

# don't write *that* book!

## Episode 2:

### My Most Successful Book

**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. Welcome to "Don't Write That Book." This is a series that I'm doing with my writing partner, AJ Harper, and we are talking about the book you should write and all the things you should avoid. AJ. Welcome to our show.

**AJ Harper** [00:00:29]:

Hello.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:00:30]:

Good to see you again.

**AJ Harper** [00:00:31]:

Good to see you.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:00:32]:

You feel there's a little Effervescence? Is it Effer or Effervescence?

**AJ Harper** [00:00:37]:

Effer.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:00:37]:

Effervescence.

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**AJ Harper** [00:00:38]:

There's a little effervescence like heifer.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:00:41]:

A good way to remember. So there seems to be light energy. What's going on with me.

**AJ Harper** [00:00:45]:

Yeah, my child is graduating in three weeks.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:00:48]:

Bam. That's good for Jack.

**AJ Harper** [00:00:53]:

For some people, it's just getting through high school. For my kid. It's like Mount Everest. So. Yes. Good for Jack.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:01:00]:

Yeah. That's amazing. Yeah. Listen, when a kid graduates, it's the next stage of life, and there's a new degree of independence, and it's necessary.

**AJ Harper** [00:01:08]:

Yeah. And I'm super proud of him.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:01:10]:

I'm proud of him, too. He's a wonderful boy. All right, so today's episode, we're going to be talking about the biggest success we had. It's the bell count of all the books we've written together. It's called PROFIT FIRST, and I want to see if we can deconstruct what makes a book a perennial bestseller. A category defining book, ideally.

**AJ Harper** [00:01:31]:

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Yeah. So we've been saying, don't write that book. So we're starting with do write this book. Let's write this book.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:01:37]:

Exactly.

**AJ Harper** [00:01:38]:

Yeah, exactly.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:01:39]:

So, by means of introduction, AJ. Harper is my partner in writing all the books, every book we've done together. You are an extraordinary friend. I think I showed you, which will come out in a future episode. I have you in my wallet as a trusted confidant. Did I ever show that to you?

**AJ Harper** [00:01:54]:

Yeah. It's on this little piece of paper yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:01:57]:

I look at every day. I think you call it the way you see it, and you say, as Emily Dickinson said, "You speak the truth with slant," so you present it a way that's consumable, but you don't shirk the responsibility of telling a friend the truth. So that's who you are.

**AJ Harper** [00:02:16]:

You just quoted Emily Dickinson. I'm impressed.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:02:21]:

Thank you.

**AJ Harper** [00:02:23]:

Well, it's my great honor and privilege to write with you. I always tell people I quit Ghostwriting, but I kept one person, and that was Mike Michalowicz made the cut. But there was a reason. It isn't just because you hustle. And I know those royalty checks are going to keep coming. It's really because having chemistry, just artistic chemistry, is rare in a writing duo. And sometimes

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it's once in a lifetime. Sometimes people never get it. So I wanted to keep that. And we're just great friends.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:02:57]:

Yeah. We have a great relationship and talking about royalties. March and September are when the tranche has come. And the way PROFIT FIRST is trending this September is indicating to be their best royalty tranche, even though last March we had a little dip down compared to the prior one because of some stuff that just happened recently.

**AJ Harper** [00:03:20]:

It's given this just an overall yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:03:22]:

Overall sales for PROFIT FIRST specifically love PROFIT FIRST. I love it. I love it. So let me give some context for our readers of the volume of sales the revenue generates and so forth. Profit first has sold well over a million copies. Now, I want to give context. There's been two versions. There's been an original version, and expanded, revised and expanded edition. So collectively, Print, Kindle and Audio has sold over a million copies. I don't know the exact number, which I know sounds so bizarre, but the audio is, the rights for it are not with the publisher. It goes to a third party called Gildon, who doesn't really report the numbers. And a question if they report it accurately. Honestly, and I'm not being accusatory here, I just don't see any motivation for anyone to report that accurately. Because why report higher numbers or great numbers when if you don't, you keep more of the royalties? I am not saying that's what's happening here, but there's a disproportionately lower number of audio sales documented for PROFIT FIRST sales compared to every single one of my other books, where I have the exact records of audio sales.

**AJ Harper** [00:04:34]:

And it's your most popular book.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:04:35]:

It's my most popular book. And the rankings of the audiobook on audio, you can use that to judge how your book is selling is not indicative of the numbers they report.

**AJ Harper** [00:04:45]:

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Also, Book Scan, which reports print sales, is only about 85% accurate. So there's always this 15% leeway of additional books sold that they aren't tracking.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:04:56]:

Okay. Yeah. So there's a little cloudiness. The other part is there's 27 translations of PROFIT FIRST. There's English and then there's Romanian. I was actually talking to someone in Romania yesterday who was I know we're going to talk about this later, but was in tears talking with me about the transformations had on him and people in his country. And he's like, this is yeah. So it's serving Romania. That reporting is very sketchy.

**AJ Harper** [00:05:25]:

Oh, yeah. Plus, you never really know. And then you can always audit. You can request an audit, but it never works out for the author. So it's just a waste.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:05:33]:

It's a waste. So a little lesson here is, if you get international rights, or translation rights, foreign rights, it's the advance that matters the most. And don't necessarily expect to get ongoing royalties, albeit Russia, China and Mexico have been consistently sending royalties. Those are the only three countries. Every other country doesn't seem to sell books. Those three countries do.

**AJ Harper** [00:06:01]:

But the point is, it's a perennial bestseller. It's a really strong backlist title.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:06:05]:

Yes. It's been around for ten years. Next year will be the 10th year. 2024 will be the 10th year. It's in circulation, and it's selling at a higher volume this year than did the prior year and generally goes up.

**AJ Harper** [00:06:17]:

Which is what publishers want.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:06:20]:

And why do they want that?

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**AJ Harper** [00:06:21]:

Because they already spent the money on it.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:06:24]:

Right.

**AJ Harper** [00:06:25]:

So it's just gravy for them.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:06:27]:

Penguin sent me a bobblehead. It was bizarre because PROFIT FIRST was the number one selling book in the entire portfolio division last week before this recording. And they said, hey, we got to send you a little gift. Hope you enjoy the joke. It was kind of weird, but it was kind of cool.

**AJ Harper** [00:06:44]:

Kind of like the awkward person at a party who thinks they're funny. They're not.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:06:48]:

Right. It was just kind of weird. Kris was like, what is this? What was interesting is all they have to do is push the print button, a backlist book. There is no necessarily marketing effort they're making. They could. And occasionally, if they see an opportunity, they'll spring on it. Right.

