

# don't write *that* book!

## Episode 13:

### PRE-LAUNCH

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

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**. So, normally when we start these episodes, AJ, we, uh, introduced each other, but I, I got to tell you this story. Um, so on Monday of this week, I had a keynote in, uh, Calgary. There was, uh, 400 entrepreneurs. It was actually staggered over two sessions. So it was 200 people in the morning, 200 people in the afternoon. I was teaching *Profit First* and actually other principles and testing out some stuff, even stuff that we're working on right now. Well, I left Sunday around one in the afternoon was the flight to get to Calgary. So I was going from Newark, New Jersey to Denver, Colorado to Calgary. I don't know if you saw those storms, or you were, you were home maybe?

**AJ Harper** ([00:00:58](#)):

Yeah!

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:00:59](#)):

The storms were ridiculous.

**AJ Harper** ([00:01:00](#)):

Oh, yeah, we were on the national news, my area, because we had all those roads flooded out.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:01:04](#)):

Yeah, yeah. Oh, the whole area got destroyed. I have friends in Vermont. I mean, it was the whole East coast in New Hampshire, lost their driveways, like just washed away. So I'm on the airplane, and like, rain's coming, Christa starts texting me going this, there's a monsoon. And in Newark, it's just a little drizzle. It's overcast. And I'm like, all right, we're on the tarmac. Like they had pulled out from the gate. I'm like, we're going. And they're like, oh, um, we have too many bags. I didn't know they, they must be weighing the plane somehow. So we have too many bags. We just have to remove 10 bags. We're going to do that, and then we'll take off in 15 minutes. I'm like, okay, I know there's this rainstorm coming. Come on. Go baby. Go. So we go, they take bags off. I've never experienced that.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:01:41](#)):

They close and said, "Okay, we're all set to go." And I said, like a minute later, "Oh, bad news. All flights are canceled." <laugh>. Oh. I'm like, what? So we turn around, go back disembark, and, uh, now I'm sitting there. Now it's four o'clock in the afternoon. We are out in the tarmac for a bit. So maybe my timeframe's a little bit off. I know it's four o'clock when we got off the plane. Now I'm like, I have to be in Calgary speaking at nine o'clock in the morning, and, uh, I got to get out of here. And there's no flights. All flights are canceled for the day out of Newark. So I call my agent Lee, and she checks around. She's like, there's no flights from the, some of southern parts DC up to Boston. She's like, I don't know what you're going to do. So I'm like, um, I guess if I can simply get into Canada, <laugh>, there's flights all over Canada, maybe outside the storm. So I said, see if you can get me a flight. I'm driving north and I just get in the car and start driving. I drove for eight hours from four o'clock till midnight into Toronto, crossing the border, by the way, at midnight. Very easy. I didn't expect that. <laugh>, there's guards signs, like, you know, slow down. Like it was just one dude sitting there smoking cigarettes. Like, yeah, what do you want? I'm like, I want to get into Canada. He's like, yeah, fine. Go <laugh>. I get into Canada, I get to the Toronto airport. It's now one in the o'clock in the morning. In the meantime, Lee and Aaron had booked me a flight for, uh, 5:45 AM out.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:02:58](#)):

So I'm like, okay, I have to be at the airport probably two and a half hours prior, so I got to be in there around three 30. It's one o'clock in the morning. I'm not going to get a hotel now. So I pull into the parking lot at the airport. It's one of those layered parking lots, like six story parking lot packed with cars, but no one's there. So I pull in, I'm like, I'm just sleep in the car. I've been sitting for so long, driving my butt was killing me. So I'm like, I just got to stretch out. So I go into the back of the cab, like the, the backseats, and I can't, I, I'm laying there on my side, which felt good for a second. <laugh>, my God. But my, my knees are in my throat, so I'm like, this is the best part. So I'm like, I can't do this.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:03:33](#)):

So I'm like, where am I going to stretch out? And I can't get into the airport. The airport's not open at that point. So I'm like, uh, okay, I'm going to sleep in the bed of the truck. So I open the bed, it has like a-- isn't this crazy? Has a rolling cover over it. Like, if you ever go to the mall or something and they close the store, that steel kind of garage door comes down. Well, that's what I have over my truck. So I open it, it's manual. I get back there and I forgot. I've been working on building a fence at my house. So I have gravel and cement bags. <laugh> So I'm now moving, I'm in the middle of the Toronto Pearson Airport, moving cement bags, gravel.

**AJ Harper** ([00:04:10](#)):

At two o'clock in the morning.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:04:11](#)):

Yeah. Two o'clock in the morning, exhausted, like tears coming down. And I'm like, I got to sleep. One thing I do, and this is a travel hack, I carry a, a blowup mattress with me everywhere, because I've been stuck in airports enough times. So thank, I had this, I blow it up, I put it in the bed, I position my body like a caterpillar around this stuff. And then I'm like, I can't just lay in the bed. What if someone comes walking by? because there's people now arriving at the airport.

**AJ Harper** ([00:04:34](#)):

Can you imagine what they're seeing on the security camera? You know they think you are like a terrorist.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:04:38](#)):

I didn't even think about that.

**AJ Harper** ([00:04:39](#)):

Like, You're moving cement bags.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:04:40](#)):

So then I, I'm in the bed laying, it's about maybe a two and a half foot gap. I pull the shed thing, the, oh my God, back. It goes, go, go, go over me. And I've, I put myself in my truck bed covered in this, and I falsely, instantly I set the alarm. It's now 3:30 AM or whatever. I have to get to the airport. So it goes off. I wake up, I'm a little bit disoriented. I'm like, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm in a truck bed.

**AJ Harper** ([00:05:03](#)):

<laugh>. Oh, no.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:05:04](#)):

And like, I'm trying to get out. So I put my hand up to open it and it was unlocked. That's not a problem. Oh my

**AJ Harper** ([00:05:08](#)):

Oh my God.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:05:08](#)):

But I put my hand open, unlock it, and just as I start pulling it, I hear a car pull in. I'm like, oh. Right next to me.

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**AJ Harper** ([00:05:13](#)):

So you're going to come out?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:05:15](#)):

No! I can't. I can't come out. I mean, I want to come out, but I can't. because they're going to think like I'm being trafficked by myself. <laugh>. I'm trafficking, I'm human trafficking myself, myself. God. So I just sit there. And then of course, the guy doesn't just pull up. He then sits in idols for what felt like eternity. Just sitting there, sitting there at a certain point, I'm like, I'm going to miss my plane if I don't get out of my human trafficking situation. <laugh>. Oh, no. So I put my hand up and start pushing it. Thank God, divine intervention. He then gets out of his car and walks away as I'm getting out. So I can actually see his, him walking away with his suitcase. Get up, look around, get out, get my suitcase, run to the airport, uh, get on the flight, make the flight to Calgary.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:05:57](#)):

I arrived, uh, 45 minutes after my starting time when I got there. Uh, and the, the client knows I'm coming late, and they're like, we're going to work with this, and we're going to delay and stuff. Just do everything you get to hear, get there. I get there. The, on my itinerary, it says I have to go to Six Avenue, you know, 3, 4, 5, 6 Avenue Southwest. Well, it was supposed to have been 3, 4, 6, 5, Southeast. So I'm a mile away now. When I get dropped off from the cab, I'm like, the guy's like I'm outside. I can't find you. I'm like, I can't find you. He goes, where are you? I'm like, at 3, 4, 5. He's like, I'm at 3, 4, 5. He goes, are you at Southeast Or Southwest? I'm like, Southwest.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:06:34](#)):

He's like, you're supposed to be at Southeast. He goes, run. So now I'm running to Calgary.

**AJ Harper** ([00:06:38](#)):

So you're running a mile.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:06:39](#)):

Ran a mile. And he actually starts coming toward me walking, which just to comfort me, because we had to go back. Anyway, sweat dripping. I stink, I have cement on.

**AJ Harper** ([00:06:48](#)):

Perfect. Perfect.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:06:49](#)):

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We get to the event now. It's an hour. Uh, I'm an hour late now. because like, I got the, I arrived at 3:45, 45 minutes late. Now it's an hour late to the venue. He's like, we got to get you on stage. I said—

**AJ Harper** ([00:07:00](#)):

You need a shower?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:07:01](#)):

Yeah, yeah. No shower. No shower. Uh, Krista calls it a whore's bath. I don't know if that's appropriate anymore. It's a sex worker's bath. Maybe it's just deodorant on your pits a little bit on your face just to clean up and a little bit in your hair. <laugh>.

**AJ Harper** ([00:07:14](#)):

It's probably not appropriate.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:07:15](#)):

Probably not appropriate.

