

Pre-Plan for a Successful Book Launch

Episode 135

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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. My guest today is a repeat guest. She has been on the podcast before talking about content batching and today she is here as an author. So our guest today Amanda Warfield is a simplicity focused content marketing and launch strategist, author of the new book chasing simple marketing, and host of chasing simple a podcast to help creative entrepreneurs uncomplicate their marketing and business. She traded in her classroom lesson plans for educating creative entrepreneurs on sustainably fitting content marketing into their business without it taking over their business. So they have time to move the needle in their business take time off and live the life they dreamed when they first started their own businesses. If Amanda's nose is not in a book, you can find her annoying her husband by slipping Disney into every conversation, or forcing her cats to snuggle. And I am so excited to welcome her back today. So Amanda, welcome back. You're a repeat guest on the podcast. I love that.

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Thank you. I'm so excited to be here. It's so funny, because when we recorded originally, there was zero plans to write. It's really exciting to be that now as an actual author.

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I love that. I know at least that's a good segue into like the question I always start with, which is, you know, like, why a book? How did this happen?

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You know, it's the stereotypical answer where I always wanted to write a book. Even as a kid, I would steal my dad's little like legal yellow pads. And I would start writing a book and I'd get about two pages in and go, nope, this is terrible. I always envisioned that I would write fiction. And as I got older, I realized that no, creativity is not really my strong suit. I am much more logical and strategic. And nonfiction definitely became much more realistic for me. And about a little over a year ago, now a year

and a few months, I realized that my 30th birthday was quickly approaching. And I really wanted to be a published author before then. And that kind of pushed me into gear and really kicked off the next year's worth of work.

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I love that story. First of all, I too, as a child thought I would be a fiction writer. And then I was like, I don't know that I got like a whole story in me. That's very funny. All right. So now your book is out. I'm actually literally holding it in my hands. If we were on video, I would hold it up for you. It looks so so good. And I want to hear the parts of the process that you liked, and didn't like this. People love the backstory here. So anything you're willing to share?

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Oh, well, I'm for lack of a better term and open book. So feel free to ask whatever. But I liked every part of it, except editing, which I think we with the caveat, though, that I think I would have actually liked the editing process. If I had given myself enough time, I did not realize how time consuming editing was going to be. And of course, I've listened to almost every episode of this podcast. And so I hear over and over again that everyone hates editing. But what I have never heard anyone talk about is kind of what the editing process looks like. Because when I went into this, naively, I thought the editing process would be very similar to editing a paper or editing a blog post where you just kind of go through and you add some things and you improve and maybe you remove a little bit but for the most part, the structure stays as it is, right. And maybe this was just me, but I had to completely rip the entire manuscript apart. And I think I even messaged you and I was like, am I supposed to feel like I'm frankensteining this right now? Because this is not . . .

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Yeah, yeah.

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But I truly I felt like I just ripped the whole thing apart and stitched it back together and everything got moved around and different things got added and it was it was much more intense than I knew it was going to be. Okay, so I didn't leave myself enough time. And I was rushed because of it which was really stressful. So I think had I known what I was getting into, I don't think I would have disliked it quite so much.

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Yeah. You know, we often talk in the editorial community, the publishing world about, if only there was a way that we could like sort of separate the like, the bigger picture stuff from like, the like, yeah, you need a comma here, like from like, the grammar and mechanics stuff. Because when you combine all of it, it's just like you said, like, it can be so much. And it's like, I don't even know what's happening right now with this document. Like, it's, it's yeah, it can be extremely overwhelming. And I think it is, it's funny that you say, like, like a paper or a blog post, because I think it I mean, it's the same process, obviously, but it's just the document is, you know, 30 times bigger. So the changes feel, and are not just feel they are, you know, 30 times bigger sometimes.

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True. Yeah. Also, I guess I've just never, I mean, never is a strong word, but the fact that I was rearranging entire sections and entire chapters, and then taking parts of one chapter, and putting in another chapter to make the flow better, and make things make more sense, that was really time consuming for me as well, because then you have to go back because, you know, essentially, you've got, what 1012 different blog posts times two massive, massive blog posts, essentially, and remembering what you talked about where and the references and all of that was so mentally exhausting. And again, had I had the time to walk away and come back, I think it was a lot better.