**AJ Harper** [00:07:04]:

Because they'll amplify if it's working.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:07:06]:

Yeah. But it's really rare. I've only experienced it in rare occasions. So all they do is manage the inventory of the books in stock, which is only print, and everything else gets distributed. So it's just money flowing in.

**AJ Harper** [00:07:17]:

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Yeah. And they own the printers.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:07:20]:

I didn't know that. Okay, so they love it.

**AJ Harper** [00:07:21]:

Well, a lot of big five does. Not everybody, but that makes sense. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:07:26]:

So they love it. It's also spawned Profit First Professionals.

**AJ Harper** [00:07:29]:

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:07:29]:

That is a membership organization. We have we're actually in our offices for PROFIT FIRST Professionals. We have about 600 members, people who've become certified in PROFIT FIRST and maintain the certification, which generates an ongoing revenue stream for us, and it further propagates the PROFIT FIRST system.

**AJ Harper** [00:07:46]:

Right. Spreads the message.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:07:47]:

Yeah. I think what's so interesting is many people read a book. Some people don't know after they've read a book if they're actually doing it right. They have the recipe, but they're like, I don't know if I'm making the thing right. I want to work with a chef. And they bring in a Profit First Professional. I would estimate maybe 1% of the books that are purchased translate to someone considering or hiring a PFP. 100 books sold, one person hires. So we've estimated now 700,000 implementations of PROFIT FIRST. Amazing out there. Yeah. Circulating. And of those 700,000, I think about 70,000. So maybe 10% have engaged a profit. First professional. To some degree, yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:08:29]:

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And you have the derivatives, too.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:08:31]:

Oh, yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:08:31]:

So it's spawned derivative books.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:08:33]:

We have 16 or 17 in print. We have 25 in total. Including what's in the queue, there's eight more common.

**AJ Harper** [00:08:41]:

So *Profit First for Therapists*. That was the most recent one that came out. One of my students, Julie Harris.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:08:47]:

We have *Profit First for Minority Business Owners*.

**AJ Harper** [00:08:51]:

That's Suzanne Mariga, also one of my students, who incidentally, that book is in universities.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:08:56]:

Yeah. It's amazing. Yeah. Before we continue on, how does someone become a student of yours? Because I know people have asked me regularly.

**AJ Harper** [00:09:04]:

I take only 30 new students a year. You can go to my website and learn about Top Three Book Workshop. It's a 14-week course. I do it twice a year and take 15 students at a time.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:09:14]:



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It's transformative. And if you're not ready for that, you must read AJ's book, *Write a Must-Read*.

**AJ Harper** [00:09:18]:

Yeah. Because it's basically the workshop in a book. I mean, say for getting feedback from me. I really did put it all in the book. Which incidentally, I think my only translation deal for that book is also Romania.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:09:30]:

Oh, is it really?

**AJ Harper** [00:09:31]:

Yeah, Romania. I have to think. I'm pretty sure I'm right.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:09:34]:

Yeah. Your only translation deal so far.

**AJ Harper** [00:09:36]:

So far.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:09:37]:

Profit first. I just got another translation deal in the last two, three weeks. So it's it's like they keep coming, you know.

**AJ Harper** [00:09:43]:

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:09:43]:

It's ten years in.

**AJ Harper** [00:09:44]:

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But I wanted you to share those statistics, those numbers. It's not I mean, you didn't write PROFIT FIRST for those numbers, though. You wrote it because you're really trying to help people. You never know if what a book is going to do or not do. Right. But I think the numbers do show impact.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:10:02]:

No question about it. Yeah. What PROFIT FIRST has achieved a very, very small minority of business books, nonfiction books, ever achieved.

**AJ Harper** [00:10:10]:

So it works.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:10:11]:

So it works. What we're going to try to do here is deconstruct it. Let's talk first about how the business idea or the book idea came about.

**AJ Harper** [00:10:18]:

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:10:21]:

The inception. Inception.

**AJ Harper** [00:10:22]:

And it's book three, by the way, everybody right. There was toilet paper. Entrepreneur Right. Then there was Pumpkin Plan, which is badass. Yeah, it's a really good book.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:10:30]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:10:31]:

First *Toilet-Paper Entrepreneur*, self-published, *Pumpkin Plan*, published by Penguin before it was Penguin Random House. And then PROFIT FIRST, self-published the first version.

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**Mike Michalowicz** [00:10:41]:

Yeah. *Pumpkin Plan*, in comparison, has sold now over 340 thousand copies. And it's a bad book. The inception point for me was when my daughter put the piggy bank in front of me saying I'm going to save our family because I had no financial understanding. I destroyed our family financially. That was the inception point. It wasn't like I had figured out the system.

**AJ Harper** [00:11:04]:

But you weren't thinking of writing a book then. That was just your turning point.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:11:07]:

That was my turn.

**AJ Harper** [00:11:08]:

For yourself.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:11:08]:

Yeah. But *Toilet-Paper Entrepreneur* came pretty soon after that. That was 2008. That happened. And I think *Toilet-Paper Entrepreneur* came out 2000 and maybe around 2009, 2008, I can't remember. But it came out around a year later. And there was a little seed of the idea.

**AJ Harper** [00:11:25]:

It's one section in *Toilet-Paper Entrepreneur*

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:11:28]:

About profit from and section is a very liberal use of that word because it really was like, two sentences.

**AJ Harper** [00:11:34]:

If he no a paragraph.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:11:35]:

Was it really?

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**AJ Harper** [00:11:36]:

I think so. I have to look at it.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:11:39]:

We called it Profit First Accounting.

**AJ Harper** [00:11:41]:

Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:11:42]:

Back then. And what I started doing haphazardly. But to some effect was I set multiple accounts and was pre allocating money to profit. And I think one other thing. I wasn't thinking about taxes yet at that point, and I had noticed my gosh, when money comes in, I don't have as much money as I think when a thousand comes in, if I allocate to profit and whatever the other thing was, I have \$400, whatever was left over, and just transformed my thinking.

**AJ Harper** [00:12:09]:

Right.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:12:10]:

When we wrote about it in *Toilet-Paper Entrepreneur*, do you know who grabbed onto that?

**AJ Harper** [00:12:16]:

Jose and Jorge. How do you remember that?

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:12:18]:

Unbelievable. Yeah, that's exactly right.

**AJ Harper** [00:12:21]:

Yeah.

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**Mike Michalowicz** [00:12:22]:

They came to a little workshop I was doing. It was my first workshop.

**AJ Harper** [00:12:26]:

And they fixed just to be clear, Jose and Jorge aren't in Florida, and they have a repair shop for the electronic repair car computers. For car computers?