**AJ Harper** ([00:07:15](#)):

But we're, we're way past that at this point. Yeah. With this story.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:07:18](#)):

So I run into the bathroom, uh, it's a public bathroom. I throw on my clothes. I put on a shirt and tie real quick. Stinking like Lincoln, go upstairs. And as I'm walking up, he's already doing the introduction saying he's about to walk in we any second. And as I walk in the room, he's like, and here he is, Mike, it's applause on stage. Go four hours. So two hour presentation.

**AJ Harper** ([00:07:41](#)):

My gosh.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:07:42](#)):

It was insane. I had to share that.

**AJ Harper** ([00:07:44](#)):

It's so glamorous. Speaking,

**AJ Harper** ([00:07:48](#)):

That takes the cake.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:07:49](#)):

Yeah. It, this, this is the, the most crazy one I've ever experienced.

**AJ Harper** ([00:07:54](#)):

It reminds me of some of your stories of early entrepreneurship when you would sleep in the car and you would keep an extra change of clothes. Yeah. And just, you didn't have to pay for a hotel room.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:08:04](#)):

Couldn't afford it. Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:08:04](#)):

Yeah. This is extreme though. This is not, it was crazy. I would never sleep in a cab of a truck with a, the thing I couldn't. I'm claustrophobic. I could never pull the thing over me.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:08:15](#)):

Oh, yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:08:17](#)):

But I do understand when you're so desperate, it, a wall looks good. Could I just lean against it?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:08:21](#)):

Oh, I was so tired. Yeah. And then after the, show...

**AJ Harper** ([00:08:25](#)):

How'd it go, by the way?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:08:26](#)):

Great.

**AJ Harper** ([00:08:27](#)):

I'm sure you're on adrenaline.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:08:28](#)):

Pure, pure adrenaline. The host was kind. He spoke. He's like, I want you to know what Mike did for us.

**AJ Harper** ([00:08:33](#)):

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Did you tell him you were—

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:08:35](#)):

I didn't tell!

**AJ Harper** ([00:08:35](#)):

—sleeping with cement?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:08:36](#)):

No, I didn't share that part. I was actually embarrassed. And I told Krista, she's like, did you film it? I said, no. She's like, that's what people need to see. What are you supposed to do? Hold your camera up in the dark. Yeah. When you're hugging cement. And then say, I'm so scared. You know, she wanted me to be Blair Witch Project. Like, where? I'm like, I'm so scared.

**AJ Harper** ([00:08:52](#)):

That would've been funny.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:08:54](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:08:54](#)):

But you were too tired.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:08:55](#)):

So I said I might do a reenactment, but say it's a reenactment. Just so people can see like the craziness. I still have the cement and moss and gravel in my car, in my truck.

**AJ Harper** ([00:09:02](#)):

You should just take a picture of it and say, where did you sleep last night? <laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:09:06](#)):

That's genius. Okay. Um, that was the long one. But I, I had a last out.

**AJ Harper** ([00:09:09](#)):

I appreciate that you, that you were holding onto it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:09:14](#)):

I had to let that story out.

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**AJ Harper** ([00:09:15](#)):

I was riveted.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:09:16](#)):

Thank you. Thank you. And I have more, but we'll save them for future episodes because we have to dig into something important. Today we're going to talk about pre-launch. Um, there's three phases to marketing a book pre-launch prior to the book's publication date launch, which is the period during the publication date. Usually I consider about two weeks after the actual book goes on sale, and then post-launch, which is into eternity. But there's multiple phases, front list and back list post-launch. So I want to dig into all that. First, I do want to introduce you, AJ Harper. Extraordinary friend, extraordinary mother. And that's what I want to talk about today. Uh, I follow you on Facebook. Um, we exchange texts more than I do with any other friend I have. And I'm just, I'm so proud of what you've accomplished as a mother and how you supported your family.

**AJ Harper** ([00:10:02](#)):

That's so nice. You're welcome. It's, I like this introducing with things that are not about our credentials. I think it's really cool.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:10:10](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:10:11](#)):

Not talking about books per se. Not talking about all that. That means a lot. My son graduated this year from high school.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:10:19](#)):

Congratulations.

**AJ Harper** ([00:10:19](#)):

Major accomplishment. Yeah. I think parents should get a party. <laugh>. Have you noticed that the kids today don't want, when we were kids, you had a graduation party. Yeah. There was a poster and it showed you as a baby.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:10:33](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:10:33](#)):

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It had all your pictures up. You got some cash.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:10:36](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:10:37](#)):

There was a cake. They don't want parties. I still got a cake. I'm

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:10:42](#)):

I'm dumbfounded your Son didn't want a party

**AJ Harper** ([00:10:47](#)):

No one in his class wanted a party. Not that I know of. There were no parties.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:10:49](#)):

That's so absurd.

**AJ Harper** ([00:10:51](#)):

Yes. Thank you for that. Uh, I'm a, um, mother to one, one and done.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:10:57](#)):

One and done.

**AJ Harper** ([00:10:58](#)):

Well, then let me just turn about, because you know, I think I remember when, um, I got first started to get to know you, I thought, who's this guy that wrote this *Toilet Paper Entrepreneur* kind of dude, bro. Frat boy.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:11:16](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:11:17](#)):

But really, you're a family man.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:11:19](#)):

Oh, thank you.

**AJ Harper** ([00:11:19](#)):

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I, and I say that all the time.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:11:21](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:11:21](#)):

Whenever I'm talking about voice and books, I use that as an example. That, that was part of you. But it was more like a persona of you. Whereas once you sat down and said, "Okay, I'm going to do 25 books," and we talked about who are you going to be?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:11:36](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:11:36](#)):

I said, "You're this, you're a gentleman and you're a family man, and a good dad and a good husband."

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:11:43](#)):

Oh, thank you.

**AJ Harper** ([00:11:44](#)):

And that's proven to be true. I've known you a long time.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:11:46](#)):

Thank you.

**AJ Harper** ([00:11:47](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:11:47](#)):

Thank you. I, yeah. I love my family. I, they're everything to me.

**AJ Harper** ([00:11:50](#)):

Yeah. And I think that comes through in your work now. Your work is, you are the voice in your book.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:11:57](#)):

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Thank you. Thank you. Oh, that means world to me. So, uh, let's dig into the topic of, of pre-launch. Uh, it's funny, one of the things that you, you mentioned in our, our little, we've kind a script here that's some bullet points to discuss is the, uh, what, what was the most successful and least successful pre-launch? And, uh, I think what I want to start off by defining what a pre-launch is. So as I shared, there's, there's three phases. A pre-launch maybe could be interchanged with the words preamble. It's the preparation for your books launch. The objective is when a book launches it, at least for the most part, in, in every launch I've had and everyone I've supported in launches, other authors, is to get as much momentum out the gate during this short period when the book gets published. Now, why is this important when a book gets published, meaning it's available on all the retail outlets, is if there is a surge of demand, and this is my numbers, I don't know if this is true, that initial surge can trigger on the ongoing momentum.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:13:00](#)):

So here's the numbers. I believe to be true that 10% of people who buy the book will actually read the book cover to cover within some reasonable timeframe. Most people buy books, never read the book in the first place. I, I bet any of our listeners right now, if you look at all the books you have on your shelf, or all the books you've ever had, I suspect a large portion, 20, 30, 40%, you haven't even cracked the cover. You look that, but you haven't read earnestly. And then a, a portion of those books that you have read, you've read in part, you either skimmed or just read the first few chapters, and I'll get back to it. Or maybe you simultaneously--read where you have like three or four books going simultaneously. Um, but my estimate is 10% of people who buy a book within a short period, within a few months have read the book cover to cover of those 10%.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:13:48](#)):

10% will become the zealots. If you write an extraordinary book, 10 people will say, this was the right book at the right time for the other 90% wasn't the right time. Maybe they think it's a great book. Maybe they don't apply it. They don't use it. So now it's 1% of that community, 1% of that community. Those people are your, uh, what they call it, thousand true fans or whatever. There, there's another book on that topic. But these are the people who are your rabid fans. I think a rabid fan can move about a hundred books for you over their lifetime. I love *E-Myth*. You hear me talk about it regularly. You love anything by Stephen Pressfield. I, I've bought all of his books. Uh, the *War of Art*, I bought the day you said to buy it. You mentioned other books. I've bought them because of you, not because of some marketing, not because anything, but AJ said to read it. So I'm going to read it. I believe the majority of books are sold because other people suggest it. Those

**AJ Harper** ([00:14:39](#)):

Are really more like ambassadors.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:14:42](#)):

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And, uh, I, I'm telling our listeners right now, buy, *Write a Must-Read* by **AJ Harper** is extraordinary. So I am an ambassador for your book. I've read your book now three times. I'm going to probably do a fourth time this summer. Um, it's one of the few books—

**AJ Harper** ([00:14:57](#)):

Why? That's so fascinating. You have access to me and then we do this same process. And yet you're reading the book. That's interesting.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:15:03](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. It's just so freaking good.

