

# don't write *that* book!

## Episode 12:

### Is Hybrid Publishing Right For You?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:00](#)):

Welcome back to The Don't Write That Book Podcast where you can learn how to write your bestseller and own your authorship. Follow along with us as we give you an insider's view of the book industry. Now, here are your hosts. Myself, Mike Michalowicz and AJ Harper. Welcome to, Don't Write That Book. This is Mike Michalowicz here. I'm joined by AJ Harper. Good morning to you, AJ.

**AJ Harper** ([00:23](#)):

Good morning.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:24](#)):

How'd you like that Taylor ham and cheese?

**AJ Harper** ([00:26](#)):

Oh, <laugh>. I did just eat half of one.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:29](#)):

Oh, you had half.

**AJ Harper** ([00:29](#)):

Yeah. It's really good.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:31](#)):

I love their sandwiches.

**AJ Harper** ([00:32](#)):

It's a very jersey thing.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:34](#)):

It's very Jersey. It's funny. Anywhere I travel the nation and should the--should, should the subject come up. Uh, and I ask people, oh, what's your breakfast sandwich of choice? And I mentioned Taylor Hamrick. What is that? It's Canadian bacon everywhere else in the world, but

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it's, it's not Canadian bacon because it's spiced a certain way here. It's only available in North Jersey, as far as I know.

**AJ Harper** ([00:57](#)):

Is it Canadian bacon? It didn't taste like it at all.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:00](#)):

No, no. Because it isn't, I mean, that, that's the, the starting foundation. It's the closest thing, uh, that people would recognize as Canadian bacon ham. But, but it's spiced and so forth, and it's produced, I think, in North Jersey, but it's only available here in South Jersey. They call it pork roll.

**AJ Harper** ([01:19](#)):

But then it has-- then it, does it have a different--

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:21](#)):

Oh, it's a different, it's different in some capacity. Taylor is the company that makes this Taylor Ham, which is a type of pork roll. So the North Jerseyans and the South Jerseys really get into this.

**AJ Harper** ([01:33](#)):

Wow.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:34](#)):

There's actually T-shirts. And if you're on the border of north and south Jersey, which is, it's questionable where that is. Some people think it's Route 78. Other people think it's like a Jersey <laugh>, like disputes breakout. It's like I'm from Pork World Territory. And the other one's like, I'm from Taylor Ham territory.

**AJ Harper** ([01:49](#)):

I feel like this is now your introduction.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:52](#)):

Yeah I just did mine.

**AJ Harper** ([01:53](#)):

You're Taylor Ham. <laugh>

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:57](#)):

AJ and I have written now 10 books together, eight titles. Two of 'em were revised and expanded. AJ also has written a book you must read called *Write a Must-Read*, which I can kind of Yoda it and say, must read *Write a Must-Read*. <laugh> Like it is an amazing book, and I think it is one of it is the defining source in writing a modern, extraordinary book. So get your copy today. That's my introduction of you, AJ. All

**AJ Harper** ([02:26](#)):

Right. Well, my introduction of you, you already said you wrote 10 books. I think, uh, I, I really want to emphasize the fact that you are, um, bleeding heart for entrepreneurs.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([02:41](#)):

Thank you.

**AJ Harper** ([02:41](#)):

Like, I've seen you come to tears <laugh> <laugh> about to right now, multiple times over stories that people share with you.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([02:51](#)):

Thank you.

**AJ Harper** ([02:51](#)):

And it means the world to you to help entrepreneurs. You really do believe in what you teach.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([02:57](#)):

Thank you. Thank you. Um, today we're going to talk about hybrid publishing. The official title is hybrid publishing: Right For You. And this is I believe, kind of a modern phenomenon, hybrid publishing didn't exist in its current capacity until recent years. There was traditional, there was self, um, maybe there was a vanity press in the middle, but, but there's been rise of hybrid. Could you explain AJ what hybrid publishing is as you define it?

**AJ Harper** ([03:26](#)):

So, it's supposed to be that you are getting the traditional publishing experience complete with the, uh, editorial team, marketing team, which to be fair, you are still doing most of the marketing.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([03:44](#)):

Yeah.

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**AJ Harper** ([03:44](#)):

There are still people who are positioning your book, um, production team, et cetera. Like you would get with a traditional publisher, and in some cases trade distribution, which, if you want to learn more about, we do talk about it in detail in episode one, but unlike traditional publishing, you are making an investment as an author. So you are putting money in to have that experience. So that's what it's supposed to be, that you are getting a traditional publishing experience, but you're paying for it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([04:22](#)):

And sometimes I incorrectly mix in vanity publishing that term with hybrid, they are different. What's the distinction between the two?

**AJ Harper** ([04:29](#)):

So, the top tier hybrid are supposed to be, and you can hear me emphasizing this <laugh> supposed for a reason.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([04:35](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([04:36](#)):

There's supposed to be people who, uh, publishers who are selective and have a submission process, unlike say, a vanity press who's just taking anybody and getting their book to market. And that's their, their business' book production, getting a book to market not really concerned about if that book sells. A hybrid publisher cares. Well, the best hybrid publishers care about their catalog. They're selective about it, and it fits their mission just like a regular publisher.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([05:12](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([05:13](#)):

And they're selective about whom they choose because they do actually want to sell books.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([05:18](#)):

Do they get a share of royalties? Why do they want to sell books?

**AJ Harper** ([05:21](#)):

Yeah, they get a share of royalties.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([05:23](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([05:23](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([05:23](#)):

Okay. But their structure is different than a traditional, where a traditional gets a higher percentage of royalties than the hybrid, typically. Is that true?

**AJ Harper** ([05:32](#)):

Say that one more time.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([05:33](#)):

That a traditional publisher would take more?

**AJ Harper** ([05:35](#)):

Yeah. So you're looking at, um, the best hybrids, if they follow the industry standards, which we can talk about in a moment, are going to give you anywhere from 50 to 90%. Now 90, pretty rare, but it has happened.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([05:50](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([05:51](#)):

50 to 90%, uh, of net. Whereas you're looking at 15%, 10% of list if you're going traditional.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:02](#)):

Yeah. Which I wonder if you run the numbers. So let's talk real quickly of lists. So if a book sells for \$30, it's 15% of lists is \$4 50 cents a book. .