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:12:37]:

Yeah. The car computer maintains the engine's performance, and so they tweak it or change it so you can optimize the car. So people take out the manufacturers and insert their modified one. And they specifically don't manufacture them. They specifically repair these aftermarket devices. They read that book Toilet Paper Entrepreneur. Yes. They started implementing profit first. They came up to a workshop within the next six months or year, whenever we held it on their profit distribution.

**AJ Harper** [00:13:07]:

Yeah. They used the distribution to afford the trip.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:13:09]:

Yeah. And they brought their significant others. I think both were wives at the time. I know they're all they're married to their SOS now, and they vacationed to New York and just built a rapport with these guys.

**AJ Harper** [00:13:21]:

But I remember you saying it's. How can they be so excited? Because they couldn't stop talking about it based on a couple of paragraphs.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:13:29]:

That's right. And it was working. We then after that, maybe that was the kick in the pants to say, oh, maybe there's something here. I was working with the *Wall Street Journal*. I had met through and this is the porns of networking. I was at a TV thing called "It's Your Business". It's on MSNBC. I'm still friends with the host, J J. Ramberg. Actually, I'm hoping to visit her in the next couple of months when I'm out in California. And she had another guest on called Colleen Debase I think I'm saying her name correctly who the time was the editor for the small business

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section of The Wall Street Journal. Well, we spent on stage together on the show together. About 30 seconds.

**AJ Harper** [00:14:10]:

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:14:11]:

Backstage, we're just talking, and I said, hey, may I reach out to you? I'd love to learn more about the *Wall Street Journal*. She said, yeah, reach out any time. Well, professional persistence. I reached out all the time, but not, you know me. You know me all the time. I think on the fourth or fifth one, she said, hey, if you want to write a story for us, we'll consider it. We wrote, you and I, subsequently, ten stories.

**AJ Harper** [00:14:31]:

Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:14:32]:

Maybe eleven of those ten or eleven prop first was not the first. It wasn't the last, but it was one of the beginning ones. Maybe it was the first. I don't know. It was hands down the best performing, because Colleen's, like, this article is hitting it right, and that was the indicator. It was maybe an 800-word article. It was pretty short.

**AJ Harper** [00:14:50]:

But to be clear, it worked for you. Transformed your life, transformed your business. It worked for readers. And you didn't just hear from Jose and Jorge. They were the evangelists for it, for sure. Yeah. But there were others. And then it was a journal article.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:15:08]:

Yeah. And that's when the email started coming in. And I'll tell you when people reach out to you without access your email, because it doesn't say Wall Street Journal, Mike Michalowicz's email, and here's his office. It just says contributed by Mike Michalowicz.

**AJ Harper** [00:15:19]:

Right.

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**Mike Michalowicz** [00:15:20]:

If they find you, they're on a mission. And that's the point when I said, we have a book. So you and I had already written toy paper entrepreneur and the pumpkin plan. We had done the trips now to Penguin's offices. We were working with a guy named David Mulderer, if you remember him. Right. In the beginning, he was our editor. Yeah. But it transitioned to I can't remember her name. I can't remember her name.

**AJ Harper** [00:15:42]:

So sorry.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:15:43]:

So sorry if you're listening, I know I can picture her, though.

**AJ Harper** [00:15:45]:

I can, too.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:15:45]:

And she was wonderful.

**AJ Harper** [00:15:46]:

She was great.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:15:46]:

She saw *The Pumpkin Plan* to the finish.

**AJ Harper** [00:15:48]:

Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:15:49]:

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I then went to her and said, I have the next book. And she said, well, what is it? I said it's profit first. And I explained, this is what it is. And the response maybe it was Kashiuk by then. Or maybe it was still her.

**AJ Harper** [00:16:02]:

No, it was still her.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:16:04]:

She comes back and says, we don't need another accounting book. We've talked with the team here. No one needs another accounting book. And *Pumpkin Plan* is performing pretty well. When you have a book performs well, a traditional publisher will invite you back in to do another book. Like, you got momentum, and they have.

**AJ Harper** [00:16:20]:

Write a first refusal, just so we're clear, which means they get dibs on getting to make an offer first. It doesn't mean that they have dibs, period.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:16:28]:

Yeah. So in the meantime, it's like, well, I need a good representative for this. So I may be mixing the sequence of events here. Spoke with Lisa Demona. Lisa Demona represents Seth Godin.

**AJ Harper** [00:16:40]:

Well, she wanted to represent you.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:16:42]:

Yeah, well, yeah, but how I got her was I looked at Seth Godin's book use your technique.

**AJ Harper** [00:16:47]:

Yeah, but you got her because of *The Pumpkin Plan* and the techniques we use to get endorsements.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:16:52]:



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That's right. We'd mailed out because I think it's important we tell a story to get endorsements for *The Pumpkin Plan*. Mailed out from my mom. We were pretending to be my mom.

**AJ Harper** [00:17:03]:

Letters and pumpkin bread that my mom did make right. And it was a clever letter, and it was gluten free, let's be clear, for Seth. And she happened to be in the office when it arrived, and that impressed her.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:17:19]:

Yeah, that's exactly right. So that brought about a meeting. She said, I want to represent you. I talk about this idea of PROFIT FIRST. She loved the title, by the way. But she goes, Nah, I don't think we can sell this.

**AJ Harper** [00:17:31]:

But can I back you up? Because I think something that's really important is this tested you the whole time. Penguin says no. Big fancy agent says no. Says, I don't think so.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:17:45]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:17:46]:

And there was this crisis moment, and I remember a phone call with you, and you were really wondering, well, maybe we do a different book. But we have this thing that we started with *Pumpkin Plan* that I introduced to you when we were at the Niagara Public Library, and you were trying to decide what to write next. And I said, what do your readers need next?

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:18:05]:

Yes.

**AJ Harper** [00:18:06]:

And I remember saying, so that's how we chose what to write for *Pumpkin Plan*.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:18:10]:

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Yes.

**AJ Harper** [00:18:11]:

That's how we chose to do PROFIT FIRST.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:18:13]:

Yes.

**AJ Harper** [00:18:14]:

What did your readers, Mike Michalowicz's readers, need next? Not just what do you feel like you want to write? And so that's what when you got the rejection, you were thinking of maybe chucking it. We'll do it another time. Because the thing is, Mike always has a million book ideas, so it's not like it was the only one.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:18:35]:

Right.

**AJ Harper** [00:18:35]:

But you felt in your bones, they need this next. And remember do you remember I said, Effort, we'll just self publish.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:18:42]:

Yeah, and thank you. I'll never forget that because that gave me the confidence. I was rocked, because the sequence I remember is I pitched a lease, and she said, no, it's not there. No. And then finally I said, no, I'm just going to go back to Penguin myself and spoke to them, and they said no. I called Lisa after our conversation, said, I'm going to self publish this. And she said, Good for you. She goes, make them, referring to Penguin. Make them regret it. I'll never forget those words. I was sitting outside the post office in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey, I think maybe right after the call with you. I remember being on the phone with her, and she goes, make him regret it, because I was staring at the American flag outside the post office, and I said, okay, maybe that became part of the American dream.