**AJ Harper** ([00:15:06](#)):

But that's what we do with books we love. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:15:08](#)):

Yeah. And, and you just learn, you just learn more as I learned things that you've taught me. But it, it's another form of education. So whatever, I I, it's one of the few nonfiction books I've ever done that with *Think and Grow Rich*. I've done it with *E-Myth*, which I've read multiple times. There's a couple other I can think of in your book. So we, so basically you have a 1% of this audience that will sell a hundred books for you. If you sell, say a thousand books, 1% is 10 people, 10 people times a hundred is a thousand. So now you've restarted that. So we need to get that 1% of Uber fans. If you can increase from a thousand to 10,000 books during the launch period, now 1% is a hundred. If I run my math right, a hundred times 110,000. And so now it starts that cycle. So the bigger the launch, I believe the bigger the potential momentum your book is going to have. The bigger, the pre-launch. No, the bigger the launch—

**AJ Harper** ([00:16:05](#)):

The launch.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:16:06](#)):

The launch, that launch period. So the pre-launch, it's all the effort and work that gets us prepared to have the biggest launch possible.

**AJ Harper** ([00:16:14](#)):

Yeah. And some of that is early readers.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:16:16](#)):

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And some of that's early readers. Yeah. Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:16:19](#)):

So remember when we, when we first started with Penguin Random House, do you remember they talked about the Launch Runway?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:16:27](#)):

Yep.

**AJ Harper** ([00:16:28](#)):

And they said they didn't want you to do any heavy marketing until about four months out.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:16:32](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:16:33](#)):

Do you think that still proves to be true?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:16:37](#)):

Yeah. Yes. No. So the yes part is they did say about four months out, but that's where they, their system, they're a massive machine. And the gears come into alignment. because they're marketing and they're promoting hundreds of books, thousands of books throughout the entire organization. And so they have to get everyone alignment. So, so their team is ready four months out and, and for our newest book, all in, which as of today is now five months out. Um, we called them, me and, and Andrea and the team at the office called them three months ago to start talking about marketing. And they were visibly upset. They said, we can't, we can't do this now. Like, we're not ready. And like, and we're like, it's too late to start talking marketing now. Like, we're waiting till the last minute. We're only eight months away. And they're like, it's too early. So they, they have their components. As an author, though, I believe we need to start our pre-launch marketing minimally a year in advance. Ideally a year and a half to two years in advance. Which, when I tell new authors this, they're like, are you effing kidding me? <laugh>? I I don't even have the book concept complete and you're telling me to start marketing. You can't. How can you market something that doesn't exist? And that's because there's a great misunderstanding of what a pre-launch is.

**AJ Harper** ([00:17:50](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:17:51](#)):

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So Let me, let me talk through some of the components. A pre-launch is preparation for the launch. There are active sales that you want to get, which is pre-orders. The, I think there's five main categories that lead up to launch that we have to know of during a pre-launch. The first off is your own community, your own list. What you do during the pre-launch phase, so let's say starting two years in advance, 24 months in advance, is start engaging your community on the topic, not on your book, but the topic to start positioning yourself as an expert. And any information you can provide them on that topic to wet their appetite or to be of service of them, to them provide that. You and I right before this, we're working on another book.

**AJ Harper** ([00:18:31](#)):

Mm hmm. <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:18:31](#)):

About selling a business. And you're like, we got to start doing, uh, some workshops and stuff that's pre-launch activity.

**AJ Harper** ([00:18:36](#)):

Yeah. It's testing, testing

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:18:37](#)):

And teaching

**AJ Harper** ([00:18:37](#)):

That's public. And I think also it's important when you're writing about the topic or testing the content that you're also saying, "This is for my book."

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:18:46](#)):

That's right. That's exactly right. During that period, collect all the names and say, "When I come out with this book, may I make you aware of it? Do you want to know about it?" And build that list. Every speaking engagement I do, every time someone visits my website, I'm capturing emails saying, "Hey, here's a, here's a free download of stuff that I'm researching on selling a business. Do you want the free download in exchange? Can you gimme your email and I'll notify you when my book comes out?"

**AJ Harper** ([00:19:10](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:19:10](#)):

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Constantly build that list. Now, I don't like to share my numbers anymore. I used to say, oh, this is what we've achieved. I do share them, but I just want to tell you why I don't like to share them. It's because it, it dissuades people. We now have 150,000 people on my list. But when I wrote *Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*, I had zero people on my list. And I think that's what people don't understand. They say, I can never get to 150,000. Yeah, you can, but that's not, the number one is better than zero and two is better than one. Let's simply start, when I launched *Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*, my first book, I maybe had like 600 people on my list. Maybe a thousand people that was had subscribed at that point.

**AJ Harper** ([00:19:50](#)):

It, wait, you just said it was zero.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:19:52](#)):

Oh, no. Uh, I started off with zero.

**AJ Harper** ([00:19:54](#)):

Oh, you built it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:19:55](#)):

I started building the list. Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:19:56](#)):

But by—

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:19:56](#)):

When?

**AJ Harper** ([00:19:56](#)):

When did you start the process?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:19:58](#)):

Yeah, when the actual book launched, I think there was a less than a thousand people.

**AJ Harper** ([00:20:01](#)):

And you had zero book sales and—

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:20:03](#)):

# don't write *that* book!

Had zero day one, zero book sales <laugh>. Oh my God. Yeah. So, um, but I didn't even know how to use my list properly. Then when we engaged our list and we were able to move a few books and got the momentum started. So, so the first thing is, uh, start capturing people's emails with their permission, um, in exchange for something of value. That's what you do there in pre-launch. The second thing is, so that's one big bucket. The second big bucket is other people's lists.

**AJ Harper** ([00:20:28](#)):

Oh.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:20:29](#)):

And I'll tell you, there's probably no greater way of amplifying or magnifying your impact quickly on awareness around your book than through other people's lists. You know, could you imagine for me if Malcolm Gladwell or Don Miller, or Ryan Holiday, or Brene Brown, or you know, whoever the names are, uh, said, oh my gosh, I believe in what you're doing. I want this to share this with my community. So how do you get Brene Brown to talk about your book? Well, first of all is you have to come into her universe in a way that's of service. You don't enter people's universe by saying ding, ding, ding, ding. "You know, Brene Brown. Uh, I know you don't know me, but I want you to promote my book." First of all, extremely offensive. Second of all, why would she ever take your phone call to, to be a promotion for you, get in her universe by being of service to her genuine, authentic service without an expectation for return.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:21:24](#)):

So a huge part of my pre-launch, and it's happening tomorrow, hopefully I won't be sleeping in a truck again, but I'm flying to Nashville. Uh, and if, if the storm comes through tomorrow, I'm driving to Nashville for 14 hours. I am not going to miss this. I'm going to meet with 30 authors. Um, and these are 30 authors who before this, most of them don't know who I am and don't necessarily care who I am, but I'm doing something to be of service to them. What I'm doing is I'm putting together an author event where all these authors are coming together to share a network. My job, I'm the facilitator. I happen to be an author, I'm the facilitator. But the power of being a facilitator is I get to cherry pick who I wanted to invite. Malcolm Gladwell, uh, it was included in the list. Uh, we exchanged some emails. Unfortunately, he won't be attending this case. But there's other, uh, people who I also admire that are attending. And they are attending, because I said, guess who else I invited? Who's going to attend?

**AJ Harper** ([00:22:18](#)):

Right.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:22:19](#)):

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And it's a live in-person event. And, uh, I'm doing like the best marketing move ever. I got, I'll share it separately. Maybe some future episode. I got to show you what I did. You'll crack up. I think total Michalowicz. So number two is build a list of influencers that you network with and build.

**AJ Harper** ([00:22:36](#)):

Can I just interject about the value piece?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:22:39](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:22:39](#)):

That sounds daunting to some new authors, right? Oh, "I'm going to get together, or I'm going to try and get, see who Brene Brown wants to get, be in a room with." It's a, a simple free thing you can do that takes five seconds is to amplify what matters to them.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:22:54](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:22:55](#)):

So go follow them on social media. Go to their website and see what's going on. They have something new. They're promoting a charity. They care about something that matters to them that they're trying to be excited about. Amplify that and support that without being asked.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:23:10](#)):

Yes.

**AJ Harper** ([00:23:11](#)):

Yeah. And another one is reviews.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:23:14](#)):

Yes.

