

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.

Welcome, welcome to today's episode of the Write Publish Market podcast. Today's episode is going to be a little bit different than what you're used to, if you are a regular listener. Instead of digging in deep to one aspect of the book writing/book publishing/book marketing world, we're going to peel back the curtain a little bit on one of my offerings, the Author-Entrepreneurs Lab, my mentorship-membership program for business owners who want to write a book to serve their business. And the reason for this is because one, I get a lot of questions about it, and two, I know that everybody learns a little bit differently. Some people don't want to go to my website and read the sales page. They'd rather me just tell them a little bit about it. My schedule doesn't allow for that many one on one calls, so I thought, "Why not do a dedicated episode of the podcast to talk about the membership and dig in a little bit about what it is, how it came to be, what kinds of things happen in the Lab, and all that good stuff?" So if that is something that interests you, you are in the right place, and I hope that you will sit back, grab a cup of coffee, and come on this journey with me.

The Lab sort of happened organically. I have one-on-one services: editorial services and book coaching services. And then I ran two rounds of a group program called The Write Life, which was basically a hybrid group coaching program and book writing mastermind. The original intent was to conclude with an in-person retreat, but the first round was ending sort of as COVID hit, and the second round was starting shortly after that. So we improvised, obviously, and did not have an in-person retreat of any kind, and we just sort of made it work. And it was great. But what I found was that, and I know this from my one-on-one work, but I *confirmed* I guess is what I should say instead of found, is that that not everyone works at the same pace. Everyone has a different writing style, and everyone has a different capacity for their book project. Everyone has different goals for their book project and their business. So what the writing process and publishing process look like for people is different. And that definitely came front and center when we were doing The Write Life. It got a little bit sticky sometimes when people weren't all at the same place. But I also loved that people weren't all at the same place, because then we could all bounce ideas off of each other for fresh perspectives. Then I started to think about maybe a membership. And I talked to a couple of business friends about it. And they said, "Yes, try a membership. See if there's interest out there." So I started sort of asking around, and people were definitely interested, which was fantastic, because part of the success of The Write Life, I know, is because not everyone is in a position to or interested in hiring a book coach one-on-one to help them from that beginning phase, at least through the draft of your first draft and sometimes longer through the publishing and through the marketing phases.

The Author-Entrepreneurs Lab is appealing because we have members in all of the stages of the author-entrepreneurs' journey. I've broken down that journey into four stages. The first stage is the "commit and prep" stage. This is when you know you want to write a book, but you're not sure exactly what it's going to be about, you're not sure exactly how to structure it, you're doing your outline, you're doing a brain dump — all of those initial things where you're committing to the process, even though you're not exactly sure what that's going to entail yet. You're getting ready, you're committed, and then you're prepping: getting ready, getting a writing calendar set up, letting people know that you're writing a book, finding some accountability.

Then you move into the "draft and revise" phase, which is when you are obviously writing. This is the most writing-heavy phase of the journey. This is when you're taking that outline and making it into a book manuscript. This is also the phase where you're getting that initial round of feedback from folks who are in your target market, and you're making revisions. Getting ready to go from manuscript to book — this is where it happens.

And then you we move into the next phase, which is "produce and publish." This is where you are getting your book copy edited, getting the cover created, getting the interior designed, and then actually publishing the book, whatever that looks like for you. Maybe it's self-publishing, maybe it's traditional publishing, maybe it's the new kid on the block, hybrid publishing — whatever that path to publication is for your book, this is the phase when it's happening. You're making decisions: Do I want a print book? Do I want an e-book only? Do I want both of those things? Do I want an audio book? Do I want my print book to be paperback or hardcover, or both? How big do I want it to be? What trim size? All of those sorts of decisions are made during this stage.

Then once the book is an actual book, and no longer a Word document on your computer, we go into the "launch and market" phase of the process, which is one, your book launch — *hooray, we did it!* — but then it's also the book marketing. If you've if you've listened to me for any length of time, you know that that is not a one and done. It's is not just the day of the book launch or the week of the book launch; book marketing is an ongoing project for your boo. It's out in the world, and now it stays out in the world. So we have to let people know that it's out in the world, or they're not going to find it.

Those are the four stages that business owners, and all writers, go through: commit and prep, draft and revise, produce and publish, and launch and market. So we have people at these various stages of the process.