**AJ Harper** ([06:12](#)):

Mm-Hmm <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:13](#)):

If it's of net, net is after what cost?

**AJ Harper** ([06:18](#)):

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Well, the problem with traditional publishing is after all these sort of costs.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:22](#)):

Yeah, yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([06:23](#)):

But with hybrid, it's really just what are the wholesale fees or distributor fees and—

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:29](#)):

Print costs?

**AJ Harper** ([06:30](#)):

Actually if you're, if you invest in a hybrid publishing deal, you are also paying the print cost.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:35](#)):

Oh, you, so, okay. So that's then removed from the net. But you are paying it direct, so let's say the net would, instead of being \$30 list, it may be \$20?

**AJ Harper** ([06:45](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:45](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([06:45](#)):

And from that, you'd be printing.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:47](#)):

Okay. So say it's \$20 and you get 50%, so now you're saying \$10 a book, but you do printing. So it's four. So maybe net six or \$7 a book as opposed to \$4.50.

**AJ Harper** ([06:55](#)):

Yeah. You can make a lot more. That's my,

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:57](#)):

Yeah. Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([06:58](#)):

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Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:58](#)):

Okay. Uh, some research we did, Bowker found that hybrid publishing grew 43%. This is from 2016 to 2017. I realize those numbers are, you know, eight years old. But at least it gives you a perspective. Comparatively, traditional publishing had 2% growth over that same period of time. So traditional publishing is growing slowly, but growing and hybrid is growing explosively.

**AJ Harper** ([07:20](#)):

Yeah. And I would say that some publishers are adopting hybrid models, you know, partnership agreements and so forth with authors. There's, they're finding things that are, they can do that are similar to hybrid. So it's taking hold.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([07:35](#)):

It's taking hold, yeah. Including Penguin?

**AJ Harper** ([07:37](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([07:38](#)):

You know, I just, my most recent book deal I did with them is a profit share deal where it's a higher royalty. Basically, what it is, is, is it's a share in the net.

**AJ Harper** ([07:50](#)):

Because you and I are all about the long game.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([07:52](#)):

It's all about the long game.

**AJ Harper** ([07:53](#)):

It's true.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([07:53](#)):

And it was so funny when I was talking with Noah over there, and Adrian—

**AJ Harper** ([07:58](#)):

Noah's their editor, Adrian's the publisher.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([07:59](#)):

Publisher, yep. Yep. Thank you for the clarity. When I was talking with them, uh, they said, you, you really are interested in this? . I'm like, yeah! Yeah!

**AJ Harper** ([08:07](#)):

Uh, huh.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([08:07](#)):

So it is the long game, but the, I consider it almost like spinning up a flywheel. We were talking about the *Profit First* royalties that came in like this, the books, the first version came out 10 years ago. It's still generating royalties, *Toilet Paper Entrepreneur* still generates a little bit here and there. Like, these books still produce a royalty stream. It's, it's a flywheel, and there's this perpetual return. So I think maximizing your long-term gains, as long as you're going to sell the book on the long-term, is the better approach.

**AJ Harper** ([08:39](#)):

I mean, that's honestly, when you say, don't write *that* book, this podcast is about the long game.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([08:44](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([08:46](#)):

I like that.

**AJ Harper** ([08:46](#)):

When you have, when you are shortsighted, when you take shortcuts, when you're only thinking about what's immediate, you miss so many opportunities. And one of the opportunities you miss is making more money.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([08:59](#)):

So there was this 2019 study came out from the Alliance of Independent Authors said that over 50%, it's 53% specifically of authors had published one or more of their books through a hybrid publisher. One last thing I want to share is there's the independent Book Publishers Associations, the IBPA, because one thing you and I were talking about is with the boom in demand for hybrid publishing, there's a lot of people that—

**AJ Harper** ([09:22](#)):



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It's like the Wild west.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([09:23](#)):

Yeah. They, they give themselves that label. The IBPA seems to be the best sorting ground for the quality ones?

**AJ Harper** ([09:32](#)):

I would go there, check out that you can see who as a member, which hybrids they recommend. Yeah. Um, but also they published, uh, publishing criteria. So a set of standards that you can easily go grab from [ibpa.org](#). Um, maybe we'll put them in the show notes. And, um, they said, this is what all hybrids need to do. This is what they must all adhere to. And I think before you go looking for a hybrid, you need to read those that, that set of criteria.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([09:59](#)):

That's excellent.

**AJ Harper** ([10:00](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([10:01](#)):

Tell me about the opportunities to work with a hybrid publisher.

**AJ Harper** ([10:05](#)):

Yeah. So more control is probably the biggest one. That's why most people choose a hybrid.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([10:11](#)):

Can you define that?

**AJ Harper** ([10:12](#)):

Well, you know, with a traditional publisher, as you know, you know, it's not like they say this is the title and this is the cover. But they do have that perpetual veto.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([10:24](#)):

Mm hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([10:24](#)):

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So you just go around and round. Yeah. You know, they're ultimately not going to let you, Mike say, this is the cover, this is what we're doing. Right. This is the price, this is the release date. Any of that stuff with hybrid, it's ultimately up to you,

**Mike Michalowicz** ([10:42](#)):

Including the price of the book.

**AJ Harper** ([10:44](#)):

Well, they're going to recommend the price. But you're the one that has to pay the cost, you know?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([10:49](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([10:50](#)):

You have to pay for the printing.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([10:51](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([10:52](#)):

So they're going to do all the due diligence and say, this is what we recommend. Because remember, a good publisher understands what the market will bear. You know, they'll hear from the sales team if they had trade distribution. Okay, we think that's price too high. We really want to be able to move it. We want to come down this much.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([11:09](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([11:09](#)):

That's super valuable. You want to know that. But ultimately you could say, forget it, I'm going to charge this. So you do have control because you have made the financial investment, but they at least are going to advise you and put forth there their, uh, collection of knowledge. Which is important and valuable, but you have control.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([11:30](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

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**AJ Harper** ([11:31](#)):

Uh, you get a bigger piece of the pie, which we just talked about. You get more money in the end. Um, I feel that the great po really good hybrids are partners in a way that I don't think as many traditional publishers are. Some small presses can be, but big publishers just don't have time to be partners in the same way that a hybrid publisher can be.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([11:54](#)):

Can you gimme an example? You worked with a, with a hybrid publisher for your own book.