**AJ Harper** ([00:23:14](#)):

Really big authors have a ton of reviews, but authors who you think, you might think they're untouchable, but they're not, are, uh, not the Brene Browns of the world, but maybe, you know, someone a little less known have to fight tooth and nail to get reviews.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:23:31](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:23:31](#)):

So if you leave an Amazon review, and as long as it's four stars or above. Don't ever do anything less and then tag somebody, but then tag that off and show them that you reviewed their book and amplify. These are free things you can do that don't require you even having to reach out.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:23:49](#)):

Correct. I, I want to go into even some more brass tacks because this is so tactics, it's so important. Brass tacks, bra tactics. Um, one thing you can do, I did this with Joey Coleman, who I already know, but I know every author responds the same way on the, who wrote *Never Lose a Customer*.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:24:05](#)):

Oh. He just wrote a new book called *Never Lose an Employee*. Just released, uh, as of this recording three weeks ago. So I, his book came out, uh, I did a review. It was one of the first reviews on the first day. I had got the book pre-ordered, uh, or yeah, he actually sent me a, a copy too. But I had read the book, so I was familiar with it. I did a review. I also did a video review, and that's what almost no one does. And so there's a section, if you scroll down the Amazon page near the bottom, it says video reviews. So I filmed a video where I'm holding the book saying, "This is Joey Coleman's new book. I just completed reading it. Here's why I love about this book. Get, here's why I would get the book and get today." And, and I was very specific.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:24:44](#)):

I went to certain pages and highlighted what I loved. I don't know how many people in the buying universe see it, but I sure as heck know, the author on their launch day is checking out their launch page on Amazon to see the stats. Joey called me and he's like, dude, I cannot believe you posted that video. And as of today, three weeks later, it's the only video up there. Do that for Brene Brown or whoever the Brene Browns are of your world. That is how you amplify them, service them, and also get notice for it.

**AJ Harper** ([00:25:10](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:25:11](#)):

So, um, so one is your list. Two is their list. Three is your community and empowering them. Uh, street teams are the popular name. We call them Buzz Warriors when we did *Pumpkin Plan*.

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**AJ Harper** ([00:25:22](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:25:24](#)):

You'll find even pre-launch, there are certain people who are just fans and believers in what you do because you are being of service to them. As you're out speaking or writing about the topic or writing prior to the book coming out. And now this isn't hyperbole, this isn't BS. With *Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*, before the book launched, I started speaking about it and I spoke to colleges. because I thought that was going to be the community buying it. I went to one college. It was, uh, uh, uh, Glassboro. It's the university, the state of New Jersey College, <laugh>, sorry. I bastardized that. It used to be called Glassboro State. I went there and spoke to the marketing group. Uh, the professor had me in. And, uh, when we were done with this, with my presentation on *The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*, some of the students came up and said, I really like that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:26:13](#)):

One guy was, his name was Matt. And, uh, Matt came up to me and said, I, I love this. Uh, he said, is there any way I can support you? I'm like, well, you're a student here. He's like, well, hey, I have to do a marketing project at the end of this, uh, semester with a deliver it. What if we market your book for you? So Matt and three other students prepared a video. It's still out there. If you have toilet paper entrepreneur. It, it's on Glassboro State. Or maybe it was Montclair State. I, I'm sorry, I can't remember the university. And it's this whole story about not having enough sheets of toilet paper.

**AJ Harper** ([00:26:45](#)):

<laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:26:45](#)):

And this guy goes on this quest, and they made this hysterical, funny video, and they promoted it. And, uh, I did pay him back. Um, I said, after he produced this video, I said, I don't have any money for this, but I, I bought them a keg.

**AJ Harper** ([00:26:58](#)):

Oh, well, what else? <laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:26:58](#)):

What else? I bought him a keg and said, have a raging party. Matt then became an intern for our company that, that book, that video moved books. He became an intern for the company. He

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started his own business doing marketing. So today he's married and, uh, has some wonderful children. He runs a marketing business.

**AJ Harper** ([00:27:15](#)):

So you can also get, if you do a test of your content. So if you're thinking, I don't have any, I don't have any raving fans, I'm just starting to think about this. I don't know anybody. You can do a test of your content and those people who are super enthusiastic about it. Yep. Those are your people that are candidates for a street team.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:27:33](#)):

That's right. That's right. So start you, you'll start finding these people. They're going to reveal themselves. And typically how they reveal themselves is they say, I want to learn more. I want to know more. Um, and this is in parallel to something part of my life's journey. That's when they, they kind of clinging on. So you got to be to pay attention to that in service. So the, so one was your list. Two is their list. The influencers three is street teams. Fourth is, and we already have been touching on this, is being vocal about it. I, I think that in a pre-launch phase, there's many ways to start speaking about the subject you talk about. So the obvious one is speaking, um, always as you shared, say, I have a book coming out in the future. But start speaking on the topic. What's interesting, interesting about speaking publicly about it is you start to hone the message better. Even though the audience may not be having a dialogue with you, you can just engage their energy, what's working, what's not working, and you can improve it. *Profit First*, the, the revised and expanded version was improved in part because of just me speaking about it prior to the original book coming out. And after the book came out so soon, start speaking. Secondly, you start writing about blogging articles. You know, what was huge for us is the Wall Street Journal.

**AJ Harper** ([00:28:44](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:28:44](#)):

And the Wall Street Journal. That's something I worked to become a columnist for them. I was, uh, I got on television, which is another way to get the word out before having a book. Uh, and I'll give you, I just want to give you some really tactical stuff here. There was a show that I admired called The Big Idea back in the day on CNBC. It was this guy Donnie Deutsch. And he talked about small business. And I was like, wow, if I could get on that show, I can really start spreading the word. How did I get on the show? I called them not to get on the show. I called them to help them. I said, "Hey, I love your show". And they have a live audience. I said, "Can I be in the live audience?" And they said, "Yeah, we're always looking for audience members."

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:29:19](#)):

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We'd love to have you come out. Here's a free pass. And I said, if you like, I can bring other entrepreneurs. And they said, you can. I said, "Yeah, I can probably take five or six people with me." They said that would be amazing, because we need about 15 people in the live audience. So I made their job easier. The booker, they call him. So I called my entrepreneurial network and said, I can get you a free pass to this TV show, and I'll even drive you out there. Who's in? All my friends came in. I did this three or four times in a row. And by the fourth time, the booker came to me and said, how are you, how are you bringing these entrepreneurs? And, and thank you so much for the support. I said, because I, I help entrepreneurs, so I know the entrepreneurial community. I'm, I'm starting to write about this. Well, what are you writing about?

**AJ Harper** ([00:29:54](#)):

Mm-hmm <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:29:54](#)):

Then the producer, the EP came over to me and said, "Hey, uh, do you want to do a little segment with this for, it's a 32nd segment we need, but could you talk about such and such?" His name is Will Rat. I, I didn't know this at the time. If you get a 32nd segment, that's your interview. They'll put you on TV for 30 seconds to see how you perform. And I, I just thought there was a, a true 32nd segment. No, they made something up for me as a test. Hit it, nailed it. I went in prepared. They said, "Hey, you want to do it again?" Within three episodes, I was now doing 15-minute sections. I did TV makeovers. They actually tried to do a spinoff show with me because I was, I was working it. And then when the book launched, uh, they promoted it on The Big Idea. MSNBC and so forth. Wall Street Journal, similar thing. I went out to help Colleen de Bass. She was the editor for the small business, uh, department at the time. Went out of my way to help her. She said, "Hey, do you want to try writing a quick article for us?" <laugh> I called you shaking, and you're—

**AJ Harper** ([00:30:53](#)):

I'm like, we need to write the best article ever. Um, and we did.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:30:54](#)):

And we did. And it wasn't about *Profit First*, the first one I think it was about, um, how to hire a lawyer when you have no money. And we talked about a hack of going to colleges, going to the legal department and making your case a case study for the school.

**AJ Harper** ([00:31:10](#)):

Oh yeah. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:31:11](#)):

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And she's like, that's such a novel approach. Do you have more hacks? And we came up with—

**AJ Harper** ([00:31:16](#)):

You got buckets of them.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:31:17](#)):

Buckets of them. And *Profit First* came out of that.

**AJ Harper** ([00:31:20](#)):

Yeah. I forgot about that article.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:31:23](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:31:24](#)):

I'll look that up.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:31:25](#)):

So start, oh, it's, it's amazing. Um, so, and now actually I use that for pre-launch material. So if you go to the Mike Michalowicz dot com website, it says, "Get the 10 Wall Street Journal, the 10 Best Wall Street Journal articles", and we picked our 10 best ones that you and I did together.

