of changes since that book was published. So absolutely. Okay, so I usually start with a different question. But I feel like this might flow a little bit better. How are you? How are you using the book in your business?

03:22

Totally. So in terms of like, how it benefits the business, or how we're using it, I think the reason why I decided to write it was first, first of all, I just thought that it was one of those bucket list things where it's like, I'm a writer, I had never written quite that long form of content. But it's just one of those things where it's like, I'd love to write something that's useful and meaningful, it's just a matter of figuring out what it is that I can contribute that maybe somebody else wouldn't necessarily have that same experience or background. And so I guess in terms of how it benefits, the business is a came out of the fact that we already had a lot of the foundational elements created in terms of the style guide. And so the book itself, the way that it's different from our style guide, which anyone can find on our website, it's also kind of a long document, just not quite as long as the book. But it basically expands the style guide by giving additional context sort of examples of what to do versus what not to do things like processes, so you can use some of the guidance in there. Like it's not just about writing style, it's also about how to incorporate relevant visuals, how to create your own style guides, the sort of the things that happen around the actual writing. So I think for us, the biggest thing and the reason why I chose this topic was to reinforce that we know what we're talking about that for our Clients were going to take great care with the projects that you bring to us. And you can trust that because it's something that all of our writers and editors use. It's something that governs, you know, every piece of content we create, in addition to that, it's sort of in tandem with that. It's really just sort of that social proof. You know, if I want to go, for example, and speak to a crowd about, you know, the things we're doing at my company and the experience that I have, it's easier for people to understand that I'm somebody worth listening to, or that I'm somebody who knows what I'm talking about by being able to say, you know, here's sort of the book that backs that, you know, here's exactly what I think. Absolutely, yes,

05:45

yes, that I actually just, I'm not your ideal audience, because I for the book, because I'm not b2b. But I read your book in anticipation of this interview. And I found myself, I recommended it to a client the other day, because we're working on a style guide for her book. And it was just sort of, like, read this because it will, it will explain to you like what we're trying to do with the style guide, instead of like the thought process of like how you put one together, rather than me trying to like explain it for the 500 of time, I was like, this is a great resource. So, so thank you for that.

06:20

Well, thank you. I mean, there's really no greater compliment than first of all, somebody reading it, but also, you know, finding somebody who could benefit from it. So that's absolutely

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awesome. Yeah, I mean, well, because the process is the same for a style guide for a book, I mean, it serves the same type of purpose, obviously, you know, the documents will look a little bit different, but it's the same, it's the same idea. And that's something that's hugely beneficial to everybody on a book publishing team for an author. So

06:49

100%. And yeah, and to be fair, that's something that we did for my book, too, I worked with the internal editors on my team, in addition to some like, editors who had more book copy editing experience. And we put together a style guide that was sort of a mix of Chicago style, a little bit of a mix of like, our own style, but it was it was different than what we use for clients. And also, you know, the sort of typical, for those who may not be familiar, Chicago style kind of fits with like business books, generally speaking. I mean, you can salute you can go a couple different directions. But

07:31

the book publishing industry, for sure. 100% For sure, yeah. Well, and I mean, like you said, you're not trying to conform to Chicago style, because you have your own style. But that document then for those editors who are trained in Chicago style, is hugely helpful to them. Because otherwise, they're going to edit a manuscript, according to Chicago Manual of Style. And then you're not necessarily butting heads on every single edit, but what a waste of everybody's time. You know, because if they had just had that style guide to begin with, then oh, we would know that even though we do XYZ in Chicago, we're not doing it for this project. So there's no need to make that edit in the manuscript. And there's no reason for you to have to go in, reject that edit in a manuscript, you know, and so on, and so on. So yeah, especially if you're working with somebody with a different, maybe different style guide, or different background or whatever, super helpful. Let's talk maybe about like the process, like, what parts of the process did you like? I mean, obviously, if you're a writer by trade, I hope that you like the writing part piece of the puzzle. But I know that you wrote the book during NaNoWriMo. So what was that? Like?

08:42

Yeah, I highly recommend it for for anyone really, because it's just such a great, I think, accountability mechanism, it forces you to just sort of try to knock out that ugly first draft, which is, yeah, it's an essential first step. And yes, so for anybody who's not familiar with NaNoWriMo. It's basically like November every year, you have the month of November, the goal is to write 50,000 words, my book was not that long, I use that time to also knock out a couple blog posts that I had been meaning to write just to hit the kind of arbitrary word count word count, and meet the goal of what the whole event was about. Yeah. But yeah, I mean, I think it was definitely not easy to sit down and be disciplined to to write I think it works out 2667 words per day, and then it just multiplies, of course, so it's hard, but it's really not impossible. I mean, it's probably the average freelance writer in sort of the niches that we operate and they might be doing that already for clients. So it's, it's just applying it to yourself and investing it in yourself versus doing it For pay for somebody else.