**AJ Harper** ([11:58](#)):

Yeah. I obviously know how to self-publish. Done it many times with different authors including yourself.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([12:04](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([12:05](#)):

Traditional. I could have gone to go get a deal.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([12:08](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([12:09](#)):

I chose hybrid specifically. My book is published by Page Two, which is a top tier hybrid.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([12:14](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([12:14](#)):

Because I did want control and I wanted that money in on the backend. Mm. I really wanted more. And I'm willing to wait. I'm willing to have the long game, but I also wanted a team. I didn't want to put everything together myself. I, it's enough to market it and write it. I know. I know. And since I know what it takes, ah, I'm not doing that. You know, let me have them do it. Plus they are, um, they, they specifically like to work with entrepreneurs that are thinking about how their book fits into their overall goals. And so we're always having discussions about how to sell more books.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([12:53](#)):

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That's, and that's what you would consider the partnering?

**AJ Harper** ([12:55](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([12:56](#)):

They're always looking at options. You know, I spoke with Trena, is she one of the owners?

**AJ Harper** ([13:00](#)):

Yeah, Trena.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([13:01](#)):

Speaking of Trena. And she's like, oh, AJ and I are working on this book. I'll tell you, if I call the owner, there is no such thing as an owner, I guess, of Penguin Random House. They don't know who I am, who you are because of the pure volume of the books they produce.

**AJ Harper** ([13:14](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([13:14](#)):

Um, but Trena knows you.

**AJ Harper** ([13:17](#)):

Yeah. So she just came to New York. She came to New York to, um, uh, Page Two is amazing because they, well, they're amazing for a lot of reasons, but they also have a traditional, they have trade, uh, distribution through McMillan, which is a big five publisher. So my book is actually distributed by Big Five.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([13:34](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

**AJ Harper** ([13:35](#)):

And, um, she, she came in to do some meetings and we had, uh, lunch.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([13:40](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([13:41](#)):

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And we just kicked around, what should I write next?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([13:44](#)):

That's interesting.

**AJ Harper** ([13:44](#)):

You know, so it's a, it's really as a partnership.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([13:47](#)):

Yeah. So, and I guess that's due to the nature of their size. Yeah. They're big enough that they have influence. They're small enough that their authors matter.

**AJ Harper** ([13:54](#)):

Yeah. And I'm not the only, I'm not special in that regard. Yeah. They're going to do that with other authors.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([13:58](#)):

Yeah. Interesting.

**AJ Harper** ([13:59](#)):

They also, I will say, you know, they published Phil Jones who wrote *Exactly What to Say*.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:03](#)):

Yes.

**AJ Harper** ([14:03](#)):

They sold over a million copies. Yeah. They published Michael Benge Stanger, who wrote *The Coaching Habit*.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:08](#)):

Well, I just talked to him yesterday.

**AJ Harper** ([14:09](#)):

Oh, you did?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:10](#)):

Met him for the first time. He's the nicest guy.

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**AJ Harper** ([14:13](#)):

Sold an ass-ton of books.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:15](#)):

He, Michael, uh, Phil, myself, and now 20 other authors are getting together, uh, this July, this summer at Don Miller's house for a day.

**AJ Harper** ([14:25](#)):

Oh. Fun!

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:25](#)):

To share. But yeah, this is something I started two years ago, and I invite every author to do this. Surround yourself with complimentary authors, your contemporaries. And so, uh, we're all getting together. Now, Michael's in the, I didn't know Michael was with Page Two!

**AJ Harper** ([14:39](#)):

He sure is.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:40](#)):

Coaching Habits. *The Coaching Habits*

**AJ Harper** ([14:42](#)):

And all his other books.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:42](#)):

Yeah. He's got eight, eight books.

**AJ Harper** ([14:45](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:45](#)):

So it's funny, just I'm, I know I'm taking us down a little rabbit hole. I said, "Michael, when we have this gathering, would you, you be willing to talk in front of the group for 15 or 20 minutes on how to create a, a bestselling, perennial bestselling book?" And he goes, "Yeah." He goes, "I'll talk about it." He said, "I have no idea how to do it." <laugh>. He goes, "I've written eight books." And, and we were talking about kind of in hindsight, you, you look at the dots and you can line everything up. But he's like, you can make figures out of clouds. Like looking back, you

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can make a story out of anything and say, "Oh, this is why it makes sense." But it doesn't mean that's the reality.

**AJ Harper** ([15:20](#)):

I don't know. I feel like he did a lot of things consistently and that can be modeled.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([15:26](#)):

I think one thing we, that came out of that conversation with Michael was that, uh, that at the end of the book, that the cons, the reader of the book can come away with that one profound idea. And it's so sticky, uh, that they can just parrot it. Kind of like *Profit First*. Take your *Profit First*. His is ask questions in *The Coaching Habit*. And the, the biggest question was, what's on your mind? And that opens up this whole dialogue of, of learning about someone else.

**AJ Harper** ([15:53](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([15:54](#)):

All right.

**AJ Harper** ([15:54](#)):

All right. So, uh, back to our list. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([15:56](#)):

Again,

**AJ Harper** ([15:56](#)):

We had more control. Bigger piece of the pie, partnership with your publisher. Also quality standards in terms of editing, design, uh, et cetera. That's all part of a top tier hybrid experience. And you know, that's something that you can make sure of just by looking at their books. Trade distribution, which we've talked about a lot. Again, episode one, you get more information about that. But in a nutshell, trade distribution is not just fulfilling demand for your book, but creating demand for your book.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([16:27](#)):

Could you explain that?

**AJ Harper** ([16:29](#)):

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Yeah. So it's you trade distributor, trade distribution, there's a sales team. So I just mentioned that McMillan is the sales team for Page Two. That's over a hundred people. I don't know the exact number. I want to say it's like 116, 120 people on their sales team trying to get books that are coming out into Target, Costco, Barnes & Noble, little stores, book clubs, other, you know, big library consortiums, you name it. They're out there hustling and pitching to get those books on shelves.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([17:04](#)):

And I assume the sales team is trying to, of the books they have available that they can sell, they want the best-selling books because I'm sure they're commissioned too.