**AJ Harper** ([00:31:40](#)):

So again, I just want to interject, if you are not feeling that and you feel like that's bold, I can't be like, Mike, I don't feel like I'm ready for that. That's okay. You can post behind the scenes content of writing your book. You can show people pictures, imagery of whatever you're working on, your process. Um, there's smaller things that you can do as you work your way forward. But always talk about writing it and the topic. I have students who, I encourage them to do this all the time. And because they have, they've made super valuable connections that they didn't expect, oh, you're writing a book on this. You should talk to so-and-so. And then that maybe becomes someone they interview for the book or they get on a podcast, or then later that person is someone they do a panel discussion with for their launch. Just you start to have people want to connect you to other people who are excited about your topic. It's not just readers. You're also connecting to other experts to build community around your topic.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:32:42](#)):

Absolutely. Right. The, the, another little hack to find those experts is identify a book. I use the Amazon platform typically for this, but identify a book that is in the space that you're going to be writing and you admire. Go to the author page for that book and they'll say, customers who

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buy this topic from this author also buy from these other authors. And it starts revealing the network of authors. So there's a real quick shortcut to get there. So now we got four strategies. Oh, you know, in, in other ways to speak is podcasts. Susanne Mariga, who you worked with

**AJ Harper** ([00:33:14](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:33:14](#)):

She is a, a student of your workshop. Top Three.

**AJ Harper** ([00:33:17](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:33:17](#)):

Which is an amazing workshop by the way. Um, she wrote *Profit First for Minority Enterprises*, or minority business owners. She started speaking on Facebook Live because she didn't want to, or didn't have access to, or wasn't ready to speak on public platforms yet, or established platforms. So she said, I'm want to make my own.

**AJ Harper** ([00:33:36](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:33:37](#)):

I remember I attended her first live one because she sent out an email to me. I was the only person there. And it was really good content. It was great. And then, uh, after it was over in my head, I'm like, well, I'm, that's kind of a bummer. There's one person I showed, and it's me. Um, she's probably disappointed. And, uh, I got a call from her. She's, she's like, that was fun. I'm like, what do you mean? She's like, it was just,

**AJ Harper** ([00:33:57](#)):

That's Susanne. That's her.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:33:59](#)):

She said that I really started speaking about stuff I love.

**AJ Harper** ([00:34:02](#)):

Yeah.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:34:02](#)):

And I said, you, you know, well what about the turnout? She's like, well, there was really not many people there. She goes, it was you. And then she goes, A couple other people thought came in and out for a few seconds, but she goes, it doesn't matter. She goes, that'll live on forever and I'm getting better at the Craft. She then did it again a week later, and then again a week later, I returned maybe three or four months into it. There was 30 people on there.

**AJ Harper** ([00:34:24](#)):

Mm-hmm <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:34:25](#)):

And I'm like, who are these people? Like how are you getting them? She's like, I don't know. Just the word started getting out.

**AJ Harper** ([00:34:30](#)):

Consistency.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:34:31](#)):

Consistency.

**AJ Harper** ([00:34:32](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:34:33](#)):

You can do YouTube. So there's so many ways just to get out there, but you have to start getting out there. You have to do it consistently and you'll start building that muscle. The first rep is the hardest, but once you're the 50th or 60th time in, you start getting really polished at the fifth and final one.

**AJ Harper** ([00:34:47](#)):

Can I say one more thing about that? This is what I see with my students. They seem to think that they have to wait to do all that. There's two things that happen. They can't wrap their head around it. Yeah. because they're in the middle of the book, it seems like too much. I think those are good examples because that you've just shared, because it's really just about talking about what you love in the con, you know, a teaching point from your book, the main message, something.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:35:10](#)):

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Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([00:35:11](#)):

Um, you don't have to have it polished. It can just be something that you're just, you're just chatting about it. You don't have to come off polished. I just want to make that point. because I, I see with, with my students that they just, they're, they're stuck and they feel like they have to do all this marketing stuff after they get everything right with the book.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:35:31](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:35:31](#)):

And then it's, uh, in my opinion, too late.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:35:34](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. I, I agree. You know, we did a grand version of it here in these offices. I don't know if you were there. It was when we were writing *Fix This Next*, I think I invited people to come here and just started chatting about the ideas. And they gave feedback on it. Um, so you can even do it live. The, the last kind of main bucket of the pre-launch is the, the Wild Card. And what I mean by the Wild Card is what's something you can do that no one else is doing? So I'll give you some examples. When we launched, I think it was *Fix This Next*, but maybe it was, maybe it was *Get Different*. We did a Pay It Forward campaign, because I've never seen someone do it. I, I've heard about Starbucks doing Pay It Forward, where someone buys a coffee for themselves and the person behind them.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:36:15](#)):

And this chain continues. Well, we, we said, "If you buy a book, we will now forward a book onto another person at our cost." And there that, that book that we forwarded on said, "This is a gift from AJ, who bought a book and she wanted to serve another entrepreneur. Um, we hope you love this book and if you will like to pay it forward, please tell us and we'll deliver that book." And it started this momentum of moving the book forward. Uh, thousands of books moved through a Pay It Forward campaign. Um, so what I do is I look at what successful marketing outside the book industry. And I always run a test of something new for all in, um, actually, I don't even know,

**AJ Harper** ([00:36:54](#)):

You don't have your Wild card. Do you have your wild card?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:36:56](#)):

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I do. I do. This is something we've tested out. Um, and it's been successful, so we're amplifying it. So the Wild Card was, we tested out or deployed it on our last two book launches was these live webinars. And you've actually seen me do this where it's a live webinar.

**AJ Harper** ([00:37:12](#)):

Mmm-hmm. <affirmative>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:37:12](#)):

Then I just teach topic. And in the middle I stop and say, "Would you be willing to buy my book?" It's not that abrupt, but there's a, a technique I've used and we get about 30% of a live environment doing it. Well imagine doing this in front of a hundred people. You sell 30 books. Imagine doing it in front of a thousand people. That's 300 books. That's a big day of book sales.

**AJ Harper** ([00:37:30](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:37:31](#)):

So what we're doing, what I'm doing is lining up all these authors who are marketing to their list and we're CODING this. So Joey Coleman happens to be one because he wrote a book on how to never lose an employee again.

**AJ Harper** ([00:37:42](#)):

It's the perfect, it's perfect.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:37:43](#)):

Yeah. Michael Bungay Stanier.

**AJ Harper** ([00:37:47](#)):

I was just listening to a podcast with him this morning.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:37:49](#)):

I love him. I was talking to him a few days ago. I love that guy. <laugh>. I'm, we're, I'm hanging out with him. This, he's one of the guys coming to this networking event.

**AJ Harper** ([00:37:55](#)):

Yeah. Well, tell him hello for me. I don't know him. We have the same publisher.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:37:58](#)):

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Yeah. Page Two.

**AJ Harper** ([00:38:00](#)):

Yes. And I was listening to him on Jeffrey Shaw's podcast, "The Self-employed Life," while I was driving in to do this podcast this morning.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:38:07](#)):

He's the nicest dude on this planet. Yeah. And funny, um, I'm putting him up on stage in front of these 30 authors to talk about, uh, book sales. And interestingly, like what makes a best-seller? He, his book, how, um, *The Coaching Habit*, I think it's called *The Coaching*.

**AJ Harper** ([00:38:24](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:38:25](#)):

Has sold a million plus copies. So how do you sell a million plus copies? And he has a really interesting insight. He's like, I don't know. <laugh>. So that, that's a conversation I want to have. Um, but he, me and Joey Coleman are going to do an event together. Webinar. We're all inviting our list. We anticipate collectively we're going to have a thousand live people there. And we're going to stop in the middle. And I'm going to say, would you buy Joey's book right now? Would you buy Michael's book right now? And if you feel compelled, but you also buy my book right now? That's the wild card. But not just doing it with those two gentlemen, I'm doing it with, uh, our plan is 15 other authors. So it's going to be this cascade.

**AJ Harper** ([00:38:58](#)):

Oh, I'm excited to hear how that goes.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:39:00](#)):

Yeah. Me too. It's going to be a cascade effect.

**AJ Harper** ([00:39:01](#)):

So those are the five.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:39:03](#)):

Yeah. So the five, just a quick recap and we have to cover a lot more. I, I just get so into this. because this is where my passion is. If you can't tell, so your list, their list, your street team, the, the zealots, uh, speaking about it being very public about it, podcasts, speaking and so forth. And the last thing is do something that no one else has done. You know, get different, uh, during this pre-launch phase, you're not just building community, you're also asking for orders. You

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know, like that webinar. I'm going to ask for orders. Why do pre-orders matter? This is one of your questions and I want to hear from you, uh, because I have some beliefs around it too, but I think you have some beliefs too. So do you want to start or why do you think

**AJ Harper** ([00:39:44](#)):

Yeah, I, well, first of all, I think people don't realize how much they matter. It's number one, if you are traditionally published or you're hybrid published and have trade, uh, trade published trade distribution, which means you have a sales team that's out there trying to get your book on the shelves, you need pre-orders. <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:40:02](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:40:03](#)):

You've got to have them. That's, uh, every day the sales team is looking at the numbers.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:40:09](#)):

Mmm-hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([00:40:09](#)):

And if there is a book that is selling well or starting to build and there's buzz around it in pre-order, what the sales team does is they say, well, what's happening? Okay, let's amplify this. There's some, there's something here. Something's happening. You want that. If you have a book that's not doing well in pre-order, it's not like that incentivizes the sales team to say, well let's kick this one up and let's give this one a boost.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:40:33](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:40:34](#)):

It doesn't work like that. Yeah. I mean, maybe there's some nice kindly folks that will do it, but honestly, they're looking for the, they're looking for the sure things because—

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:40:43](#)):

I, I'm sure they get a commission. Like, like they get, if they don't get commission, they're recognized for how many books they're moving. Yeah. So they want to pick one.