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Absolutely. I just recorded a solo podcast episode about using NaNoWriMo. Like, as a business owner working on a nonfiction book. So of it, it's timely that we're talking about it. That's I mean,

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that's exactly what it was, too. Yep. So yeah, I mean, in terms of favorite parts of the process, I think just really fleshing out this, this outline I essentially already had, because I had the style guide, I knew that that's I decided, you know, in the weeks leading up to NaNoWriMo, that that's what I wanted to focus on. And that it just made sense, because I had the most material to work already. And that's something that I'd recommend to others too, is to not go in without a plan. You don't have to have as much information as I did necessarily, or as much of like a fleshed out detailed skeleton. But even just thinking like, like it was something that I did was every day, I kind of dedicated to a specific chapter. And there might have been multiple days for one chapter. But knowing going into that writing session, what I was going to focus on helped me to mentally prepare for it. Right. So so that that's something that I would highly recommend. Yeah, I mean, favorite part of the process probably was NaNoWriMo. Just because it was great to see it all come together in some sort of meaningful way. Even though I knew there was going to be a lot of extra work. Probably the my least favorite part of the process was like getting into the nitty gritty after that, especially the things that I was less familiar with, because it's outside of the typical scope of writing that I do all the like publishing steps, but probably the absolute least favorite was going through the formatting of the book itself. And, you know, reading through my draft a million times, and yeah, looking for just the minutiae of rites, things that were out of place.

11:58

Uh, huh. Yep. Everyone always says almost without fail. Every client that I work with, like in an editorial capacity, they're like, How many times am I going to read this thing? Many way more than you want to? Yes. Without a doubt, you self published Am I right, Maddie? I did.

12:16

Yeah. And the reason why I did that was because I had worked with some other authors, kind of before running my agency back when I was this, like, jack of all trades, freelance marketer, but I had benefited from working with a partner who was really good at sort of like the paid ads side of things. Yeah, I was like the content, go to for everything, promotional emails, blog posts, social posts, influencer marketing stuff. We tried promoting these new authors from a lot of different angles, and had successfully gotten them to bestseller status on Amazon. So because I had had that experience, and had gotten to experiment, you know, with other people's books, I felt, I felt fairly confident that I that I had a chance of replicating that success. Yeah,

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that's, well, listen, that's smart. Experimentation is the name of the game with book publishing, it really is especially publishing, I mean, because every project is so different. And anytime you think you've got it figured out, there's some kind of ball so being able to experiment on other people's books, especially. Sounds awesome. Okay, so you mentioned the importance of, you know, having some sort of plan, even if it doesn't look quite like like yours. So what else would you tell somebody, you know, if a

business owner came to you and said, I'm thinking about writing a book, I know, you wrote a book, what do you want to tell me? Like, what gave a couple pieces of advice?

13:49

Sure. I mean, I guess on the other end, which we started to touch on, which is like the publishing and like the promotion, promotion is such a big part of it, writing is really almost like the smaller aspect of it. And it depends on what your goals are to write because my goal was I wanted it to hit at least one best seller category number one, which luckily it did, but it was it was a grind to get there. And it did not happen like the first day that it went live on Amazon. And so it's it's kind of just like, like a torment, you know, to keep refreshing the page.

14:26

Yes, I'm familiar (waving).

14:29

I'm sure you are. But the only reason why that did happen was because I planned for months, every media interview that I did, you know, mobilizing my friends and family and clients and team and everybody in the world that I knew, absolutely buy the book or to share the book or to leave a review and, and things like that I made you know, all sorts of like swipe copy that they could share and imagery. Hurry. And I asked a bunch of people to review the book. And then I made graphics based on that. And, you know, it's like every detail was so over planned, but it did support my eventual end goal. And, you know, helped get that sort of early buzz going for the book. So it was all worth it. But like, make no mistake, it took many months. A lot of the hours.

15:25

Yes. Yeah. Well, I think I mean, the easier you can make it for people to help you. Yes. Is obviously that it just helps you take it that much further. But it is it is so much work on the on the front end it really, I think I think you're right, also that people underestimate the marketing promotional piece of the like, right, publish market puzzle. But I mean, the flip side of that, though, is that then the book becomes Evergreen. And so it's not like you're doing all that work. And then it's all for naught. Like the book then is out there. And I mean, like that bestseller status that you have, you can always you that's evergreen also, so

16:05

100% it's all worth it. And yeah, nobody can take that away now that I got it, basically.