**AJ Harper** ([17:13](#)):

Well, they're out there pitching front list. Front list are books that are about to come out or recently came out. So they're focused always on what's coming. Right. But they will actually do work on a, you know, strong back list, but they're focused mostly on front list. So then also, uh, I would say that the other two things that are important about, you know, the opportunity to work with hybrid.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([17:36](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([17:37](#)):

They're more nimble and flexible. So they can do interesting things. They can do, you know, we mentioned Phil Jones. They do all these custom books for him.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([17:46](#)):

He's the ultimate of repackaging content. And *Exactly What to Say* has come out exactly what to say for real estate agents.

**AJ Harper** ([17:54](#)):

Exactly. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([17:54](#)):

You know, and he will do these print runs of say, 5,000 books or 3000 books just for real estate, because he can't

**AJ Harper** ([18:01](#)):

Exactly. And they, they partner with him on that. .



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**Mike Michalowicz** ([18:04](#)):

Yeah

**AJ Harper** ([18:04](#)):

And they can be flexible. And they, they were flexible with me with certain things that I needed or wanted. So I think that I also, you know, and I talk about this in my book, I had a lot of really difficult-- I wrote that book during the pandemic. Uh, or actually I was in the process of writing it when it hit, and then had a lot of personal challenges, which I wrote about in the book. And they were able to move with me when I had to make changes in my schedule and so forth to accommodate just life, which isn't necessarily going to be the deal. Uh, with traditional.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([18:37](#)):

You and I walked into Penguin's offices and a famous author was sitting there with most panic-stricken face because that person had missed multiple deadlines.

**AJ Harper** ([18:47](#)):

Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([18:48](#)):

And the, the hammer was a coming down because I guess traditional publishers, perhaps it's due to the size. They, they've got to keep the gears moving. And if one, one gear's out, it can start stripping all the other ones. I wonder if it's due to the nature of the size and maybe the model of hybrid publishers that they had the flexibility?

**AJ Harper** ([19:07](#)):

Yeah. I mean, they, it still doesn't mean that I got to pick my release date. I still to be pushed back a season and they still have dominoes, right, that fall.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([19:15](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([19:15](#)):

But, and then the last thing is access to a team. In traditional publishing, you're primarily just dealing with your editor that acquired your title or who was assigned. And I have, you know, I was, I had access to half a dozen people.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([19:29](#)):

Yeah.

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**AJ Harper** ([19:29](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([19:30](#)):

Direct access to half a dozen

**AJ Harper** ([19:31](#)):

People. Uh-huh. <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([19:32](#)):

I would say with the traditional publisher, I have access to the marketing team. Uh, I think three or four people. No, but Noah, the editor is the liaison.

**AJ Harper** ([19:40](#)):

Right. So in my case, I meet everybody in a big kickoff. They're all part of the process. It's a much more of a team approach.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([19:47](#)):

I gotcha. I gotcha.

**AJ Harper** ([19:49](#)):

Yeah. So those are some cool things.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([19:50](#)):

Is that true through all, uh, hybrids, would you say? Or is that specific to Page Two?

**AJ Harper** ([19:54](#)):

I think I, well, I, I don't publish with other publishers, but I know great hybrid publishers like, uh, Wonderwell.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([20:02](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([20:03](#)):

Uh, She Writes, IdeaPress Publishing, you know, they all have teams.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([20:06](#)):

Yeah.

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**AJ Harper** ([20:07](#)):

They're all, they're all trying to create, A lot of those people came from traditional publishing. This is what you need to understand.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([20:13](#)):

Hmm.

**AJ Harper** ([20:14](#)):

They came from traditional, and they wanted a better way.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([20:17](#)):

Hmm.

**AJ Harper** ([20:17](#)):

So they made it, they created it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([20:20](#)):

Hmm. That's cool. Uh, it ain't perfect. It ain't all roses. So what are some of the challenges of working with a hybrid publisher?

**AJ Harper** ([20:28](#)):

Well, I think it's mostly in how you find one actually. Because if you, it's vetting. That's the biggest problem is how do I know I have the right one? Because there's always going to be challenges with any publisher, whether it's hybrid or traditional, there's always going to be a not quite perfect situation. Because as I said in an earlier episode, your publisher is not your fairy godmother. Your publisher is not your boss. Your publisher is your partner. And that's the mindset shift you need to make. But that said, I think the biggest problem is people don't know how to vet hybrids because anybody can say "I'm a hybrid."

**Mike Michalowicz** ([21:05](#)):

Right. There's no law forcing it.

**AJ Harper** ([21:08](#)):

No. Okay. Most, I would say most hybrids that are out there are really just offering you self-publishing packages. But not telling you that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([21:17](#)):

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Would there be a easy way to distinguish if they're just doing a self-publishing package versus being a true hybrid?

**AJ Harper** ([21:23](#)):

Um, yeah. There's certain things you can do to vet them. So again, I mentioned the IBPA Publishing Criteria. But there's things I do like, I'll go see, here's an easy one. Do you ask them who's do you have trade distribution and who is your trade distributor? Yeah. So don't just accept. Yes. I had a student, you know, I trained my students so well.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([21:44](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([21:45](#)):

A lot of times people are frustrated with my students because they have so much knowledge. So they go and asking these surprising questions. I had a student who went to an event where there was a hybrid publisher at, you know, the little exhibits, right? So because I trained them well, she said, do you have trade distribution? And the hybrid publisher said, yes. And then upon when she did her own homework, they do not.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([22:10](#)):

Oh.

**AJ Harper** ([22:11](#)):

So you have to ask who is it? And it just takes a minute to figure out if that's actually happening. Um, and it's okay for them to say, we do, you know, sometimes they don't, you don't qualify for trade distribution because maybe you don't have a big enough platform. But at least have that conversation, have that option. Another one is to see, you know, what... Do they include developmental editing in their package. So when you've got a hybrid publisher that costs \$5,000, you're not getting developmental editing, it's not happening.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([22:42](#)):

Mm.

