

Welcome to the Write 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 Write 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 up yet.

We have a very special guest expert today other entrepreneurs and I can't wait to learn from her just as much as you. Please welcome Jyotsna Ramachandran. Jyotsna is a best-selling author, book publisher, TEDx speaker, and international author success coach who helps coaches, trainers, speakers, and experts build a super-profitable author funnel with the help of their book. She founded Happy Self Publishing to help overwhelmed yet purpose-driven authors experience a transformative journey of self-discovery through the process of publishing their book and amplifying their message. So far, Jyotsna has helped over 400 authors from 35 countries through her global publishing agency, Happy Self Publishing. When she isn't working, this mom of two kids also loves to dance, run, plan her next solo trip, and is a passionate advocate for educational rights. So welcome, Jyotsna. I'm so happy to have you on the podcast today.

Jyotsna:

Thank you so much, Jodi, for having me on Write Publish Market.

Jodi:

You say in your bio that you've helped “over 400 authors from 35 different countries.” That's incredible.

Jyotsna:

Thanks, Jodi. In fact, we did not realize it until me and my team one day sat down and actually started counting. Yeah, we realize that we've started getting people from different parts of the world. And it's amazing, right? I think it's all thanks to the internet.

Jodi:

That makes things easier for sure. I had a similar experience of somebody asking me one day in an interview, “How many authors have you worked with? How many business owners have you worked with?” And then I started counting. That's an impressive number, although I don't have 35 countries for sure. So that's remarkable. That's such a great accomplishment.

Jyotsna:

Thanks, Jodi.

Jodi:

I think we probably teach a lot of the same things to our clients. I'm hoping that we can focus a little bit on messaging and positioning because I know that one of the things that you work on with folks is TEDx talks, which is something that I am unfamiliar with. But I'm starting to get more and more questions about, and I imagine once the world returns to some semblance of normalcy, and events become a thing again, those questions will pick back up. Can you talk a little bit about how an author might approach getting a TEDx talk and what makes a successful author turned TEDx speaker”

Jyotsna:

I would just share what I did. And it worked for me twice, so I think the same should work for others as well. Talking on TEDx was my dream for many years, and every year I would have it on my dream list, and then it would just get carried forward to the next year. So a couple of years ago, I decided *I'm not going to do that again. Let me actually make this a reality.* I thought that so far, I was just waiting for people to realize how amazing I am and invite me. But since that was not happening, I thought, let me become proactive, and actually reach out to people and get myself invited. So what I did was I just went to ted.com. And I looked for the upcoming TEDx events around my city. I live in India. So I made a list of all the upcoming events in the next few months. And I could make a list of 10 events, which were in cities near where I live. The good part about that website is they also give the contact information of the curator, the person who's organizing the event; we get to know their name and email. So I wrote to all these people. And this is how my pitch looked like. It had three important ingredients, which I think could be useful for the listeners. The first thing I did was I went and saw what was the theme of that particular event, because every TEDx event has a particular theme. And I tried to come up with an idea that I wanted to share on that stage, based on that theme. So I was trying to make the life of the curator a little easier by giving them a topic that they would instantly feel is relevant to the theme of the event. And I feel as experts in all the different things that we all do, we can easily talk about multiple topics. Though we may be an expert at one thing, there are a lot of these subtopics and related topics, which we can try to see if it will fit with that particular events theme. So that's what I did. I told each of them that this is the topic I want to speak on your stage. That's the first ingredient. The second thing I told them is “By the way, I am a speaker, so you can check out some of my videos on my YouTube channel.” This is kind of important because sometimes a person may have a great idea but the organizer also wants to make sure if they can speak well. I just gave them a couple of video links of the previous speeches that I've given. If you don't have that, even a normal video where you're just talking in front of the camera inside your house is also fine, as long as they get a chance to see how well

you speak. That's the second thing. And the third thing was my book. I told them that, "Hey, by the way, I'm the author of this best-selling book. And this is how I helped my readers achieve this and all of that." I think that made them believe that I am an expert in whatever I'm talking about, because the book instantly gives you the credibility. People just assume that authors are supposed to be intelligent. And probably that won me some brownie points. And immediately out of 10 people, seven of them responded, and three of them, in fact, invited me to be on their stages, and I went to two of them. So I felt that by just having a nice pitch, which mainly includes the book, it increases our chances of getting accepted on these stages.

Jodi:

That's fantastic. I like the way you broke that down into the three ingredients to super clear, and you made it sound very easy.

Jyotsna:

I think it is simple. But it just takes the extra effort of reaching out to people and being okay, with hearing a no, because we may not be the perfect fit for all events. I could have done this earlier, but I was scared of getting a no for an answer. But now I'm pretty sure I'm okay to receive 100 nos. As long as one person says yes, it's fine.

Jodi:

It's the same with pitching anything, whether it's a podcast, or a print interview, or a TV interview. You're putting yourself out there. But I think that first point that you made about making it relevant and making it easier for the curator of the event to say yes, is often overlooked. And that's such a great point.

Jyotsna:

I think we just have to place ourselves in their shoes. They are also looking for great speakers. So I think if we are able to bridge that thing, then it becomes easier for them.