**AJ Harper** [00:19:25]:

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But the thing is, you knew in your bones that this is what people needed next. And I think this is important for everybody to understand. Sometimes we get swayed by experts and other people who don't. And the thing is, you can't expect them to know your reader like you do.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:19:40]:

Yes, you can't.

**AJ Harper** [00:19:41]:

They don't. They know the market. They understand what's happening with trends and so forth. But some of the best books, the breakout books, it's because they defy trends. So you really have to go with it's not even a gut thing. It's really considering what your reader needs next. And I feel that you stayed true to that.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:20:02]:

Yeah. So let's deconstruct why it worked.

**AJ Harper** [00:20:05]:

Why it worked.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:20:06]:

I wanted to start off with a conversation had with Michael Bungay Stainer. He is the author of the coaching habit. We had a call about three weeks ago. Now he and I, along with 20 other authors, are gathering down Don Miller's place, something I have organized, started three years ago. I want to surround myself with the lead authors. I want to be in a room where I wouldn't be invited. And the only way to get in that room is you run the event and they come. So Michael, among others, is coming. He has a book called The Coaching Habit, which, I don't know if you've read that. I love the book.

**AJ Harper** [00:20:36]:

It's on my desk right now.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:20:37]:

Oh, I love the book. And one of the key questions there is, what's on your mind? And we use it now whenever we're having a meeting, just to peel back the onion and get kind of the baggage

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off the table. Before you talk business, what's on your mind? It's a fabulous book. He sold over a million copies. So I said, Michael, what's the secret? In fact, I want you to present at our event of what the Secret is to have a perennial bestseller. And he goes, in hindsight, I can't tell. And I think the analogy he used was a cloud. He goes, you can look at any formation of cloud and make a picture out of that and say, see, it's a dinosaur or a whale or it's a person's face. But he goes, Only when you're looking in hindsight. Doesn't make sense. He subsequently has tried to reconstruct it. He's had multiple books. None of them have done it. We've tried to reconstruct it, and as of now, no book has had a million dollars, a million units in sales. We've had very successful books. There's no question these techniques help. I just want to put this little awareness around this that I don't know if there is a perfect formula. There's elements, but I don't know if you nail every single one that I can get.

**AJ Harper** [00:21:44]:

Luck is a huge factor.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:21:46]:

Luck is a factor.

**AJ Harper** [00:21:47]:

Timing is part of that. But there are key elements that set you up for that.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:21:51]:

That's right. That's what we're doing. We're setting you up. Yeah. So why don't we dig into some of the stuff we wrote down?

**AJ Harper** [00:21:56]:

Here why it worked.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:21:58]:

Yeah. The proven concept. Talk about that. What's your thoughts?

**AJ Harper** [00:22:01]:

Well, it wasn't just an idea you had. What if you did this? What if you put your stuff different money in different bank accounts? That'll be great. You actually had been working it yourself,

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and I believe you also had been helping just people you knew in business to do the same, but you knew it worked for you.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:22:20]:

Right.

**AJ Harper** [00:22:20]:

And then later, when we published the second version, we had total proof of concept because by then, Profit Versus Professionals had been launched and we had a lot of success stories. But it wasn't just an idea that you had. And I think it's important to remember that we need to make sure that a book, when we're teaching a framework or process or steps, that it actually works not just for us, but can work for the reader as well.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:22:47]:

That's right. So this is an interesting differentiation. And actually, when I speak with Michael, he said the same thing in the beginning. When we write a book, an author is positioned to be a creator because it's usually stuff we've done, we have a lot of practical experience with. But once you've created that book, then you become a curator. So we go from creator to curator. A curator is someone that accumulates ideas, but maybe doesn't have practical experience deploying it themselves. And I wonder if because PROFIT FIRST was a creation that was being baked for years before the first book came out and further baked before the revised and expanded edition came out, if maybe that was a significant it is advantage.

**AJ Harper** [00:23:25]:

Yeah. Because you know with absolute certainty that it works because you've experienced it, and then you also know that it works for others. I think that last part is a key distinction. Sometimes what works for us doesn't work in the same way for other people. And part of your job as an author is to distill down the doable part so that the action steps and so forth, so that anyone could do it, not just you.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:23:49]:

I wonder if that's the challenge we're having with Get Different. Get different is fizzling. And I think it's an excellent book. I think it's actually one of our best pieces of work ever. And it's something I can do and the people that me least around me do do. But I wonder if the I know the majority of people feel intimidated to.

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**AJ Harper** [00:24:08]:

Do the well, there's a confidence factor there. Yeah, I definitely think we need a brainstorm session because I have ideas about how you could kick that up.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:24:17]:

R and E, revise and expand it. You thinking. You thinking.

**AJ Harper** [00:24:20]:

No, I think that well, we're off track. We're a little off track. But I will say this one idea.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:24:27]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:24:27]:

I think when you can demonstrate to people that it works, when you can show them evidence, it's so much easier. That's also why I think the revised and expanded edition of PROFIT FIRST sold more, not just because it had a traditional publisher, which we'll explain that later, but because there was so and so and so and so and so and so and so and so and so.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:24:48]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:24:48]:

And I think if you actually took some time to go show examples of how people use the system, it would actually help.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:24:58]:

Yeah, I think that makes great sense.

**AJ Harper** [00:25:00]:

Yeah. So, all right, moving on. Serving the reader is something that we talk about. That's my belief system. That's how I wrote.

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**Mike Michalowicz** [00:25:08]:

You call it "Reader First".

**AJ Harper** [00:25:09]:

I call it Reader First." It's a methodology I've used with all your books, introduced you to it. I think you are embody it now. You don't even think about it anymore. It's what I used as a ghostwriter, and it's what I teach. But it's basically everything in the book must serve the reader, not just be something you wanted to include. So that's something that we do with every book and we did with PROFIT FIRST.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:25:34]:

Yeah. To me, it's the hero's journey, and the reader is the hero. They're going to have trials and tribulations as they go through your book. You're the guide or the mentor. You have to navigate them through those challenges.

**AJ Harper** [00:25:45]:

Yeah. They're on a quest.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:25:47]:

Transformational core message. To me, we have a profoundly simple transformational core message. If you take your profit last, you won't take profit. You won't be profitable if you take your profit.