**AJ Harper** ([22:43](#)):

Or if you are, that person is not qualified <laugh> to do developmental editing. That's an expensive thing because it takes a lot of time. And you need people who have experience in the genre and they cost money.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([22:56](#)):

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Mm-Hmm.

**AJ Harper** ([22:56](#)):

So that's a tell. If, if your hybrid publisher says, "We only cost \$5,000," you're getting a self-publishing package.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:04](#)):

What is the normal price range? Is there such a thing for a hybrid?

**AJ Harper** ([23:08](#)):

I mean, I think you can expect to pay minimum \$25 K.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:12](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([23:13](#)):

You can also go up way over six figures.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:17](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([23:17](#)):

Now I don't... I personally choke on that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:21](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([23:21](#)):

I think you and I are alike in this.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:23](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([23:24](#)):

No. Cannot do over six. But, you know, for some people it's a, it's worth the investment. Um, but I think, you know, \$25K, \$35K is pretty, pretty standard.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:36](#)):

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Pretty standard. And that excludes printing the books themselves.

**AJ Harper** ([23:39](#)):

It sure does.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:40](#)):

Yeah. So that's the team to write the book with. Well, you write the book, but it's, it's all the componentry except for the printing.

**AJ Harper** ([23:47](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:48](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([23:48](#)):

And you know, I mean, here's the thing. Oh, that's another thing. That's another tell. Do they only do print on demand?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:55](#)):

Oh, interesting.

**AJ Harper** ([23:56](#)):

Yeah. That's, that's how one way you can tell they don't have trade distribution <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:00](#)):

<laugh> Right.

**AJ Harper** ([24:01](#)):

So, you know, and then are they more concerned about the upfront payments or about the sales?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:07](#)):

How do you know that? How can you distinguish that?

**AJ Harper** ([24:10](#)):

Well, let's see. Is their marketing copy, are they mostly talking about people who became, got a lot of clients and lead gen and speakers versus how many books they sold?. Go look at their

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books. Don't just go on their site and see the sample books go onto Amazon. Search the books. Are they pretty much tumbleweeds? Meaning nobody's reading this book. It has like three reviews.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:37](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([24:37](#)):

The ranking super terrible. They forgot about it. That means the publisher also forgot about it. So if you see that's the norm, it's, there will be exceptions. There will always be books like that because authors have to participate. <laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:52](#)):

Oh yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([24:53](#)):

And publishers can't make that happen.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:54](#)):

Right.

**AJ Harper** ([24:55](#)):

But go see, uh, you know, do a random sampling and if they all kind of show up like that, then that's also a sign.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:02](#)):

Oh, that's interesting. Uh, Adayla shared with us, and I just want to read off a few of them. The IBPA Hybrid Publisher Criteria. Again, this is available on their website. Um, but with some of the things that are interesting is that it's so unparallel with what you've been saying. Uh, first of all, they define a mission and a vision for their publishing program, but their, uh, 10th item or 10th listed criteria was, "do they demonstrate respectable sales?"

**AJ Harper** ([25:29](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:30](#)):

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You know, the proof it's in the pudding, but there's also, there's new hybrids coming about. I guess if someone's brand new is a hybrid, they just have to disclose the fact they're new. And then you're, you're

**AJ Harper** ([25:39](#)):

Yeah. Transparency. I mean, it can be cool to hit your wagon to, you know, a brand-new hybrid. For sure.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:46](#)):

Uh, a couple other criteria they published under, under their own imprint and have their own ISBN. Uh, oh, actually, here's a good question. The ice cream for your book, was that a signed by Page Two?

**AJ Harper** ([25:55](#)):

Because they're my publisher.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:56](#)):

Because they're publisher. So they own it. They own that. Yeah. They own the ISBN. Yeah,

**AJ Harper** ([26:00](#)):

But they don't own the copyright. No publisher owns the copyright.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:02](#)):

They just have the license, but they own distribution rights.

**AJ Harper** ([26:04](#)):

Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:04](#)):

Yeah. That's the key distinguish. So as an author, you always own your, the copyright, the material you've written.

**AJ Harper** ([26:10](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:10](#)):

But they are licensed to distribute it.



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**AJ Harper** ([26:12](#)):

Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:14](#)):

Uh, and is that for life, or is that for a period of time?

**AJ Harper** ([26:16](#)):

Depends on your contract.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:18](#)):

Yeah. <laugh>, how's yours? Do you remember?

**AJ Harper** ([26:20](#)):

Oh, mine's life.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:21](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([26:22](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:22](#)):

Mine's...

**AJ Harper** ([26:23](#)):

Yours is life.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:23](#)):

<laugh>. Yeah. Mine life too. Yeah. Try to get it for five years. <laugh>. I'm kidding.

**AJ Harper** ([26:27](#)):

I mean, smaller presses will do that often, especially with genre fiction, you know, that's very common.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:32](#)):

Yeah. I guess a small press too, to get a bigger name author maybe would, or someone they think can move a lot of books will take that risk of reducing the term five years, 10 years.

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**AJ Harper** ([26:41](#)):

I mean, maybe. I think it's mostly about, um... Here's the deal with a small one. You know, when I had my small press, we knew that a book was mostly going to be done selling within five years. Yeah. Really more like two. Yeah. Right. So that's the logic behind it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([27:01](#)):

I gotcha.

**AJ Harper** ([27:02](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([27:03](#)):

Let's talk about the financials for hybrid. We already talked a little bit about the costs, the expected range, \$25K, you know, up to six figures even. But let's talk about the royalty shares. The-- What are, what's the royalty structure you have? Just to give us a sense, uh, for how your books, and is it for every, um, format the same? How, how's that work?

**AJ Harper** ([27:26](#)):

So I get more than 50%, for net.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([27:32](#)):

Of print.

**AJ Harper** ([27:33](#)):

Yeah. So I make, uh, I'll just tell you, let's just figure out the, so my book, I think retails first \$27. It's in hardcover.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([27:40](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([27:40](#)):

I make roughly \$8 a book.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([27:43](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([27:44](#)):

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And the reason I make that is because, uh, you know, when you have trade distribution, trade distributors take a big cut, they take a usually around 25%

**Mike Michalowicz** ([27:55](#)):

On

**AJ Harper** ([27:56](#)):

Top of what Amazon's taking.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([27:58](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([27:59](#)):

So when you have trade distribution, that's part of what happens is there's a bigger, more people need more of the pie, more people are claiming slices.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([28:07](#)):

Sure, sure.