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That's something I probably need to do a better job of talking about. And editors in general, I would say, publishing people in general, probably, like we say, all the time, but we we do we toss it around, like, it's like everybody understands what we're saying, when it's like, take a break from your manuscript, like, get away from it for a little bit. Like, I don't mean like five minutes. Like you need a real like, especially when you're moving big pieces of text like that, like you're talking about, like the amount of time that you actually need to let your brain come back fresh, is so much more than people have probably built into the schedule. And they're definitely, like, you know, like a boulder going down the mountain, because now you're like, oh, my gosh, now I gotta get some designer now it's this parts do that, like, I need to love, uh, you know, and then it's just like the stress mounts. And yeah, I can easily see that happening. For sure. Plus, the document is so like, messy. When you're like in the middle like that. And that's, I don't like that part. When I'm a writer, like when I'm the author. I think most of us who are business owners tend to be like, you know, like you're saying logical type A Enneagram, one, et cetera. Like, we don't like that. Like, we don't like that. All the markup in the document that cutting and pasting and all that. Yeah, it's not that part's not fun. I call that the sausage making part. Because it's just like, yeah, the end is great. But getting there, man, it's a journey.

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Well, it's also difficult to really, it's just so easy to get lost in a document, when you're looking at a document that size when you're looking at on your screen. I had to print out this manuscript so many times, and there's so many pages and

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so yeah, but it's, it's smart to do that, though. Because you look at things so differently, like on paper than you do on the screen. And I feel bad saying that as like an environmental was yeah, like, but yeah, it really there is just you see so much more, and catch so much more when you're looking at the paper version. So yeah, I feel you lots of

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conflicted emotions, there's

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got there's used agents use the back for scratch paper. And I keep telling myself, that's funny. Okay, so let now the book is out there now. Yeah. So how are you using it? Are you using it in your business the way that you thought you would be?

09:14

Yes. 100%. So the plan from the very beginning was to really use the book as a marketing tool. I have learned from you and listening to this podcast that you should never plan to make money off of the book itself. And so I really intentionally set up this book so that it was marketing, one of my courses, essentially, and the book itself markets it and the additional resources also market it as well. And I've already seen – the book's only been out for just over a month right now – and I've already seen sales come to that course and to other products that I have from book readers. which has been really cool to see. So essentially, my whole plan was this is a marketing tool. And I'm going to use it to funnel people into my other offers that are actually going to make money. And I'm focusing on promoting the book so that I get people into those. And I'm focusing less on marketing the actual products outside of the back end of my business. So my, my front-facing marketing is mainly for the book at this point.

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Love that. Yes, I also love one of the things that you do in your book that I wish more people did this way, is you come right out and list like those other resources and link to them. Like a lot of people will like, you know, maybe like, drop the name here and there or, you know, like, I was working with somebody recently. And she's she had, you know, like, I think four references to her membership like throughout like, the 180 page book. And she's like, I feel like I'm mentioning it too much. And I was like, you're definitely not mentioning it too much. In fact, you're not mentioning it enough, if that's the goal to drive people there. So you do a really good job, I think of that in this book. And that makes perfect sense, given you know, the plan as you just outlined it for us.

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Well, and I will say that I didn't do it. Well, at first when I had BETA readers go through. Yeah, I had just really one big at the very end message about my course. And a beta reader was like, this is incredible. You should talk about this more throughout the book. And so I really had that push for someone to go no, you you need to share this more actually.

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Yeah, yeah. Well, yeah, bread crumbing it throughout like that. Yeah. Is is very smart. It's hard sometimes. Let's talk about beta reading a little bit, because I know that you, it one enjoyed that experience and got so much great feedback from the beta process. So can you walk us through like what you're like what your philosophy was with the beta readers? Like, what were you hoping to accomplish by using them? Just anything you'll share? Yeah,

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I mean, I definitely got a lot of my plans for beta readers from your episode on beta readers. And realistically, my hope was to find out what they connected with, what they didn't, and where they felt like, there were gaps. So, you know, I, I asked for beta readers for my email list. And I got, I believe, about 20 people who were interested originally. And then by the time it came to actually reading the book and giving the feedback, I think I had 12, or 13 people that actually followed through, which was a great number, because it gave me so much to work with. And I asked them all, I gave them all their own Google doc copy of the manuscript. And I just asked them to leave comments throughout. And so they

did that. And then I had my virtual assistant, compile all the comments into one document, bless her heart. I know that took her forever. It was so nice to be able to see that master doc. Yeah, the master doc of oh, I have multiple similar comments in this one session. Yeah, that was it was great. And so visual. And then after they finished leaving comments, everyone had an exit survey, essentially, where I asked, you know, what really stood out to you while reading the book? What do you feel like was missing? What would you have liked to see more of? And what do you feel like was unnecessary? And I also asked them as they went to leave comments about things that they really connected with, and so it kind of helped me gauge which stories hit Well, which ones maybe didn't, where I needed to add additional information, things like that.