**AJ Harper** [00:26:00]:

I would say it differently. How would you say it? Because sometimes you need to establish a disruption first.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:26:07]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:26:08]:

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So the traditional accounting method because remember, you're in post PROFIT FIRST land now. It's ten years out.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:26:13]:

That's right.

**AJ Harper** [00:26:14]:

At the time, it was really controversial, actually. You got a lot of pushback.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:26:17]:

Yeah, I did. Totally.

**AJ Harper** [00:26:19]:

So the original core message traditional accounting methods are killing your business. Take your profit first.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:26:25]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:26:25]:

And it's transformational, because even if all you hear is that, all you hear is that you can actually start making a change. You don't even have to read the book.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:26:36]:

I was at Event or whatever and came up, and I was talking to him like, oh, you're Mike Michalowicz. I love your book first. I'm like, oh, thanks so much. And I was sitting with this person, so I said, what part did you love the most? And she looked at me for a second and goes, oh, I haven't read it yet.

**AJ Harper** [00:26:52]:

She means she loves the concept.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:26:54]:



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Yeah. And I think that is a really key indicator. Your book is successful. She's parroting to others, you got to read this book without having read it yet.

**AJ Harper** [00:27:03]:

Yeah. So a transformational core message that is transformational on its own, that's also shareable.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:27:11]:

That's the key.

**AJ Harper** [00:27:12]:

Yeah. So that people can easily share with others. And that's why also the title works.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:27:17]:

Well, okay. And I think this may be the most important part of the entire prophet first book is within two words. The method is taught to you, and you don't have to crack the pages. It's right on the COVID Yeah. So I think PROFIT FIRST, while it wasn't devised this way, the retrospect is that title teaches the entire system.

**AJ Harper** [00:27:40]:

This is why I always tell my students they'll come into class, I just met with somebody just the other day who's about to be in my September class. She wanted to run titles by me. I said, we're not doing titles. She was really disappointed. Well, you haven't done a core message yet.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:27:55]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:27:55]:

How can you do a title if you don't have a core message yet? You can't. People don't realize. So we wouldn't have had PROFIT FIRST if we didn't have the core message first.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:28:04]:

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That's right. I mean, that being said, we did reference the PROFIT FIRST accounting back into a paper.

**AJ Harper** [00:28:10]:

Yeah. But it could have been anything.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:28:11]:

But it could have transformed.

**AJ Harper** [00:28:12]:

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:28:13]:

That is the one book I don't remember us playing with other titles, though. I think that's the one.

**AJ Harper** [00:28:16]:

No, we knew.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:28:17]:

Yeah, we just knew. We just knew. The subtitle, though, helps carry it, too, because I think our subtitle, which is transform Your Cash Eating Monster to a Money Making Machine. Or Transform a Cash Eating Monster to a Money Making Machine, what I think is it gives that before and after state, obviously. I think there's high relatability that a reader can say, this is exactly who I am right now. This is exactly what I want to be. A money making machine.

**AJ Harper** [00:28:46]:

Yeah. Monster machine is the juxtaposition, too. A monster is this out of control thing that haunts you. A machine is well oiled, controlled by you. Yeah. And can I note something else? That's really cool. That's why that makes that title and subtitle perfect.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:29:01]:

Yeah.

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**AJ Harper** [00:29:01]:

Okay. It's PROFIT FIRST is the solution core message. And the subtitle is problem plus promise.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:29:12]:

Yes.

**AJ Harper** [00:29:13]:

So it's all there.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:29:14]:

It's all baked in.

**AJ Harper** [00:29:15]:

It's all in there.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:29:17]:

Yeah. And in retrospect, it sounds kind of easy. It's really hard to devise that. You got to be very deliberate about it. We had some stuff fall into our hands, like, we knew this was the.

**AJ Harper** [00:29:26]:

Right title, but this subtitle took a minute.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:29:28]:

That definitely took time. Yeah, that definitely took time. The next thing that makes a perennial bestseller deliver on the promise by the end of the book.

**AJ Harper** [00:29:38]:

Yeah. So this is a hill I die on.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:29:40]:

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Yeah. Then let's do it. Let's go.

**AJ Harper** [00:29:42]:

Well, okay, so Pet Peeve is prescriptive nonfiction that promises something that's pie in the sky or that may eventually happen if all the stars align. And what you want to do as an author is deliver on a promise by the time they turn the last page. This is sort of a whoa, hang on a minute. Moment. When I share this with authors because it forces them to think of two things. Wait, what do they want? My audience? Can I actually deliver that? And then you have another choice. Am I going to rise to that occasion, or do I need to maybe modify it, which is fair, to bring it down into something that you can deliver, which then shapes and changes your content, but if you do it, then you have built in trust.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:30:29]:

I'm really curious. Do you think most readers read a book at a certain pace that then puts a time frame around this meaning? Do most readers read a book in about a month and that you have basically a month to transform a person?

**AJ Harper** [00:30:41]:

I don't think about that at all. Okay, it's so you that you would think about that.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:30:45]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:30:45]:

But what if they only read it in a weekend?

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:30:47]:

Yeah. Then can you transform them in a weekend?

**AJ Harper** [00:30:49]:

You should be able to.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:30:50]:

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Yeah, you should be able to.

**AJ Harper** [00:30:52]:

And the promise, regardless of how quickly they read it, 100%.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:30:55]:

Okay.

**AJ Harper** [00:30:55]:

You have to put yourself that's a constraint that you as an author, have to put on yourself so that the author gets what they're paid for, basically what they signed up for. I mean, the reader yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:31:10]:

So the reader, whatever speed they're consuming it's in the book, they have to be transformed whether the promise has to be served or delivered.

**AJ Harper** [00:31:19]:

Yeah. So then modify the promise. If you can't do it, what happens.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:31:21]:

If you don't deliver on the promise? What's your perception?

**AJ Harper** [00:31:24]:

I mean, I got to be honest, a lot of readers really don't expect you to when they're reading self help, prescriptive, nonfiction, other business, spirituality, whatever. I always say they come in with this mixture of hope and skepticism. I want this book to be the one. I want this book to be the one. And then it's like, okay, yeah, didn't quite cut it. And there's so many factors in that. It's just we would talk the entire day to dissect all the reasons why. But when you do deliver on the promise, it's like, holy cow.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:32:00]:

Yeah.

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**AJ Harper** [00:32:01]:

This book actually did what it said it was going to do. And then that's how you have ambassadors.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:32:06]:

And to deliver on the promise, I presume, you have to make it digestible, accessible, doable well.

**AJ Harper** [00:32:11]:

You have to first decide what the promise is, and then you ask yourself, what do I need to do to deliver that? So for us, for this profit, first was, your business will be profitable by the time you finish reading the book.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:32:23]:

Yeah. Permanently profitable.