**AJ Harper** ([28:07](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([28:08](#)):

So if running the math in my head is roughly, say 30% of the retail price, if your book sells for 27, you get eight, it's roughly 30%, which in a traditional what I have is 15% of retail.

**AJ Harper** ([28:20](#)):

Oh, I misspoke. That's about what I'm making after my cost.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([28:24](#)):

After you print?

**AJ Harper** ([28:25](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([28:26](#)):

Okay. So you're making even more than 30% say it's 40 or 50%.

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**AJ Harper** ([28:29](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([28:29](#)):

And what's your cost to print a book?

**AJ Harper** ([28:31](#)):

Um, so I didn't run, again, it's, it's about the, as you know, how many copies, I think I did about 7,000 copies and it was about \$4

**Mike Michalowicz** ([28:42](#)):

A book.

**AJ Harper** ([28:42](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([28:42](#)):

Yeah. Okay. Right. The higher the volume, the less expensive it is. But then you're sitting on inventory if it's not moving.

**AJ Harper** ([28:48](#)):

Exactly.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([28:50](#)):

Uh, with the supply chain issues, since Covid, at least I'm experiencing, it's harder to get a book printed, meaning you have to get in the queue and way behind all the other books.

**AJ Harper** ([29:00](#)):

Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:01](#)):

Have you experienced the same thing?

**AJ Harper** ([29:02](#)):

Yes. It's in, and it's happening with print on demand as well.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:05](#)):

Oh really?

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**AJ Harper** ([29:06](#)):

Yeah. You just need to allow more time. So it used to be that we could get a book printed if we had maybe say four to six weeks notice. Yeah. And now you should pretty much expect eight to 12 <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:18](#)):

Yeah. I was about to say used to be two to three months. Now it's six months or longer to get in the queue, it seems like.

**AJ Harper** ([29:25](#)):

Well, that might be for you in traditional Yeah. But if you were working with a printer

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:30](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([29:31](#)):

It, you know.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:32](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([29:33](#)):

I mean the— Oh, you mean the queue?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:35](#)):

The queue,

**AJ Harper** ([29:35](#)):

Yeah. You definitely need to notify them that you're going to need that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:39](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. It's just,

**AJ Harper** ([29:40](#)):

But the process of printing also takes longer, is what I'm getting at.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:43](#)):

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Oh yeah, no, exactly. Yeah, exactly. It all is taking longer. Um, okay, so the royalties, what about the royalties? We talked about the print. What about the audio and electronic?

**AJ Harper** ([29:52](#)):

Well, the thing is, that was my main deciding factor.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:56](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([29:57](#)):

I did my own audiobook. I get all of the money.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:01](#)):

A hundred percent.

**AJ Harper** ([30:02](#)):

I get my own. I did my own KDP, I get all of the money.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:07](#)):

Wow. So this gave you the files and you upload it.

**AJ Harper** ([30:09](#)):

Yep. And I know how to do it, so it was no problem.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:12](#)):

Oh my gosh. And what percentage of your sales are in audio or electronic versus print? What's the breakdown?

**AJ Harper** ([30:19](#)):

I am, I am not you, okay. I do not have these numbers at the top of my head.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:23](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([30:24](#)):

But, uh, you keep such a close eye on all these things.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:27](#)):

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Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([30:27](#)):

This is your, um, I would say it's—

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:30](#)):

My bailiwick.

**AJ Harper** ([30:30](#)):

Maybe a little bit of an obsession. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:32](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([30:32](#)):

It is. It's good. It serves you. I would say that, um, eBook is a small percentage. Most people want or do audio and print.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:41](#)):

I wouldn't be surprised if at least 30% of your sales are on audio. And it's probably more like 40%.

**AJ Harper** ([30:47](#)):

I am going to look, get that number for you.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:49](#)):

Yeah. That's awesome. Yeah. Um, but you get a hundred percent?

**AJ Harper** ([30:52](#)):

A Hundred percent of the net because obviously the net reflects what is ACX.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:58](#)):

Their fee. Audible fee.

**AJ Harper** ([30:59](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. The fees for the distributors.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([31:00](#)):

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Yeah. That's amazing. Uh, and that right there is so compelling for me because 50 or 52% of my sales are on audio. If I can get a hundred percent of that, that offset may be worth not going with a mainstream publisher anymore.

**AJ Harper** ([31:17](#)):

I mean, my logic for myself, for those who want to hear this is: Aside from, you know, I wanted the control, I wanted the partnership in the team. Didn't want to do it myself, but ultimately, I know I wrote a classic, and that's me. I am typically a modest person, but I did intend to write something that would stand the test of time. And I thought over time I want more of the piece of the pie.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([31:43](#)):

Right.

**AJ Harper** ([31:43](#)):

Right. And for those who are curious about this, I earned back the money I invested within... The fee that I invested? I earned it back within about 45 days.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([31:55](#)):

Wow.

**AJ Harper** ([31:56](#)):

And then the rest I think I've earned, I've - I've earned out the rest of the cost of printing.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:02](#)):

Yeah, by far.

**AJ Harper** ([32:04](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:04](#)):

So, right. *I Must Read*, when I last looked, uh, a, a few hours ago was ranked 17,000 whatever on Amazon. That is a popular book.

**AJ Harper** ([32:14](#)):

Yay.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:14](#)):



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That is a popular book. And we have to check how it's trending, you know, regularly to see, but you can look at your sales data, I strongly suspect is selling stronger this month than it did last month and last month was--

**AJ Harper** ([32:26](#)):

Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:26](#)):

Yeah. Which is, that's the momentum of a, that's the extraordinary momentum of a backlist book.

**AJ Harper** ([32:31](#)):

That's what you want to write.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:32](#)):

That's what want to write.

**AJ Harper** ([32:33](#)):

You need a strong backlist title no matter what path you're choosing.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:37](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. And I think the only way to explain why that phenomenon happens is a person has been served by the book so well they feel compelled to inspire others to buy that book.