**AJ Harper** ([00:40:51](#)):

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Honestly, I don't know. I think they're just on staff, but that is one thing I don't actually know. Okay. What I do know, having been a publisher is that when they see something that has promise and the pre-sales are starting to kick in, that they're going to go harder on that one.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:41:04](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:41:05](#)):

So there's that. The sales team now really caress, they're going to care more about your title than the literally hundreds of other titles they're trying to get placed in that season. So this is really important if you know Squeaky wheel. Yeah. Secondly, if you're trying to make a list, if you want to make *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*. And then of course the big kahuna of the *New York Times*. You have to get those pre-orders in because that first week of sales is your, when your book launches is your one chance to take advantage of all the pre-orders. So that count all the pre-orders plus that first week. .

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:41:47](#)):

Yeah

**AJ Harper** ([00:41:48](#)):

That's your chance to really go for it. Especially if you're new and you're not a well-established author who can hit that, hit the list right out of the gate or a celebrity or something.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:41:59](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:41:59](#)):

You need to pull in those pre-orders. It also helps your publisher to see, oh, hey, look what's happening. And then they know how many books to order. You don't want to be in a situation, especially with the current supply chain issues, where they run out of books. So these are all really practical reasons to, uh, get those pre-orders in that you might not be aware of.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:42:23](#)):

So I have one pre-order, one reason pre-orders are important, I think supersedes all that. And, and I also realize I may have a confirmation bias here. I I'm not excited about the lists. Uh, my books, our books have been on the *Wall Street Journal* bestsellers list and so forth. I I, I don't put much significance in it, but maybe it's a ego thing or, or trying to feign ego or, or, or whatever. But here's the thing that supersedes it. All I believe is Amazon, that 800-pound gorilla has modified its system in the last year or two in regards to the pricing structure. Used to be

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when your book listed, it went out, it looked like, and compared with other retailers and determined its price. So if a book retailed the suggested retail price is \$30, Amazon might list the book for \$24 95 cents. And then Amazon drops, uh, Barnes& Nobles drops \$23.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:43:17](#)):

Then Amazon drops it and there's this kind of jockeying. Now it looks like Amazon only just priced based upon actual demand, regardless of what other price sites are listing the price for. And they come out at the MSRP. So you'll see a pre-order book out there that's \$30 and it's listed for \$30 for the consumer. That's a kind of dis-persuasion, why, why would I buy this book at a full retail price? No one does that. If, if you then, if you don't have pre-orders going on, Amazon doesn't see activity around your book, it says, well just leave the price as is. So now in launch day, you're coming out at \$30. That's a bad price to come out at. If you actively do pre-orders. And this is why I believe now pre-orders have to happen months and months, like three or four months in advance, and you start getting demand for the book. Then the algorithm, in my opinion, kicks in and evaluates what's the optimal price to get the highest conversion rate. And they start dressing the price down to see where they can get the best conversion for people. So start sending traffic to that page, start sending people and try to get pre-orders and the price will come down. Now, on launch day, you're not listing at M S R P, you might have a book listed for \$25 or, or \$19. That's a \$30 book. And that's highly consumable.

**AJ Harper** ([00:44:30](#)):

There's also one thing I forgot to mention earlier this year, this was in the news, uh, Barnes & Noble announced that they weren't going to be stocking certain books that didn't have reach a certain pre-order threshold. So that's another factor. Pre-orders are really, really important because some stores, big stores are just not even going to stock it at all. Unless you reach a certain level. because they want it to be, they want it to be proven. Um, this has hurt a lot of authors because, you know, if you can't get the pre-orders, then your book's not going to be on the shelf, which is a discoverability, which is someone finding your book who didn't know about it before. Versus findability.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:45:09](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:45:10](#)):

Which is finding a book someone recommended or that you heard. The discoverability factor is really important where people just happen upon your book, and if it's not on the shelf or on the table, they can't happen upon your book. That's right. So it, you know, these things really, really matter. You got to get a good pre-order campaign going.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:45:26](#)):

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I was talking with Noah, I think you were on that call, and he shared something that I thought was fascinating. That book sales, um, overall have increased, uh, this year compared to last and last year compared to the prior. It is increasing, but the dispersion of demand has changed that more people are buying popular books that are already established. So the demand for the successful books like Brene Brown's has expanded, but new books, the demand is decreasing, which simply emphasizes that it's even harder now for a new author to get the word out. And that means pre-orders matter even more. Exactly. You can't eff around with... You can't fuck around with this, um, list. Let's talk about lists. Um, are you, you're kind of a fan, I think, of being on the *New York Times* bestseller, or

**AJ Harper** ([00:46:13](#)):

I think it's ridiculous to say, oh, I'm not a fan, I don't want to be on the list. <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:46:17](#)):

Right, right. <laugh>, I'm not saying I don't want to be on the list, but why, why are you?

**AJ Harper** ([00:46:20](#)):

I, I think it's, listen, I think it's very difficult to get on the list. We have to remember the *New York Times* is not just based on who sold the most books in that category relative to the other books sold in that category. It's a curated list. So they can decide ones they prefer. And even if you sold more, you might not be on it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:46:42](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:46:43](#)):

Also bulk buys, you know, affected and so forth. But look, it's a big deal.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:46:49](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:46:49](#)):

You can sell more books. When you say you're a *New York Times* best-selling author, it does, it's a, it's a validating, um, credential for sure.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:46:58](#)):

And see, and that's what I question. I don't know, but this is highly subjective. I've never purchased a book because it's a *New York Times* bestseller or not, or *Wall Street Journal*. I've bought a book because **AJ Harper** recommended it.

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**AJ Harper** ([00:47:11](#)):

Sure.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:47:12](#)):

But I, I so need this topic.

**AJ Harper** ([00:47:13](#)):

I still think that it's, it tells people, oh, okay. This other, it's the same thing as other people like it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:47:19](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Right. It is a social proof mechanism.

**AJ Harper** ([00:47:21](#)):

It's like a line. You go to a convention, there's a super long line, you don't even know what it's for, but you get in the line. And it's for one of those dumb canvas bags.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:47:31](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:47:31](#)):

You waited two hours in line for this free bag, but somehow you got in the line. I go, oh gosh. Everybody was, everybody needs to get in the line. It's a similar mentality, but also, I mean, look. I'm a writer getting to say *New York Times* bestselling author **AJ Harper** someday. Yeah. That's ego. But yeah, sure. As you know what, I would love that. I do think it's unrealistic for most people. I get on the list and I think that there's a, we could do a whole episode on how do you get on the list?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:48:00](#)):

We should, we should.

**AJ Harper** ([00:48:00](#)):

Probably do that. Maybe, maybe.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:48:01](#)):

We should be, because sadly, and many people don't realize this is manipulated, too. There are authors I know personally who've bought their way up to those.

**AJ Harper** ([00:48:08](#)):

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But you could, you could, you could have a strategy to get on it. It would just, it's like, uh, multiple team military operations. <laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:48:18](#)):

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:48:19](#)):

Like trying to get this thing done. Uh, but other lists are easier. *USA Today* is easier. *Wall Street Journal* is easier. There's a *Publisher's Weekly* list, which most people don't think about. But you still get to say it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:48:32](#)):

And there's the Amazon bestseller ranking too.

**AJ Harper** ([00:48:34](#)):

Right. But this is, this is something that I wish would die.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:48:39](#)):

Amazon bestseller?

**AJ Harper** ([00:48:40](#)):

Well, here's why. It's a moment in time. It's not just even a week of sales. It could be that hour.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:48:48](#)):

Three.

**AJ Harper** ([00:48:48](#)):

It's flips usually around every three hours. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:48:51](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:48:52](#)):

People say they're Amazon bestseller. It doesn't mean anything to me.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:48:55](#)):

Right.

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**AJ Harper** ([00:48:56](#)):

Because I know that they could have sold four books to get that. Yeah. And then they're off the list. Yeah. And I think that's, um, that is ego and vanity.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:49:07](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:49:07](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:49:08](#)):

Yeah. So it's funny. So to me, it's so funny because I see it's totally different. I think the *New York Times* is ego and vanity. because I've seen people buy their way onto it. If you have a hundred thousand dollars, I'll get you a NYT.