**AJ Harper** [00:32:24]:

And we did it in I think it's chapter three.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:32:27]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:32:27]:

I think we could deliver in chapter three.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:32:29]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:32:29]:

Now, we didn't say your business will be perfectly healthy, debt free, any of that. Can't promise it.

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**Mike Michalowicz** [00:32:37]:

Right.

**AJ Harper** [00:32:38]:

Too many variables.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:32:39]:

Right.

**AJ Harper** [00:32:40]:

But I think it's chapter three, I'm embarrassed to say. I don't exactly remember where we tell them to do this, but it's within the first four chapters.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:32:47]:

Definitely by chapter three, I'm actually back in the studio still doing the re recording because of the rights transfer of audio. And yeah, we just tell people, just start this with this 1% rule, open.

**AJ Harper** [00:32:57]:

One account 1%, take 1%.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:33:00]:

That's it.

**AJ Harper** [00:33:01]:

But that was not like, oh, we just wrote that one day. No, it was, how can we deliver on that promise? What could we do?

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:33:10]:

Yeah. And that came out of experience of people doing it. When I do the Live keynote on it, I have people come up regularly that say I've read the book, and somehow they glanced over that and that's normal. And they said, now that I'm hearing it, you explain this, you make it accessible. That 1% one account. I think that's the thing. It's like, they can actually do this.

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**AJ Harper** [00:33:31]:

Right. So you were thinking about, how can I get we weren't just thinking about how to deliver on the promise. And critics, some people say, well, that's just all that is, is a bank account with 1% in it. Doesn't mean your business is doing well. Okay, well, again, can't account for those variables. But you were adamant, I recall. You said, if I can just get them to do that, then they've established the habit, and so the rest will fall into place. And it is true for so many people.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:33:57]:

It's so true. High stakes and high payoff.

**AJ Harper** [00:34:01]:

This is one of my theories about why PROFIT FIRST works. And this can apply to other books, too. Unlike all of her other books, except maybe *Pumpkin Plan*, PROFIT FIRST is the highest stakes for the reader. Because it's money. Because usually how many times have you heard, even I've been stopped in elevators. I've had people talk to me at parties. Anytime somebody finds out I had anything to do with it, probably first saved my business, saved my life, save my bank account, save my marriage. Even that's high stakes. Are you losing your business? Are you losing your shirt? So when when a book is speaking to a high stakes problem, therefore more people are interested in that, and it gave results. So when you have the high stakes plus an actual payoff, that you can promise that's winning combination.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:35:04]:

James Clear shared an insight that I invite all of our listeners to write down right now about what makes a book successful. To give context, he wrote *Atomic Habits*, has over 100,000 reviews on Amazon, and.

**AJ Harper** [00:35:16]:

He passed the 10 million mark recently.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:35:18]:

He really sold over 10 million books. Yeah, so and it's a top ten seller now. For years, he said, write a book that the reader feels they're alone experiencing, yet everyone is experiencing it. So they feel it addresses something that's unique and special to them. Yet it's true for everybody.



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And PROFIT FIRST speaks to the entrepreneur who says, I'm struggling. I'm ashamed of this, but no other entrepreneur struggles.

**AJ Harper** [00:35:42]:

They really believe they're they think they screwed up. And they're the only screw up.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:35:45]:

Yeah, but it's not an island. It's like the size of Australia. Everyone's on there. It's massive. It's a continent.

**AJ Harper** [00:35:50]:

That brings up a point that's not on our list to talk about today, which is helping a reader feel less alone in that. Yeah, and that's a huge factor. But that's in all our books.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:36:00]:

Okay, so high stakes and payoff. What about being disruptive?

**AJ Harper** [00:36:03]:

Well, that's one of our immutable laws for your books. All the books must disrupt the status quo or we don't write it.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:36:10]:

Contrarian is the word I like to use.

**AJ Harper** [00:36:12]:

Yeah. So, upsetting the apple cart.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:36:16]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:36:17]:

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It causes legit controversy. Not controversy for controversy sake. But you're actually saying, hey, this isn't working anymore, or not as well. Or never.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:36:27]:

Did I'll tell you? The simple hack to find out what would be disruptive is look at what the common approach is. Look at the actual data behind the results. So the common approach to profitability is profits. The bottom line, it comes last. Only I think it's 17% of businesses are sustainably profitable, so everyone's doing this profit last, and no one's getting what they desire to get. That's an easy opportunity for disruption. With all in the new book we just wrote interviews. Everyone does interviews. The result of hiring a top performing candidate is like, 5% of the time. Most of the time you get candidates, and a lot of time you get unfit candidates through the interview process. So we created workshops. It's a whole different approach. And we have statistic proof through sports organizations and so forth. Large corporations like Home Depot, Domino's Pizza. Use this. The recruiting process. The chance of landing a player candidate goes up to like 80 or 90%. So it seems disruptive. But if you just look at the data of what everyone's doing and what the results are, it just presents itself.

**AJ Harper** [00:37:32]:

Yeah. And then doable. And that's also an immutable law for all your books. So not just, hey, try this, but making it actually doable for folks.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:37:44]:

Yeah. What doable means is PROFIT FIRST has a full system set up to five accounts, have no temptation accounts, et cetera, et cetera. What we realized is that is the full implementation, but we need to at least get them taking that first step where they see an impact. So doability is what is the smallest action we can have them take that results in the biggest impact.

**AJ Harper** [00:38:08]:

Yes. And also how you frame it and present it cognizant of what challenges they might have.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:38:14]:

I'll give you this formula. I think it's profound is a pretty self Philadelphia word, but we what's profound to you? Profound to me is I believe a successful book has a formula that is DOI times, so times EOI. And if you have these three elements, it stages you for a really well selling perennial bestseller. DOI is degree of impact. So if your book has a we'll talk about weight loss. It's a common subject. Right there's actually ISR. Just made an announcement. They have a pill

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now for weight loss. I mean, it just came out. This may be the game changer they said in just months prior to that. Was that injectable? I don't know if you heard about this thing. You inject it?

**AJ Harper** [00:38:54]:

No, but I'm going to Google it when I get in my car.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:38:56]:

Oh, my God. If anyone's at risk for diabetes, I know some people taking this now. The problem is some people in Hollywood are taking it because it works so effectively.

**AJ Harper** [00:39:06]:

Okay?

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:39:10]:

Stands for Degree of Impact. If you take this, we'll say weight loss pill and you lose an ounce a year, that's a very low degree of impact.

**AJ Harper** [00:39:19]:

Right.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:39:19]:

If you lose 50 pounds, for example, in a year, that's a higher degree of impact. So the greater the degree of impact, the more desirable is. SoI stands for Speed of Implementation. Can I do it quickly?