**AJ Harper** ([32:49](#)):

Yeah. I mean, I have, I have people who reach out to me who are telling so many people about it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:59](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([32:59](#)):

So that's what happens. You get this dip when everybody's reading and the book seems to not be selling that well, but it's because everybody's reading.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([33:07](#)):

Yeah.

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**AJ Harper** ([33:07](#)):

And then it picks up.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([33:08](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([33:09](#)):

And that's when everybody finished reading and now they're telling everybody about it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([33:13](#)):

Word of mouth. Yeah. Knew it's the best marketing ever. Yes.

**AJ Harper** ([33:16](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([33:17](#)):

Everyone knew that's who. What should you get in a hybrid deal? So it includes the writer, the developmental editor, the copy editor, the proofreader cover includes the whole gamut.

**AJ Harper** ([33:29](#)):

It should include all of that. If it doesn't include that, you should be concerned. You, you know, you, you might be able to negotiate if you hired your own developmental editor early on in the process and you feel pretty good about it, you might be able to get that money down. A lot of my students do that. Um, but ultimately you should be getting: Developmental editor. Copy editor. Proofreader. Project team manager. Cover designer, interior page design and eBooks. Market positioning, anything to do with trade distribution, anything to do with getting your listings up. Um, that all should be done. And then some basic marketing stuff.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([34:11](#)):

That's what I was thinking. PR person, right?

**AJ Harper** ([34:15](#)):

No, not even that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([34:16](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([34:17](#)):

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Super basic working with the sales team. If there's a trade distribution, um, maybe some banners or things like that for your social media, maybe a consultation. You're just, those are the basics. Then they'll have add-ons, they'll have marketing packages that will cost more.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([34:36](#)):

All said and done, from the day you signed the contract with Page Two to having your book published. What's the, what was the timeframe? What's the normal timeframe?

**AJ Harper** ([34:43](#)):

Well, um, I'm not normal because as I said earlier, I had some personal challenges and I had to keep pushing the date back. But if you have trade distribution, they're on the same schedule as traditional. Meaning they have the same seasons, they have the same sales team that needs a lot of advanced notice. So if I, I'll just do it like this. If I got the deal today, I would, I could be published maybe in late... So right now, let's just say it's May, it's mid-May.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([35:16](#)):

Right.

**AJ Harper** ([35:17](#)):

I could potentially publish at the end of 2024 or maybe early 2025.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([35:23](#)):

Alright. So it's, right now we're recording May, 2023. So you're saying a year and a half,

**AJ Harper** ([35:29](#)):

Or it could be a year. It just kind of depends. Yeah. Is your manuscript done?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([35:33](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([35:33](#)):

So when I signed, I didn't have a manuscript.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([35:36](#)):

Yeah. *All In* comparatively is a two year from signing to print, uh, to on, on market date or on publishing date or that date.

**AJ Harper** ([35:47](#)):

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Yeah. So again, trade distribution adds a lot of time. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([35:51](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([35:51](#)):

So.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([35:51](#)):

Okay. So, so plan realistically a year and a half.

**AJ Harper** ([35:56](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([35:57](#)):

Unless

**AJ Harper** ([35:57](#)):

You're going to do print on demand with your hybrid publisher, which is definitely an option. And then you can, you can decrease that time.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:04](#)):

We didn't talk about this on the print on demand in last episode. Do they do print on demand in hardcover or is it only in soft cover?

**AJ Harper** ([36:10](#)):

No, they do have hardcover now.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:12](#)):

They do? Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([36:12](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:14](#)):

Um, do I need an agent?

**AJ Harper** ([36:16](#)):

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No.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:17](#)):

For any hard hybrid?

**AJ Harper** ([36:19](#)):

N-o.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:20](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([36:21](#)):

No agents.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:22](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([36:23](#)):

In fact, don't do it. <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:25](#)):

Yeah. I guess why would you?

**AJ Harper** ([36:26](#)):

Because you're already putting money in and then they're going to get percentage.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:29](#)):

And there there's no need for it. Right.

**AJ Harper** ([36:31](#)):

There's no need. You do need to get something together that's like a book. You either a book proposal or you're going to have to follow their submission requirement. You're going to have to get them something.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:43](#)):

Yes.

**AJ Harper** ([36:43](#)):

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Who is this book for?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:44](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([36:44](#)):

What's the main message? Where do you see it fits in the marketplace?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:48](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([36:49](#)):

Where does it fit for you? And your plans. How do you plan to promote it? And some of them you do need a full proposal, so it's good to go just check the submission requirements.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:58](#)):

You know, what's interesting is once you're established, I assume this is with your hybrid or your traditional, does the book proposal change? It used to be for the first book, you've got to write a 15-20 page book proposal. That's what we did for *Pumpkin Plan*. And now we still write a book proposal, but it's really for our own planning. But

**AJ Harper** ([37:20](#)):

We don't really though, it's really just like two pages,

**Mike Michalowicz** ([37:22](#)):

<laugh>. Right. It's super short, but Noah, the editor just says, "Hey, just gimme your idea and we'll just, we'll throw it around." I think Page Two would be the same with you. Like if your next book, which I can't wait now, you just told you gave me a little tip off.

**AJ Harper** ([37:34](#)):

I did. Don't say!

**Mike Michalowicz** ([37:35](#)):

I won't, I won't. Um, when you start working on the next book, if you decide to go with Page Two, based upon your performance, based upon the quality of your book, I assume it's just like, "Hey, I have an idea," and you get signed up. Is that, is there truth to that?

**AJ Harper** ([37:48](#)):

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Okay. I'd say for me that's probably true.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([37:51](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([37:51](#)):

I think you have to, you know, you have to be working to sell your book.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([37:56](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([37:56](#)):

Right. You, you can't.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([37:57](#)):

You totally do.

**AJ Harper** ([37:58](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([37:58](#)):

If, if you, what I'm simply saying is your proceeding book dictates how easy it's to sell the next book to, to the publisher.