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Okay, that I imagine that was a Herculean task for your assistant. But what a great way visually for you to see, okay, there's, you know, seven comments in this one section, there's something up here – good, bad, or otherwise – but that's really, really smart. And then to have that, the questions paired with that, to really see, like you said, where the gaps are, I think that's a key piece that a lot of people miss with the beta reading step is, you know, they don't make that connection like this is resonating. This is not, but like, where are those gaps that I that I now need to fill in during my revision process?

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Yeah. Well, then it was nice, because as they went left comments, you got the like, detail oriented type of comments. But then at the end, after they finished the book, and you have the survey, now you're getting that more bird's eye view of what their what they remember from that read and what stood out. And so it was nice to have those two different aspects. Right. And it gave me great, you know, testimonials that I could use in marketing the book later.

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Absolutely. Great point. That's a great point. So you're talking about the book to funnel people into the course. Is that the long term plan as well? Or is it sort of okay.

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Yeah, that that's the long term plan i Long, long term, I'd love to write two other books, because they're essentially three arms of my business. Yeah. And so I'd love to eventually have a book for each arm and just focus on marketing the books, and then let the books funnel people into each separate space within my business.

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I love that. Nothing warms my heart more than when I hear somebody, especially so fresh out of the process already talking about another book.

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Soon, for sure. You know, some point,

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yes, I've heard that it's, I mean, akin to labor, like laboring a child where you're like, why do people do this? Again, this is awful. And then you're like, oh, because now you have this wonderful baby, and you forget about how horrible it was.

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So and, you know, like I said, I really did enjoy almost every part of this process. And the part I didn't like, I feel like I can make, you know, better improvements in my scheduling, I actually enjoy that part more as well. So it's, it's definitely something that I do want to do. It's just, you know, it is very labor intensive. And it essentially, was my whole focus of my business for over a year. And so I want to spend time marketing this book and giving absolutely the marketing side the time that it needs.

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Yeah, you're so good at that, you know, so that makes perfect sense that you are not like rushing, and you're like, No, I'm gonna give this the like, the time and attention that it deserves. So that completely makes sense to me. Okay, so I would assume that one of your big pieces of advice to another business owner thinking about writing a book is to really make sure that that schedule is long enough. What else would you tell somebody if they came to you saying, I see that you wrote a book, I want to write a book? What do I need to know,

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share about it from the very beginning. I mean, I talk about it all the time for the whole year, year plus, so you're working on this book, share every step of the way. I actually, my lunch did not go as planned in any way, shape, or form. I launched the book on my 30th birthday. And on my 30th birthday, I came down with COVID. And five days later, my grandfather passed. And two weeks after that, we had to go down and take advice to my husband's mother. And a week later, she passed. And so all within the last month, it's been one month beforehand, since the book launched, yeah, life has lived. And yet the launch of this book was so successful, purely because I pre launched it. And because I did not, I didn't do anything with my launch week, like I anticipated. I had all of these plans for my launch team, and for my just my email list and all of his marketing I was going to do. And when I came down with COVID, on my birthday, that whole launch week just didn't happen. And then the next Monday morning, I was like, Okay, we're gonna launch week, part two, and I emailed my list and my launch team and said, Okay, we're going to launch this week, and then that afternoon, my grandfather died. And so that one too, we didn't happen either. And so I really didn't end up having a full launch week like I had anticipated. Okay. But yet I was it was still such a success because of all the pre launch. And honestly, that just came down to from the moment I decided this is happening. This is happening right now I shared every step of the process. I shared anytime I was working on the book, I got my audience involved by pulling them they chose the book cover my cover designer, there were so many amazing options. I mean, I wish that I could release like seven different book covers of the same book because truly gave me so many options that I loved. But ultimately, it came down to Okay, here are the cover options. And I went through like a two week process on Instagram where my audience helped me narrow down to the one cover. I remember that tagline. I mean, I got them involved in every way shape that I could. I also was really intentional about pitching for podcasts. While I was still creating the book so that I could get on as many podcasts as possible around lunchtime. Yeah, it was just so much of okay, how can I get people involved the beta readers, I mean, that was helpful for making the book better. But it also was a really

helpful way to improve the launch because all of those BETA readers were so excited to get the book in their hands and see it finalized and they shared about it. My launch team, which some of them are beta readers, but not all of them were and even though I wasn't able to lean on them As much as I intended to, they were still really great about sharing. And so all of those different pieces of the puzzle really helped make this launch a success, even though I didn't have the launch that I intended. And so I cannot stress enough how important it is to share ahead of time because it really makes people rally around the book itself. A book is such, it's such a big deal. It is a huge undertaking, and everyone recognizes that. And so to have someone that you are friends with, or you're acquainted with doing that thing, you get excited to hear about it, and you get excited to share about it when the time comes.