**AJ Harper** [00:39:32]:

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:39:33]:

If I got to say to you, you can lose 50 pounds in a year by running a marathon every week, that takes a long time to get it done. If I say just take this pill and you'll start seeing results in the next

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hour. Results now. So speed of impact. And the last is EOI, which is ease of Implementation. So speed of implementation. And ease of implementation.

**AJ Harper [00:39:52]:**

Yeah, speed of implementation. I want to put an Asterisk because it doesn't mean you should create a program they can do in 30 days or nine days or two days. It just means finding an element of your process that can be done quickly and that becomes an early win in the book.

**Mike Michalowicz [00:40:07]:**

Correct.

**AJ Harper [00:40:08]:**

But it doesn't mean that the whole thing has to be super fast.

**Mike Michalowicz [00:40:12]:**

No, they just need to see the result.

**AJ Harper [00:40:13]:**

The sooner they need an early win.

**Mike Michalowicz [00:40:15]:**

The bigger result they see. The sooner they see with less effort is the win. So Ease of Impact is a pill versus running and profit first. What we did is we have a massive impact. You see permanent profitability and grows over time. You can get it done within a day of reading that book or in the same hour, and it's really easy to do. And we just made it even easier recently with our relationship with Relay, the online banking platform.

**AJ Harper [00:40:42]:**

Oh, I saw that.

**Mike Michalowicz [00:40:43]:**

Dude, it's huge.

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**AJ Harper** [00:40:43]:

So cool.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:40:44]:

So now you don't even have to go to your bank and say, hey, please have an account. You just click and they have a whole system set up there. Those three elements, I think, make a book really effective. If it's hard to do and it takes a long time and you don't see much results from it, why would you ever do it? So reverse?

**AJ Harper** [00:40:58]:

And it could also be just for everybody who's freaking out about maybe there isn't a tangible result that you could have somebody do an action like that. The early win can also be something as simple as a mindset shift or just feeling better. It doesn't have to be opening up a bank account or taking some action like that.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:41:15]:

No. Yeah, I agree.

**AJ Harper** [00:41:17]:

So that is concept plus how to in my mind, I think that's also one of the reasons why profit first works, is it isn't just, hey, try this. It's here's also how to do it.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:41:28]:

Okay. So I don't even know what this note is. We talked about following the traditional publishing process.

**AJ Harper** [00:41:33]:

We didn't just slam and jam it. We followed the traditional publishing process.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:41:39]:

I see.

**AJ Harper** [00:41:39]:

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You're saying with all of the correct editors, designers, proofreaders, we did not cover design. We did not get it out in 30 days.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:41:47]:

No. Private first. Still took us a year and a half, I think.

**AJ Harper** [00:41:50]:

Yeah. This is a factor.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:41:52]:

Yeah. So this was a self published book.

**AJ Harper** [00:41:53]:

Just to reiterate, initially.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:41:55]:

Initially, yeah. It was a self published book. We had right proof. And the wonderful thing is, we actually used your team. So I think Zoe was doing the editorial work.

**AJ Harper** [00:42:05]:

Zoë Bird.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:42:06]:

Zoë Bird. I think your mom Nikki was involved.

**AJ Harper** [00:42:09]:

Yeah. Back then she was proofreading.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:42:11]:

Proofing. Yeah. Amazing stuff. And that book, we probably went through, I don't know, four versions of the manuscript over time. Yeah. It was the traditional process. We also behind the

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scenes, Patty Zanelli was working for me at the time. We were working on the distribution of the book beyond just Amazon. I'm sorry. No, we built a direct relationship with Amazon, but we set the infrastructure in place to do it.

**AJ Harper** [00:42:36]:

Exactly. So you weren't just trying to get it out in 90 days.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:42:39]:

I remember that. It was a call with Liz Dabrinska. She was doing our cover design work. She's amazing. And we were working on the cover and we had a cash cow. It was originally a dollar bill origami style folded to look like, oh, yeah, I forgot that was it. And I was like, I think this is it. Because we had turned your thing into a machine. But cash cow? It didn't make sense. One day I was in the airport. I was in Chicago. I remember walking through the airport and they had something for the local meat district or something. And they showed the different cuts of meat from a cow and showed, like, the hind quarter, the flank, whatever. I was looking at that. I was like, oh, my God. What if we took a piggy bank and carved up its different components? So I called her. She's amazing. Within hours, she's like, I love it. I love it. She's playing with it and comes back with this piggy bank that's carved up with the different accounts right in the.

**AJ Harper** [00:43:38]:

And it was perfect because it aligned with the most popular, most emotional story in all your books ever, which is the piggy bank story.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:43:47]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:43:47]:

And that cover is so beloved that people who also have the revised and expanded edition, which has a different cover, kept the original.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:43:56]:

Yeah. It's unbelievable. There were some other things about the cover which I don't think played into its popularity as a book, but still *Something Gets Noted* is a tactile experience.

**AJ Harper** [00:44:08]:

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Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:44:08]:

It's not a glossy cover. It has, like, a little stick almost to it, like a little grippiness. It made the book feel differently when you held it. Mine has that same yeah, I know yours does.

**AJ Harper** [00:44:19]:

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:44:20]:

I prefer I love your book. And I did the classic thing. We fall in love with the book. I bought the audio. I like the audio better. I love holding your book yeah. While I listen to it.

**AJ Harper** [00:44:31]:

I think you also really upped your marketing on PROFIT FIRST.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:44:36]:

Yeah. This is where we learned, and we'll talk about it over subsequent episodes. Kind of the five core principles how to work your list, how to empower a street team, how to engage other influencers, how to use social media and to do things that actually no one else does. I always believe you have to do at least one or two significant marketing campaigns that have never been done before. We've done pay forward campaigns we did not global, but a US scavenger hunt, so stuff like that. The interesting thing is PROFIT FIRST had a double dip. I call it the Penguin rejected it. The book sold hundreds of thousands of copies, and within a year or two of its launch, three. I get a call one day from this guy with this Indian accent. I didn't recognize the name Kaushik. Kaushik.

**AJ Harper** [00:45:35]:

My favorite.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:45:35]:

Yeah. Kaushik from Penguin. And he goes a voicemail. I said, Please call me back. So call him back. He said we're doing this. He was doing research. He was an assistant to Adrian Zacheim



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and was assigned a task of looking at their historical authors and see who has good, back selling books. And *Pumpkin Plan* came up to the top of the list, and they didn't really get it. So he's like, I want to call you and talk about this.

**AJ Harper** [00:45:57]:

No, because he then went and found oh, they found he went on Amazon and he said, Wait, what's this book?