**AJ Harper** ([38:05](#)):

Oh, a thousand times. Yes. Right. For sure. But I think, um, you know, I just want put a shout out for book proposals.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([38:15](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([38:16](#)):

If you are the, the reason we only have to do two pages, and I guess now you're telling me I don't have to add that to my, to-do list this year.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([38:22](#)):

If you don't want, we don't have to because—

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**AJ Harper** ([38:23](#)):

We can just tell Noah, which is great.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([38:26](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([38:26](#)):

Um, but it does force you to gain the clarity you need. So it's an important and worthy exercise.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([38:35](#)):

Yeah, I agree.

**AJ Harper** ([38:35](#)):

Even our little two pager is worth doing. You know,

**Mike Michalowicz** ([38:38](#)):

I think it's really powerful coming with an outline.

**AJ Harper** ([38:40](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([38:41](#)):

And know what we're doing.

**AJ Harper** ([38:42](#)):

But when you're a new author, you've got to have that book proposal because you have to really think it through, wait, what are my comparative titles? Where does my book fit in the marketplace? This is actually a huge, huge factor in how, whether people decide to sign you or not.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([38:59](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([39:00](#)):

When I had my publishing company, it would always annoy me when I would ask these authors, so we were fiction and I'd say, well, who, you know, what authors do you love in the genre? Or where do you think your book fits in this, in this genre? They aren't, we weren't even reading other books in the genre. So that's a red flag for me.



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**Mike Michalowicz** ([39:22](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([39:22](#)):

And when you can say this, I understand the market, I know this, I understand what's other books out there serve the same readership. This, these are, they're great. This is how mine is different. You have to be able to have those conversations. Yes. And you have to do that work. The same with really thinking through your outline, thinking through how you plan to market it, thinking through not only what's the demographics of your audience with the psychographics of your audience, and then also writing a killer couple chapters.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([39:58](#)):

Yes.

**AJ Harper** ([39:58](#)):

So that is a process that is a worthy endeavor. And I think people should just do it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([40:06](#)):

I think even worthy for self-publish because you, you really start to understand how the book's going to flow. And you know, the outline we wrote in our cabin trip for *All In*.

**AJ Harper** ([40:18](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([40:18](#)):

The most recent book versus what the book is today is... is different.

**AJ Harper** ([40:22](#)):

Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([40:22](#)):

Not radically different, but it's, it's different. Yes. But we put in a tremendous amount of effort from the get go to understand the course it was taking and it gave it, it gave it its North Star.

**AJ Harper** ([40:34](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([40:34](#)):

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That pitch gave it the North Star. Hey, um, one last question I have for you is just owning the rights when you go with a hybrid, uh, you already touched on this, the copyright versus distribution. Just can you explain how the rights work real quick? Who owns what?

**AJ Harper** ([40:50](#)):

Well, the hybrid, just like a traditional publisher just has the right to publish.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([40:55](#)):

Which means distribute the, the book.

**AJ Harper** ([40:59](#)):

Yeah. And sometimes they also have rights to negotiate your subsidiary rights, which is foreign translations, film, video, audio, et cetera. But you can negotiate that out. You don't have to accept that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([41:10](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([41:10](#)):

And you should read the contract carefully to make sure that they don't own any other aspect of your intellectual property.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([41:16](#)):

And then your, uh, copyright means what can, what, what do you have the right to, I know it's your material so no one else can use it, but can you use your own material in different ways?

**AJ Harper** ([41:28](#)):

So it depends on the contract. With hybrid you can negotiate different types of deals. Uh, remember it's your printed material, not, they don't have, they don't own your idea.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([41:38](#)):

Right. So you can, you can make your idea into a service or you could write workbooks. As long as in the contract it permits that.

**AJ Harper** ([41:45](#)):

Well they can never, there should never be a contract that prevents you from using your ideas.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([41:52](#)):

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Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([41:52](#)):

To have a service.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([41:53](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([41:53](#)):

But a workbook's a different thing if it's derivative of the original printed work.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([41:58](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([41:58](#)):

But I need you to think about it as they have the right to distribute this one body of work in this book.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([42:05](#)):

Gotcha.

**AJ Harper** ([42:06](#)):

Not control over everything you ever think.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([42:09](#)):

Okay. That's super clear. Is there anything else you wanted to touch on regarding hybrid?

**AJ Harper** ([42:12](#)):

Just one really important tip.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([42:14](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([42:14](#)):

This is crucial. If you're trying to decide, do I do hybrid? Do I do traditional? Is hybrid my backup? If I go for traditional, this is how I want you to time it. I want you to submit to hybrid and traditional at the same time. Don't wait to do hybrid when you've exhausted your traditional options.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([42:35](#)):

Hmm.

**AJ Harper** ([42:35](#)):

Because here's why. If they want you, if a hybrid company wants you, if they offer you a proposal, you can say, gimme a minute to think about it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([42:46](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([42:46](#)):

You can turn it down.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([42:48](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([42:48](#)):

For that matter you can turn down traditional too. But point being, if you wait to start the hybrid process until you've exhausted your traditional options, now you're extending, I've just told you how long it can take.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([43:00](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([43:01](#)):

Better if you've already have somebody lined up that will take it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([43:05](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([43:06](#)):

And then just set a timeline for yourself for traditional. So what I tell my students is, you know, decide I'm going to be in, I'm going to try for three months. I'm going to try for four months, whatever number. And while you're trying for traditional, also submit to the hybrids and have those interviews and conversations. So all that work is done.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([43:24](#)):

I love it.

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**AJ Harper** ([43:25](#)):

All the vetting's done. And then if you decide to go with them, you're good to go.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([43:28](#)):

And once you get accepted somewhere, it starts building confidence. Yeah. So maybe you get a hybrid and now some traditionalists are hemming and hawing and say, well I already have a deal. You have that confidence to go into that.

**AJ Harper** ([43:38](#)):

Yep. That's an important tip.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([43:39](#)):

Uh, before we wrap things up, I want to invite our listeners to get the free materials we have and to join our email list. We have some cool stuff that we're sharing on there. It's [dwtb podcast.com](#). That's "don't write that book [podcast.com](#)." Also, we'd love to hear your stories. Maybe how you made your own bestseller. Maybe you have your own best tips you want to share with us. And we can in turn share with our audience. Email us at [hello@dwbpodcast.com](mailto:hello@dwbpodcast.com). Thanks again for joining us today. We are looking forward to having you join us on our next episode. And as always, don't write that book.