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Yeah, people really feel invested when somebody that they care about, like, in any form, is launching a book or that they've been involved with at any point, like people really I have found get invested and are willing to do a lot of that heavy lifting. Well, first of all, I'm so sorry. I think you I mean, not just about the book launch, but like I mean, that's a lot of life life thing, like, I mean, especially in a very tiny window of time. I mean, that's a lot spread out. But that's a lot and a small amount of time. Thank you. And I think that's the right. I mean, you have such a good attitude about that, like, because I can imagine lots and lots of people if that were the case being like, Okay, this book is a failure. Good. I mean, honestly, just

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the fact that I got launched, I would have been like this is a success. But truly, I'm so grateful to all of the different people that rallied around it, because they helped make it a success when I was struggling. And so it's having community so important.

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Yeah, that's I mean, that perspective is fantastic. I listen, you know, how many people do like launch do overs or birthday, do overs, or like, whatever the case may be. So I, you've got something to talk about with that story. You know what I mean that I tried to launch this book on my 30th birthday, and look what happens. So we're doing it now, whenever that may be?

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Well, and that's, again, like I said earlier, I want to continue to give this book, the marketing time that it deserves. And I think it also helped my perspective going into the launch, knowing that this is just the launch. This is not the end of the marketing. And so the launch isn't the end all be all. It's simply the beginning of sales. And I think that perspective really helped me not feel frustrated by the fact that I wasn't able to. I mean, you know, when you have family members dying,

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yeah, that really doesn't seem that important. Absolutely. Yeah.

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Not to get dark. But it does become like, well, it is what it is. Why so? Yeah. But I think that perspective of the launch is not the end all be all. There's so much more marketing. In fact, it's the smallest part of the marketing that I'm going to do for this book. So yeah, perspective definitely helped as well.

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Yeah, I will. And really, not ever. I mean, some people say that, but they don't actually feel it, I can tell that you really understand that. And that's a huge, that's a huge piece of the book marketing puzzle is understanding, you know, that this is a long term thing. Like it, the book is out there now. So it's out there forever. And like you said, the launch is really like the smallest piece of that book marketing pie or puzzle or, you know, whatever. Wow, I'm impressed, first of all that I mean, because I mean, as you know, I follow you on social media. So just seeing how much excitement and people sharing about the book and everything while all of that was going on. I mean, kudos to you, my friend. That I mean, that's, that's pretty remarkable.

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Truly, it just, I can't stress enough the importance of having community because, yeah, I wouldn't have had anything up on social media without all of the amazing people that were sharing. I even had someone messaged me and be like, um, did you see that your book is number one new release right now. I had no idea. Someone else happened to notice it and messaged me and I was like, that's awesome. That's really cool. Like, that's exciting. Right? I had no idea I wasn't even paying attention. And none of that would have happened without the amazing communities that I have. And the incredible people that supported this book in different ways.

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Yeah, which happened because you've cultivated that community like that just didn't happen. Like overnight, right. So yeah, amazing. Amazing. i One can't wait for the next books, even though I know not for a while. But I'm gonna be stalking your social media for any bread. crumbing coming out of the room once a year. All right. I'm taking note of the date. All right, Amanda, you know, I don't let anyone leave the podcast without a book recommendation. Okay. It's so hard because I worry so much you have not been read. If you haven't been reading, you get a pass because you've had a lot of memory.

25:00

Meeting. Okay, all right. That's my escape. No, I'm waiting to my yearly goal right now, thanks to everything that's been going on. It's hard to pick just one, I would say gutsy by Natalie Frank. She just released her second book. Yeah, I finished with it yet. I'm still got a few more chapters. But I mean, it's all about doing things scared, right and following your dreams, and I think every entrepreneur should go read that. Okay,

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I have not read that yet. I have a copy. But I have not read it yet. So I should move it to the top of my pile. Maybe I'll do that this weekend.

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She's such a great, she's just so easy to read.

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She's very rare. I've read her first book in one sitting. Because yeah, she is very, very easily digestible. And her tone is I think, probably because, you know, I feel like I know her from following her on social media for so long. Like I feel she writes like she like she taught us. And so yeah, very easily digestible, and good. Okay, good. See, gonna move it up to my top of my list. Well, thank you, my friend for being a repeat guest, as you've been a guest expert of both types on this podcast author with a book, and like the topic expert on on content bashing. So that's very exciting for me, and I thank you very much.

26:14

Thank you for having me.

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Thanks for listening to today's episode of the right publish 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.