Jodi:

Yeah, I totally, totally agree. I want to shift a little bit and talk about author funnels, because I know that's something that you're passionate about and that you know, inside and out. We talk a lot on this podcast and in my membership, about author funnels and book messaging, and positioning and marketing, and all of those things. Can you talk about the importance of an author funnel and maybe walk us through what that looks like if we haven't set one up? What does that look like?

Jyotsna:

In fact, I've realized that what you teach is very similar to what I teach as well, Jodi. So there's a lot of synergy in the work that we do. So when it comes to the author funnel, what I've noticed is a lot of times authors write a great book, and they have a great business. But there is not a connection between the two. And that's where the author funnel plays an important role, because it helps the book to play the role of a lead magnet for the author's business. The author funnel that I teach typically has four steps. The first step is the book itself, because a lot of people get to know about the author for the first time through the book by reading the book. They get into the universe of the author. That's the important first step that has to be value-packed. Please don't reserve your best-kept secrets for your coaching and other higher levels. Give your best stuff inside the book, because people will love it. That's the first step. And then comes the next step. After reading the book, people want to receive more value from the author in terms of continuing the conversation from the book outside the book. So for this, the author needs to choose one platform to provide free value. So the second step is the free value. And this chosen platform can be a podcast, it can be a blog, it can be YouTube — it can be anything — but the author needs to be consistent in providing more and more value to the reader. This is where the reader also gets into a conversation with the author. They become a part of their community and all of that. And then comes the next level, the third level, which is a paid value level. Now, everybody is not going to progress to this level. But some people will. The action-takers who want to see some results do not want to just consume the free stuff. They don't mind paying something extra to get something that's more step-by-step — that is more result oriented. So these guys would be willing to pay that extra bit for more value. And at this stage, I think every author should have something like an online course or a membership community, which is not too expensive, maybe in the range of \$97 or something like that, which is an easy buy for a serious reader who doesn't just want to read the book for motivation but also wants results. And then the next level is the premium value. This is where all the money is really. But unless we have the previous steps, it's very difficult to instantly convert somebody to this premium value level. Now, at the premium value level, the author should have their most valuable product or service. It could be their one-on-one coaching, group coaching, consulting for companies, it could be their speaking like professional speaking, or it could be done-for-you services, like what you and I do, Jodi. So I think these are the different levels in the author funnel. And unless an author plans to have a funnel, the readers will not automatically become clients. And there is one missing step here, which a lot of people do not know about. And that's why, even if their book is great, and even if they have all these elements in the funnel, the reader doesn't become the client. And that important step is the reader magnet. Because otherwise, what happens is somebody would read the book, they would then close it, and they would focus on their next priority in life. And they would forget to go and check out the author's website. They would not go check out the YouTube channel or podcast or the other things. So it's important that the author gives away something for free inside the book to capture the leads, so that there is some way to be in touch with the reader. Because Amazon, as we all know, does not give the contact information of the reader. So it's the author's duty to get that. And for that, they need to have this content upgrade, which could be an action guide, the audio version

of the book, a free assessment, free webinar — something for free, which is related to the book. And that has to be planted in several places in the book, so that we don't miss the opportunity of collecting the readers' email. And once we have that, then the author can regularly send newsletters, bring them to your Facebook group, ask them to subscribe to your stuff, and then they become your followers for life. But I think if we don't have these elements in the funnel, then there is the book and there is the business, but there is no connection.

Jodi:

That's something I'm sure you see as well. I see it happen all the time. All the time. And it's such a shame, because obviously, we work so hard to build our businesses, but people who write books work so hard and invest so much in time, money, and effort, and then to not then take that final step and make the connection is a huge mistake that so many people make.

Jyotsna:

Right? Absolutely.

Jodi:

That was also very clear. Thank you for the way you've laid that all out. Honestly, you've just created a blueprint for people, if they're not following you elsewhere, for the author funnel. So that was super helpful. Thank you.

Jyotsna:

Sure, Jodi. Actually a lot of authors feel that *Oh my God, I just have the book. And I just have the course. But I don't have the other elements in the author funnel.* I think that's all right. We can always build it step-by-step. Yeah, one need not have everything ready to publish the book and just get things done one by one. And eventually, you will have all the steps in the funnel, and then it will be fully functional. But you need to start somewhere.

Jodi:

Like you're saying, feeling like you have to have every single thing in place, that analysis paralysis, it's perfectionism — it's all of those fears into one, really — that prevent us from taking that last step, or just putting it out there.

Jyotsna:

Yeah, in fact, people get confused about the order in which they should do this. They ask me, "Shall I start my coaching first? Or shall I write my book first? Or should I create my online course first? Or shall I start my podcast first?" I think that really doesn't matter. We just need to get started with one thing, and then do it consistently and create a system so that it works on its own without the author having to worry too much about it, and then move to the next step. And I think that's really, really important.

Jodi:

I find — and I'd be curious if this is your experience also — that the book publishing world is almost like a mysterious, big, unfamiliar thing. It's unfamiliar, [but] it's not necessarily difficult. It's just something that business owners are so unfamiliar with that they tend to overcomplicate the status, or what they need to do, just because they're unsure. And as business owners, they're used to being the ones in charge.