16:11

Yeah, yeah, I think having a plan. And then if I could just take it a step further for the writing piece, but also that, you know, of the publishing piece too. But that like marketing piece for sure, because a lot of people, especially if their background, like your your background is writing. So that part not not that it comes easier or easy. But you know, like, I think we take for granted that that's going to be the hard part. And really, there's plenty of hard parts to come everybody.

16:40

Oh, yes. No, it does not get easier, even after you finalize, you know, the last version of your draft?

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Absolutely. Absolutely. It sounds like did you type set your book yourself? It sounded like maybe from the way you were describing it? No, I

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mean, no. Okay, I did a lot of formatting work to get it as close as possible. But I did work with a third party to get that kind of stuff done. And I'm glad I did, because it's great the choices that you have and the freedoms that you have when you self publish. It's also like, sometimes it is nice to have constraints when you work with the publisher, you know, and then there's less choices to make, right? And then it's also just a matter of learning all these different things. And for me, well, I was willing to take on the project of learning like the Amazon self publishing marketplace, which is another thing that I would recommend to new writers who are seeking this path, which is to just like, do your research ahead of time on what the limitations are going to be. Some of those things were surprised to me after having gone through this with other authors in the past things do change. Yep. But in terms of like learning how to format something for Kindle, I was like, I absolutely have no interest in that. Yeah.

17:57

Yeah, I can understand that. Yeah, that I felt the similarly with the formatting for my books, all of them. Yeah, like, just stay in your lane. Jodi fine. Like, by the time I figured it out, probably I could have written like three more books, I think with some of that stuff. That is seriously, you got it? Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. would do you think you would self publish again, if you are writing another book, Maddie,

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maybe just because I, I understand the process more fully now. So it's not like starting from fresh. If I were to write another book, I would probably write a second edition of this current book after enough things change or change. I have enough new ideas for like, complimentary chapters. One thing that people have asked me after publishing this book is like, would you publish another book? And what I've told them is like, maybe a children's book, okay. A little easier to copy of it, you know?

18:58

Listen, I have worked with hundreds and hundreds of business owners and the percentage who go on to write multiple books is very small. I can't imagine why. Yeah, I mean, and that's what a lot of them say, I can't imagine but also, if it's doing what you want it to do in your business, you don't need to you know what I mean? You don't need to you're not trying to be a professional author, like as a business owner or trying to it's just another tool in your business it just is different from the ones you're used to with courses and you know, things like that. So this was an awesome conversation I again, I will be recommending you will link your book obviously in the show notes and I will be recommending it to more of my clients so that I don't have to come up with a way to explain guides in the future. So I thank you. I don't let anyone leave the podcast no matter without giving me a reading recommendation. So something that you've read recently and loved or reading now and anything goes fiction, nonfiction, whatever.

19:51

Sure. I will. I'll give a general and a specific I've really loved Book of the Month Club as a company where you pick a monthly book out of like six recommendations, and a lot of them are new authors, or they're like about to hit the market books. So you get them a little bit before everybody else. And I've just like every book I've read from them has been so great. One of them that I've read very recently was a book called sign here. And it's about basically like, what goes on in hell, and how they try to win like new souls over to the dark side. And there's this, there's something about like, the different perspectives, there's like a really good twist at the end, a lot of their books have really good twist, and I'm always a huge fan of that. So just, it's just kind of a little bit of an offbeat one. But I really enjoyed that one.

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I have not even heard of that book. So that sounds like is it like suspense? general fiction? What's the category?

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There's a little bit of suspense? Yeah. It's just like a hard one to describe because it's so weird. But it's very, like, it's very world building, you know, like, it's, it's like, describing like, what how might look like, as if it were almost like a limbo, you know, like living on. And it's not like the fiery like, you know, people like burning and dying sort of thing. It's just like, Oh, these people who like maybe made a bad deal with the devil and what happens right after? Oh, my gosh, that sounds really good. I'm gonna check that out. It's quite interesting. And I have to say,

21:29

Book of the Month Club. I think it's such a bad rap, especially among like, younger generations. I have always loved Book of the Month Club. I feel like it's such a great thing. And a lot of younger people have never even heard of it either. It's such a shame. So I'm glad that you mentioned that it is. And it used to be a much bigger deal even within the book publishing industry. So I'm glad that you mentioned that okay, sign here. I'm going to check that out. Do Thank you, Maddie, for your time. This was an awesome conversation.

21:57

Thanks so much, Jodi.

21:59

Thanks for listening to today's episode of the right published market podcast. I know just how busy your schedule is as a business owner, so I'm grateful you've taken some time out of your soul journey into the world of book publishing with me today. If you are looking for even more book writing, marketing and publishing information and support, check out my mentorship membership at the author entrepreneurs lab where each month we take a deep dive into one element of the book world with education, a q&a session with me your book publishing expert resources, co writing times and so much more. You can learn more at the link in the show notes. I hope to see you inside the lab.