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:46:04]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:46:04]:

Not realizing they had passed on it.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:46:06]:

That's right. So he called me, we talked about that, and then we start talking about PROFIT FIRST, and that became the Oops moment. I subsequently went in there. I don't know if we went together for that first meeting.

**AJ Harper** [00:46:15]:

No, you did. It was just you.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:46:17]:

Just me. And they said, we want PROFIT FIRST.

**AJ Harper** [00:46:21]:

Now make them regret it.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:46:22]:

Yeah, they regretted it. That's interesting. Kowschik had no idea.

**AJ Harper** [00:46:25]:

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He didn't know.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:46:26]:

Yeah. And Adrian maybe remembered, but it doesn't matter who they came around and they made a six figure offer low six figures, but we were in the six figure club. We rewrote it and rewrote it. Yeah. And we made a revised and expanded edition.

**AJ Harper** [00:46:42]:

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:46:43]:

What we did is we tore it down to the Studs. And I think if you ever do an R and E, revised and expanded, tear it down to the Studs. That book is radically simplified. The first book was great. This book is superior and lots of.

**AJ Harper** [00:46:56]:

Success stories and so forth. But this leads me to my I feel like one of my favorite prophifers. To me, this shows authors what's possible.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:47:05]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:47:06]:

Do you remember we were up at the Penguin offices before they merged with Random House? So it was down on Houston.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:47:14]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:47:16]:

Or near Houston. And we were in a room, and there was a bunch of people I don't even know their names who are all in the marketing department and the publisher no, maybe it was Will before he left.

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**Mike Michalowicz** [00:47:31]:

Yeah. I can't remember his last name, but yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:47:34]:

And we were having a meeting and everything was going fine, and it was about a new book, and then all of a sudden there was this stern look, and he said, we really need to talk about this problem we had. We ran out of books.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:47:49]:

I do not remember.

**AJ Harper** [00:47:51]:

You don't remember?

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:47:51]:

That was Will who said that?

**AJ Harper** [00:47:52]:

I think so, yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:47:53]:

Okay. He was the VP of Marketing number two to Adrian, the publisher.

**AJ Harper** [00:47:57]:

Pretty sure it was him then. And you were mystified but what had happened was what they said was, please tell us when you're going to do these marketing initiatives. Because we actually had to do an express run because we ran out of books, so they had to hurry up and print more books. What had happened? And the thing is, you said I don't know what you're talking about.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:48:20]:

Yeah.

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**AJ Harper** [00:48:21]:

The reason I love this story is what had happened was it was, I think, Harv Ecker. Do you remember this now?

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:48:28]:

T Harv Ecker. Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:48:29]:

You later figured out what happened. I don't know.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:48:32]:

Yes.

**AJ Harper** [00:48:33]:

How did such a run on the book?

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:48:35]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:48:36]:

He had put it in his newsletter or signed his email.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:48:39]:

Do you remember that?

**AJ Harper** [00:48:39]:

And didn't ask, just said, you got.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:48:42]:

To read this book, just did it.

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**AJ Harper** [00:48:43]:

And he has such a massive following that it blew it out and they had to hurry up and print more books. And I love that story because to me, it speaks to the power of a book that works. It gets word of mouth, word of mouth, word of mouth, word of mouth, until even without any effort of your own, an influencer hears about it, loves it enough that decides to talk about it without even contacting you, and then you run out of books. Running out of books is, as my dad would say, a good problem.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:49:11]:

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** [00:49:12]:

So that's why I love sharing that story.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:49:15]:

I do remember that now and it happened again a week ago.

**AJ Harper** [00:49:20]:

Really?

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:49:21]:

Yeah. They didn't run out books, but a big influencer. No. Okay, so TikTok oh, TikTok. Last week, Proffers was ranked its best ranking 26th in the world on Amazon.

**AJ Harper** [00:49:38]:

Oh, that's right. You told me this.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:49:39]:

Okay. The book exploded. It sold 3000 print units within two days. That's pretty simple. Yeah. Same thing. Didn't know about it. Nothing. I'm sitting in the hotel room and I was at a speaking event and I get a text from Kelly Ruda, a friend of mine, who says oh, congratulations on being on TikTok. PROFIT FIRST has been on TikTok by many people, many times. So I click on, I look at

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it. I'm like, oh, this has 60,000 views, this thing. And I'm like, that's a lot of views. And then it goes to the Amazon ranking. Prop first now is ranked 200. So then I check, like, 4 hours later, 3 hours later, now it's ranked like 100 or something. I look back at the TikTok video. It now has 100,000 views. It has subsequently 100 and 8990 thousand views. As of this morning, it dropped down to 26. I called Noah that night or left him a voicemail at around midnight because I didn't remember the T Harv Eker situation. I do remember Penguin saying, if the book pops, tell us. So I called him, said, the book is popping. That morning I got a call back at 07:00 a.m.. He says he already called Supply. They have enough to cover a strong surge. And he says, we're covered. We're moving more print demand right now. He goes, what'd you do with TikTok? How did you do it?

**AJ Harper** [00:50:57]:

You did it.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:50:57]:

I didn't. I didn't even know.

**AJ Harper** [00:50:59]:

But that's because the book works.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:51:01]:

That's the nature of it. Yeah, that's the nature of it. And it was interesting. So I found out who this person was. They're not an influencer. They're just a business owner who talked about their experience using PROFIT FIRST. Talked about the system, talked about it incorrectly. They deployed it incorrectly, but nonetheless said, here's the book that served me. It did transform them. So they didn't do it perfectly, but they did enough to have transformation.

**AJ Harper** [00:51:19]:

And you're very grateful to them.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:51:21]:

Very grateful. I sent them all my books. I sent them some just stuff personal to them. And I'm so honored that they did that. But the thing is oh, you hear this and you're like, I just need to get one TikTok video. No, that was a person who did the right time and the algorithm picked up for

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the right reason, exploded. There's hundreds of references of profit first on TikTok. I'm not saying TikTok is a solution.

**AJ Harper** [00:51:44]:

No. But the point is, whether it's Harv Eker or it's TikTok or it's something else it's setting yourself up with all these elements we've talked about today to make sure that your book works so that these opportunities that seem to come out of the blue can happen for you.

**Mike Michalowicz** [00:52:00]:

Yeah. All right, we got to wrap things up. Hopefully, you were taking copious notes and found a few things that you can do to make your book a perennial bestseller. Before we go though, I want to invite you, our listeners, to get free materials. We have join our email list. We're going to have some good stuff for you there. We're going to support you every way we can. The website to go to is DWTB Podcast, that's don't write that book, [dwtbodcast.com](http://dwtbodcast.com). Also, we want to hear your stories. How are you making your book successful? What are your best tips? Maybe you have questions you want to ask us. Just email me and AJ at hello at DWTB podcast.