Jyotsna:

Sure.

Jodi:

So then they realize, *Oh, I'm not sure what I should be doing. I need help.* They don't like being in that position.

Jyotsna:

One good thing about entrepreneurs is, a lot of people don't go with traditional publishers. They realize that they need that control. They need to have the rights or royalties with them. They need to have the creative freedom. So they go with self-publishing, which is, I think, a good decision. But self-publishing doesn't mean they have to do everything themselves. It's absolutely good to have a book coach helping you with everything and guiding you with your perfect reader magnet and all of those things. You need to have an editor; you need to have a designer. So when people try to do everything themselves, I think that's where they feel overwhelmed.

Jodi:

Yeah. And like I said, it's not difficult necessarily, but there are a lot of moving pieces. There are stages at which it's easier to do it yourself. And there are stages where you really should bring in a professional in their zone of genius. So it's really a matter of trying to figure it all out. That's where having someone to help you really can make a big difference for business owners, too. If

you had to give one piece of advice to potential author-entrepreneurs (I call them author-entrepreneurs, because they're entrepreneurs trying to become authors), could you pick one or if not, give us a couple?

Jyotsna:

Sure. One thing I can immediately think of is, when you decide the topic of the book, it's really important to decide who your reader is, right? The target reader. So I think if you're an author-entrepreneur, your target reader is exactly the same person as your target client for your business. A lot of times people know who their target client is for their business — like if you are, say, coaching new moms to reduce their stress, that's your coaching business. Have that same avatar for your book as well. Do not try to come up with something different, because then it won't fit into your author funnel. Make sure your reader is the same as your client. So that's one thing I wanted to say. And the second thing: I don't know if everybody goes through this, but I've seen a lot of authors, even before they publish their first book, thinking about their second book. Because if they enjoy the process of writing their book, it becomes addictive. There's nothing wrong with that. But I feel if you write your book, with the primary goal, to use it to promote your business, then focus on marketing your first book really well. Do it for three years, five years, before taking up the second book. There are two types of authors that I've seen, Jodi. There are people who write for a living. They are serial authors, they publish four books a year, and they probably have 30 books already on Amazon. And that is their major source of income. So if that is you, then it's good to think of your next book, because that's your main business. But if your main business is something else, like coaching or a done-for-you service or something like that, then don't make writing your main profession, because you've already created a great book. First promote that and get clients using that book before thinking of your next book.

Jodi:

That's a good point. I see that as well. That's great advice — especially because then they're discouraged. Sometimes people get discouraged when they move on to that second book so quickly, and they haven't spent the time marketing the first book. And then they get discouraged because they think, *Why am I doing this again, when the first book didn't do that well?* Well, the first book maybe didn't do that well, because you abandoned it.

Jyotsna:

Marketing the first book well, and then building an audience before you actually think of the second book would be wiser than thinking *Okay, let me write more books to build a bigger audience.*

Jodi:

Yes, I completely agree with that. That's a great piece of advice that is not talked about often in our circles. Those are two very good tips. I can never narrow it down to one tip, either. I don't know why I ask guests to do that, because I can't either. This was a really fun discussion. I feel like I could talk to you all day long — and we could probably trade lots and lots of notes. I don't let anyone leave the podcast, though, Jyotsna, without telling me either something that you're reading right now that you love or something that you read recently and loved, whether that's work-related, fiction — doesn't matter. Anything goes.

Jyotsna:

Sure. So we have this policy of a company book club. Since we work in book publishing, it's really important that all my team members also have this habit of reading. Once a month, we choose a book, we all read it as a part of our company assignment, and at the end of the month, we discuss it over a call. This month's book is *Delivering Happiness* by the CEO of Zappos. Tony, I don't know how to pronounce the second name, but it's a great book. I've just started reading it. And I think for anybody who is providing any kind of service, ultimately for us to improve our profit and focus on our purpose and do it with and to do it with passion, it's important that we have phenomenal customer service, and I am sure this book will help me with that.

Jodi:

I have actually read that book. By Tony Hsieh. And I think that you are right. He is such a neat human being to learn about. I think you'll enjoy it. And I love that you have a company book club. That's awesome.

Jyotsna:

Thanks. That's one of the outcomes of the pandemic, because now, people have more time than before. They are sitting at home, so I thought this is a great way to engage the team.

Jodi:

I agree. I think that's a really neat idea. Thank you so much for your time today. I really appreciated having you. I know that the listeners have learned a ton and could learn a ton more. So we'll have to do it again, another time. But thank you so much, Jyotsna, for being here today.



Jyotsna:

Thanks, Jodi. It was such a pleasure talking to you, somebody who is also a part of the same industry and who's helping authors. You've just made my day. Thank you.

Thanks for listening to this episode of the Write Publish Market podcast. I know just how busy entrepreneurs' schedules are. I'm grateful you've taken some time out of yours to journey into the world of book publishing with me today. If you enjoyed this episode, take a quick screenshot and share on social to let others know you're listening. Use the hashtag #writepublishmarket to spread the love. Until next time, friends, happy writing.