**AJ Harper** ([00:49:18](#)):

But I don't think you should.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:49:20](#)):

But I've seen them manipulated. Here's what I think why Amazon's Legit. *Profit First* has been, is an Amazon number one bestseller for, uh, eight consecutive years. Every hour for eight consecutive—

**AJ Harper** ([00:49:35](#)):

Okay. That's a whole different story.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:49:37](#)):

Correct. But it has, but it has to be, I think a shared that way. That it's a consistent perennial bestseller for eight consecutive years; powerful.

**AJ Harper** ([00:49:45](#)):

That's, that's, that's worth listening to. But saying that I was number one in an obscure category.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:49:52](#)):

Right.

**AJ Harper** ([00:49:53](#)):

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I was *Profit First* was number one in, um, some category that had nothing to do with accounting.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:49:58](#)):

Romanian accounting, like print-making Roman... Romanian children.

**AJ Harper** ([00:50:00](#)):

Printmaking.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:50:00](#)):

Yeah. Right, right, right.

**AJ Harper** ([00:50:02](#)):

Um, uh, for two hours on Tuesday in 2004, you know, or whatever.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:50:07](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:50:08](#)):

It's not, we didn't even write it then. But my point being, there's a whole industry built up around getting people on Amazon Bestseller. You can do it yourself if you want to do it. You could do it in almost no time. Um, my recommendation is to go to [kindlepreneur.com](#) and he has an article up about actually how to do it. You can do it yourself. Um, even if you don't have an assistant or anything else, don't pay anyone to do it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:50:34](#)):

Yeah. Oh, I totally agree. I, I also question the, the, the motive of people that say that I am an Amazon Bestseller. I'm an Amazon bestselling book. Um, are you trying to manipulate people or truthful representation?

**AJ Harper** ([00:50:49](#)):

Well, when I, when I'm, when my students hit it, it's always organic.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:50:52](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:50:53](#)):

And so then I'll say organic.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:50:54](#)):

Organic.

**AJ Harper** ([00:50:55](#)):

Organic or legit.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:50:57](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:50:57](#)):

I'm proud of them. Because they're not actually trying.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:51:00](#)):

That, that's organic.

**AJ Harper** ([00:51:01](#)):

That's fun to see. It's always fun to see when just their general efforts landed them there without any manipulation.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:51:07](#)):

Exactly. I'd say they are trying, they're not manipulating. It's organic.

**AJ Harper** ([00:51:11](#)):

It's not the goal.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:51:11](#)):

It's natural demand. Yeah. If it's representative of natural demand, that's a big deal. Um, okay. We're running long, but there's so much to talk about.

**AJ Harper** ([00:51:21](#)):

We'll have to table some of it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:51:23](#)):

Yeah. So what's the difference between a pre-launch and marketing runway?

**AJ Harper** ([00:51:26](#)):

We did that.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:51:26](#)):

We did that. What are the most must-haves for a pre-launch? I, I think we should talk about that.

**AJ Harper** ([00:51:30](#)):

We did. Well, you, I mean, I think we can keep it really simple. If you want to, I'll share what I think.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:51:35](#)):

What do you think? And I'll add to it.

**AJ Harper** ([00:51:36](#)):

Okay. You've got to have someone to help you. I, period. Even if it's just an assistant that's making sure you hit all your marks. Because you're going to be so exhausted.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:51:48](#)):

You're writing a book! <laugh>

**AJ Harper** ([00:51:49](#)):

You're writing a book, and you won't remember everything. And then you just sort of slowly start to rationalize why you don't have to do that thing. Okay, I could skip that. Oh, you know what, I probably don't need that. And then you, pretty soon you just have this truncated pre-launch.

**AJ Harper** ([00:52:07](#)):

So an an assistant, virtual assistant in-person, assistant college kid, your own kid doesn't have to be super advanced. Just somebody who is, uh, taking the strategy that you maybe create for yourself or get some, get some help creating and make sure you hit your milestones and get that stuff done. I think that's number one. And I think you have to have your author website up and all your branded social media done. And anything that you can do in pre-launch to create materials that don't have to be created too close to the launch date.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:52:40](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

**AJ Harper** ([00:52:41](#)):

And the last I would say is to be building those relationships.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:52:45](#)):

Correct. I, I'll add that. You have to have, in addition to the author webpage, a book page. And they are two distinct and separate things. So we have a book site, I should say, and an author site. The author site also has a sub directory that has the book. The mistake I made with *The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur* was I had The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur dot com, but I didn't have a Mike Michalowicz site. So when the book launched, I, it became synonymous. I was The Toilet Paper guy. And there was almost an expectation that the next book had to be toilet paper, this, and then toilet paper that. Tim Ferriss had that too.

**AJ Harper** ([00:53:18](#)):

You also had that huge people following you because you built up the blog and then you had to rebrand everything.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:53:24](#)):

And abandoned everything.

**AJ Harper** ([00:53:25](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:53:26](#)):

So yeah, we had that, that block. Um, Tim Ferris had the *Four-hour Work Week*. He didn't have Tim Ferris in the beginning. I remember that. And then it was *Four-hour Body* and he began the Four-hour guy. And he had a break from that. And be Tim Ferris as an author, you, you are the brand and your book is a product, and therefore you have to have a product site and a brand site. So do that plus for search, when someone pulls up on binging or Google whatever it is, and they search, you're going to get multiple listings. Now you type in *Profit First*. You'll see the *Profit First* Book website. You'll see Mike Michalowicz. It's *Profit First*, which is the domain and so forth. So you get more property, if you will, or more exposure in your rankings. Um, I'm thinking for other pre-launch stuff. Oh, other pre-launch stuff too, is if you're going to get endorsements or blurbs, that's the time to do it.

**AJ Harper** ([00:54:15](#)):

Yes. Can I share a little story about that?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:54:18](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:54:19](#)):

Oh my gosh, I was in tears over it. It was last night actually. This happened.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:54:22](#)):

Oh, juicy.

**AJ Harper** ([00:54:24](#)):

Yeah. So, uh, this is the first time I'm telling this story. So I have my Top Three Book Workshop, and part of it is this author community that I love and nurture, and I teach my authors to be there to support each other, but I also teach them: go out there and build these author relationships that we've been talking about this whole time. And go out there and ask for stuff. Ask for the endorsement, ask for people to help you. And I have this author that's been in my program for a while. She, her book comes out this fall called *The Mirrored Door*. And it's for women who are getting stuck in their work environment and don't realize that what's happening is they're, that the mirrored door is the way we judge ourselves as not being ready or good enough or something. So our own internal messaging, we can't get past that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:55:17](#)):

Oh.

**AJ Harper** ([00:55:17](#)):

Go succeed and promote her and get promoted and so forth. Right.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:55:22](#)):

Very cool.

**AJ Harper** ([00:55:23](#)):

And so this is such a beautiful concept where she's talking about the social conditioning and the way we condition ourselves as women in the, and that leads to these challenges in the workplace. She's brilliant. And she had not done any reaching out. The book comes out in the fall, <laugh>. So she wrote on my, our, in our Facebook community last night, this incredible post that by the time I was done reading it, I was crying how she, even though she knew I was right, she didn't do it.

Then one of my other students did do it and had mentioned to her that she just went and asked Dan Pink and she got Dan Pink.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:56:07](#)):

Carol Mahoney.

**AJ Harper** ([00:56:07](#)):

Yeah. Carol Mahoney's book also comes out this fall.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:56:11](#)):

Oh, that's awesome.

**AJ Harper** ([00:56:11](#)):

And, uh, anyway, so she got the nerve up to ask this author who she recommends all the time. Sells their book. Sells her book all the time.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:56:21](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:56:22](#)):

Um, thinks the world of her and reached out to her. And not only did that person give her the most incredible glowing endorsement, but she said, what can I do to help you excel with this book? We need this book. I want to be there to support you.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:56:39](#)):

Wow.

**AJ Harper** ([00:56:40](#)):

I was in tears because she was posting in our group to say to the other authors, you need to listen. You need to go do this stuff. And, um, it was emotional for me. Yeah. Because it's very hard. I get it. I had to do it myself. I had to be a good example and go after my favorite person in the world, Steven Pressfield, to get the endorsement.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:57:03](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:57:05](#)):

Um, which I did. And I was terrified. And I, and I got it. And it's the most beautiful thing to talk about. Tears. That was me just sobbing in the Lowe's parking lot when I got it. I share this story because even people who are brilliant and successful and great at everything in the rest of their lives are still nervous to do it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:57:26](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:57:27](#)):

But you just have to do it.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:57:28](#)):

You have to do it.