I created this container in the Author-Entrepreneurs Lab that provides support for each of the three phases of book publication — writing, publishing, and marketing — no matter which phase of the journey you happen to be at this very moment. What that actually looks like in practice is that we have a space where there's monthly education, there is support community support, and then there's also accountability to make sure that you're actually working on this book and making forward progress, because otherwise you're not really committed. Each month, we have a monthly training about some aspect of book publishing. This coming month, for example, we're covering path to publication, and we're breaking down the different paths to book publication — self-publishing, traditional publishing, and hybrid publishing — so that people can decide what makes the most sense for them. Other topics that we've covered include beta feedback, creating writing and production schedules that are realistic, and the role of Amazon in your book, journey, and especially with regard to publishing and marketing. We take each of these topics, and I do a training, or we have a guest training, where we discuss the all the information that someone needs to know, no matter which stage they are right now (commit and prep, draft, and revise, produce and publish, launch and market) and then how the material applies at those various phases. Obviously, there are topics that are more applicable to people in, say, the commit and prep stage or the draft and revise stage, and there are topics that are more applicable if you're in the launch and market phase. The idea is that there's something in there that you can take away and use no matter where you are along th journey. That's my goal, and my hope, anyway.

We take that information, and then we implement it throughout the month. Often, there's an activity that everybody is working on. We did a month on a book positioning study, for example, and walked through what that looks like, and then everybody completed a positioning study and shared about it in the Facebook group. That's where that support and community aspect comes in that second sort of pillar of the education, support, and accountability three-legged stool, if you will.

Twice a month, we get together for cowriting in the Writing Studio. I should probably change it to the Book Studio because people are not just writing in there, especially if they are not in the draft and revise phase of the process. Last week, for example, we had someone working on their book outline, and we had someone working on their launch plan. A couple of weeks before that we had someone who just published a book and is prepping for her second book, but she was working on her post-launch marketing plan for book number one. And then we had somebody working on that book positioning study that exercise that I just talked about. I was working on social media posts for my book. Everybody's doing something different. Everybody hops on to Zoom and declares their intention for that time — this is what I'm going to be working on — and we get to it. Anything book-related goes. And then aZswe regroup at the end of the hour and everybody shares what they accomplished. We do that twice a month, every other week. The most important feature of the Lab has been that accountability that the Writing Studio provides for people. That dedicated book time is the hardest thing for book writers, especially those who are business owners, because they're still running a business, is to sort of carve out that time.

And then once a month, we have Office Hours, which is basically a book coach in your back pocket. I'm available for any questions people have. We start with the questions that are related to that month's theme, and then anything goes from there. Sometimes people want to talk about that book positioning study — something that came up that they thought was interesting — or they had a question about something from a previous month's theme. Sometimes people have a question about a book on the bestseller list. It really is anything goes. Those sessions are recorded, as are the monthly trainings. They are available in the membership site so that people can go back and watch or rewatch. Once they're in a different phase, maybe they want to check out a different training, or they want to check out a particular office hours where they know somebody asked about subject XYZ. Members have access to all of that information.

It's really been a great way for people to kind of come together and get the three pillars on that three-legged stool — that publishing education, that support and community, and then that accountability and the space to really just dig in and work on their book. It's been a great eight months so far, and I look forward to seeing what happens in the future. We have two people who have now finished a manuscript within the lab, so that's very exciting, obviously. We have two people getting ready to work on book number two. And then we have somebody who published her first book a couple years ago, actually, and is revising it.

Like I said at the start, today's episode is a little bit different just because it's more of background, "let's sit down over a cup of coffee and let me tell you about the Author-Entrepreneurs Lab" versus digging into someone's specific book journey or a publishing-related education topic for you today. I hope that you enjoyed this episode. If you did, please let me know. I plan to feature some members of the Author-Entrepreneurs Lab in upcoming episodes, so that they can tell you the sorts of things that they're working on and getting done and what the dedicated space does for them. If you have any questions, please reach out and let me know. I would love to tell you more about the Lab. At any point, no matter where you are in that journey — commit and prep, draft and revise, produce and publish, launch and market — you are somewhere along that spectrum, and I would love to help you move further along that journey and get your book out into the world.

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.