**AJ Harper** ([00:57:29](#)):

And that was an example of a person she was already loving, supporting, um, believed in. So she had a connection, even though that person didn't know her, she was saying, I give your book, I recommend your book. So that was already, uh, a way, a way in for her. Even just saying that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:57:49](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:57:49](#)):

That's one of the things I told Steven Pressfield initially, my first contact was to say, I sell your book constantly. You know? You would listen to that if someone said that to you.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:58:00](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([00:58:00](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:58:01](#)):

Yeah. And, and, and some people do say that to me. Say, I I just love what you do.

**AJ Harper** ([00:58:04](#)):

So the book is *The Mirrored Door* by Ellen Taaffe, by the way.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:58:07](#)):

Buy your copy, pre-order, please.

**AJ Harper** ([00:58:09](#)):

Ellen Connolly Taaffe

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:58:10](#)):

I always do that for authors, too. I, uh, so Joey Coleman's a good example. Uh, he sent me a copy of his book, uh, in, in the pre-launch phase. I still bought a copy of his book. Um, I, I will go out of my way to support an author. I have the book, but it's not about that. It's about

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supporting him. Um, and there's, there's mistakes people make in the pre-launch phase. So one is, uh, a lack of preparation in, in doing this stuff and waiting till last minute. That's, that's a big mistake. The other one is they don't do things that get noticed when it comes to, uh, blurbs. And you, I've texted you about this. Like, "Hey, someone's looking for a blurb and, because I know you know me and stuff." I'm like, yeah. But it frustrates me that people will send me one email, usually not even to me, to like assistant or something like that, saying, could Mike blurb my book?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:58:58](#)):

Um, I don't even see it. I get so many freaking emails. They don't make a direct contact to me. They don't reach out directly. They don't do something unique and different. And then they, I've heard back like, oh, I've tried to reach out to Mike. He never responds. And it's like, oh, you didn't make an effort. You're, you're, we talk about this in *Get Different*. You're in the habituation situation. You're in a thing I can't even see. How do you expect me to respond? And I will go out of my way to support any author. I will always say yes to an author. I believe in nothing more than authorship. One author sent me a box of Chaco dials and said, Hey, I read in your book you love Chaco Dials <laugh>. I track these down. And I got 'em here at the office. And I said, dude, thank you. First of all, it should. It was something personal to me. Clearly they knew enough about me. because it's buried in one of the books that they've read. Or at least discovered it. And they did something that was remarkable, noticeable is different. It was attractive because this book to me, and they gave me direction, said, if you're willing, I'd be honored. If you consider my book for blurbs.

**AJ Harper** ([00:59:55](#)):

Listen. For me, it would be Pudding Pops.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:59:57](#)):

Oh, I love Pudding Pops.

**AJ Harper** ([00:59:58](#)):

Do you remember? Why can't we have them back?

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

Because Cosby ruined them. That's why <laugh> You want Pudding Pops. He ruined it. If it wasn't for Cosby, they'd be everywhere. Well, they discontinued it.

**AJ Harper** ([01:00:09](#)):

I, I would take some Pudding Pops for an endorsement.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:00:12](#)):

I'm surprised Subway didn't go out of business because of, what was that guy, Jared or something?

**AJ Harper** ([01:00:15](#)):

Oh, let's not, let's not.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:00:17](#)):

But I'm just saying people, these brands, these people can ruin brands. So, okay.

**AJ Harper** ([01:00:21](#)):

Do something different.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:00:22](#)):

Do something different. And most people don't do it different. Secondly, a big mistake people do is if they do have a street team, they activate the street team too early. They say, Hey, the book's six months out, who wants to be on the street team? There's this rah rah. "Yeah, I'm in, I'm in. Okay. Hang tight. Um, hold on." <laugh> "Uh, wait." And then the street team fades.

**AJ Harper** ([01:00:42](#)):

Yeah. Fatigue.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:00:44](#)):

I find for maybe six weeks prior to your book launch is when you've really activated the street team, it's hard to sustain attention and momentum and excitement longer than that.

**AJ Harper** ([01:00:53](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:00:55](#)):

Um, do you see other areas of mistakes?

**AJ Harper** ([01:00:56](#)):

I think honestly, the biggest one is just not doing it. <laugh>

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

Yeah.

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

I mean, that's what I see. We're going to talk, we talked about a bunch of stuff, and if you're listening, you're going to write down a bunch of stuff and you're going to be gung ho about it. And I see it almost every time. That a person has the best of intentions. And I actually ran into this for myself. Sometimes life happens, I get that. But when you can't, you won't do most of the stuff you're thinking of doing right now.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:01:25](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([01:01:26](#)):

You have to actually commit to: How am I going to follow through? And that's again, where I feel getting some support would be helpful to make sure you actually get it done.

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

And this probably ties into where I've seen the biggest waste of time with pre-launch effort. I can say categorically, the biggest mistake people make is they apply effort in an area where their community is not congregating. Meaning for me, I can go onto, uh, clubhouse or whatever platform and, and speak to them blue faced and spend hours and hours there talking about, but my community for the most part isn't gathering there. And therefore it's, I'm speaking to the wind, and I've seen people do this. They say, oh, everyone knows that TikTok is the platform. Is it, is it the platform for your community? Is that where they're going? Because you'll waste so much time there. So it's really first understanding where is your community gathering and concentrating your effort there. So the biggest mistakes I've made is an extraordinary, it was with fix this next an extraordinary social media effort without really understanding where on social media my community was going. So with all this stuff going down on Twitter and huge push on Twitter...

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:02:40](#)):

My community's not there. That's not their spot. I should have spent that time on the, the areas they were gathering. And it wasn't even necessarily social media. It was me building a better influencer network or something. So really know your audience first. That was my biggest mistake. Um, and then the last thing before we wrap things up, and, and we did spend a little more time on this episode than other episodes, but I think it's, it's necessary is, uh, how to get support. You talked about using assistant, um, Pen with Purpose. That's a, an organization we started, we help people market their, launch their books. So we help people find a deal, uh, an a, uh, publishing house, but then back them with marketing. And there are these book-launch companies out there. There's many and there's some great ones, and they're not necessary.

# don't write *that* book!

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:03:29](#)):

And the prices can be all over the place. Um, we, we take a percentage of dollars upfront to make sure people's skin in the game, but we are really unique in that we share in the success of the book. We're a percentage success fee, basically. And that's really unique. Most people say, we'll charge you, you know, a huge amount of money, \$50,000 for your launch, or a hundred thousand dollars for your launch. It's a huge amount of money. And they say, well, it may not work. We're like, yeah, we'll charge you a small portion, make sure you're interested in this, and then we'll take a percentage of the books that sell and our skin's in the game. So we're, we're, we're really committed to making books successful. Um, so you can use a company like ours or, or many out there to do pre-launch, but no matter what, um, I would hire someone, like you said, that's an assistant or something that just is that persistent and consistent presence doing one of those five categories we talked about.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:04:20](#)):

And even if you don't even do all five, you just choose to do one. The top of the list is your own list. Even if you have nothing out there, just do everything to build your own list to, when I promote a book, uh, hands down, the number one way to move books is just asking my community through email typically saying, Hey, I have a new book out there. Would you be willing to buy it now? And, uh, that the response is usually within minutes. The first sale will come through and it sustains for a few days. Dollar for dollar, penny for penny. I can't think of something more effective than having your own list that you can reach out to.

**AJ Harper** ([01:04:54](#)):

But above all, do something. <laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:04:57](#)):

Just do something. Do something. And start now.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:05:01](#)):

It's already getting a little bit too late. It's too late. It's too late. Hi my friend. Thanks for that. I, I hope our listeners have found some, uh, fascinating new tips there. Uh, my gosh, I could dig into so many details of, of how to do it and do it right. Um, I want to invite you also to, to go to our website. It's dwtb. Don't write that book podcast.com and you can download some free materials that AJ and I prepared for you. And you can join our email list. And who knows, maybe we'll write a book, uh, on "Don't write that book." Actually, that's a title for you. Maybe AJ, you have a book called Don't Write That.

**AJ Harper** ([01:05:35](#)):

Maybe.

# don't write *that* book!

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:05:35](#)):

Maybe. Uh, the second thing I'd like to do is hear your stories. We want to hear your experiences about writing an extraordinary book, making a bestseller, uh, your best tips, anything that we love to share on the show. So email us at [hello@dwtbpodcast.com](mailto:hello@dwtbpodcast.com). That's [hello@dwtbpodcast.com](mailto:hello@dwtbpodcast.com). Thanks for joining us for this episode. We hope you learned some good stuff here. We hope to see you in a future episode. Please hit that subscribe button so you don't miss a single tip we're sharing with you. And as always, don't write that book. Write this one.