

# don't write *that* book!

## Episode 24:

### Understanding Translation Rights

**Mike Michalowicz** ([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**.

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

What a way to start an episode. My stomach's like, braaah. <laugh> So I, I hope we publish these episodes in sequence. If so, last week's episode would be about the great debate and it's continuing. We're in the studio. I wish I said this. And you wish you said something about translation rights.

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

Yeah. you know, when there's buzz about a book, it gets the attention of...

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

Other publishers,

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

Publishers in other countries.

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

Yeah. The international rights. So we're going to dig into translation rights today, and perhaps a great debate will continue. <Laugh> You're listening to Don't Write *That* book. And what we're saying is not, don't write a book. My gosh. Write a great book. Just don't write a half-hearted half effort, 30 days. And you're an author cheeseball book. Write something that transforms you and your readers. Now, I'm Jordan's Studio by my friend who is building an awesome house. We were just looking at pictures of this.

**AJ Harper** ([01:13](#)):

You keep, you keep talking about the house.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:14](#)):

Yeah. I'm excited. Can I not be excited about that?

**AJ Harper** ([01:17](#)):

No, you can. You can. I'm just, you know, I'm modest, so I don't ...

# don't write *that* book!

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

Oh, I get it. It, well, it's beautiful. I love pine trees, and when I saw that picture, I could smell the clean air. (Yeah.) There's something about the air when it comes to there, pine trees, and maybe it's because they're in cold temperatures. The air is just generally crisper and cleaner, and the pine smell is just amazing. (Yeah.) So there's, it's funny, with some of my friends, I get so excited about something they're doing in life. So, your house, I think about it every couple days.

**AJ Harper** ([01:47](#)):

You do? <Laugh>. Really?

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

Yeah. That's weird because usually I think about aimless stuff and I have another friend oh, I can't remember what it was. Now he, he wants a fire wood stove, Matt. And I'm just like, I can't stop thinking about his stove. He's really excited to get this stove. He's got...

**AJ Harper** ([02:05](#)):

Is it Matt Out?

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

No. Matt Cox. College buddy. I'm just like, super excited for him. So I think about it regularly.

**AJ Harper** ([02:12](#)):

You know what that is, is you just love seeing people get what they want, especially if it's something they've wanted. They've, you know, might seem out of reach and they took steps to get there. That just jazzes you up.

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

Yeah, that's true. And I want to add one little asterisk. It's when good people get what they want. I was talking with someone, another author we met up with in Miami. I never met him before. And we were talking about some authors that we both admire and, and it devolved to some authors that we don't necessarily admire. And the common theme was when good people are putting good things out for the goodness, the betterment of the world. Like we are both fans of it. And there's certain folks that use the book platform to... It's self-serving. (Yeah). It, it, it's, they're trying to acquire for themselves materialistically in other ways, but it's all about them. Them, them, them. And we are both kind of repulsed by that.

**AJ Harper** ([03:15](#)):

Turned off by it. Yeah.

# don't write *that* book!

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

Yeah, yeah. So I don't like when people acquire stuff or achieve things unless it's a good person that's contributing societally, doing something with, with breadth or depth or both. And when I see them winning, it's like, yes. Yes. The good guys were winning. I love that.

**AJ Harper** ([03:32](#)):

Oh. Thank you. Excited. That's so nice. Thank you. Those were good intros for us.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([03:37](#)):

Yeah, that was good.

**AJ Harper** ([03:38](#)):

Yeah. The one thing I want to do say about my, my house I'm building and studio is I keep thinking about walking to the edge of my driveway, the driveway's pretty long. And doing one of those little libraries, you know, you see them around, they're little libraries and you can put, people can take books. It

**Mike Michalowicz** ([03:55](#)):

Looks like a little, it's like a mailbox, but a big one. Yeah. That's how I see them.

**AJ Harper** ([03:59](#)):

I want to have a little library that every time one of the authors I work with has a book come out. I walk to the end of the driveway. Or you, you too. I guess you fall under that category. Yeah. I walked the end of the driveway and I put it in the little library.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([04:13](#)):

Oh, that's cool.

**AJ Harper** ([04:14](#)):

I knows. That's what I think about.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([04:16](#)):

That's fun. That's amazing.

**AJ Harper** ([04:17](#)):

I know. So that people who are walking will get their books. Oh,

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

I love it.

# don't write *that* book!

**AJ Harper** ([04:21](#)):

Yeah. All right.

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

Alright. So today we're going to talk about translation rights. I remember the first time I was contacted, it was with *Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*. It was by a Chinese, or maybe Korean. That's irrelevant. A company that reached out. And it was in the, let's say it's Chinese. Those Chinese characters, the subject line, everything. I'm like, Ugh. You know? So normally it's like, oh, it's junk mail. It's junk mail. It ain't junk mail. So if you're an author who's written a book and you get some kind of communication from some external country, and they say they're a publisher, I'm not saying it's not a scam, but in every single case, it was legit. So I used one of the Google translates translate things and said, oh, we're interested in your book, *Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*. We'd like to buy the rights and—

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

To publish in China?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([05:09](#)):

To publish in China. Right, right. And in interesting, in China, you can sell the rights in two ways. There's the simplified Chinese and there's the complex. So I said, we want to own this complex rights, or whatever it was. So I responded, I'm like, Hmm, sounds like a scam. You know, they're going to hook me and how much do I give them my banking information? And said, yeah, the rights are available. And they said, "Oh, okay. We'll send you a contract. Here's the dollar amount," and so forth. I didn't negotiate it. And then a week later I got \$2,000 from the publisher. So,

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

Which was an advance on royalties, just so we're clear.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([05:44](#)):

Was an advance on royalties. That's correct. And then in the terms you negotiate the royalties very similar that you would with a traditional publisher for locally that you're working with. So it was 15% on hardcover, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. I will tell you in retrospect, the countries who seem to be the most integral, meaning I've earned out the advances, and they continue to send checks, including for toy paper entrepreneur, is China, Russia, <laugh>. Right? I can't believe I'm saying this. China, Russia and North Korea. No, I'm kidding. No. <Laugh>, China, Russia, and Mexico.

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

Okay. I know you have a big Mexico fanbase.

# don't write *that* book!

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:17](#)):

Yeah. I'm not surprised about Mexico. But there's other countries, France, Italy, the Arabic countries that it hasn't earned out. But the, the advance was so low. I'm like, Hmm, I wonder if those publishers are paying it out properly.

**AJ Harper** ([06:33](#)):

I think that's one of the biggest downsides. You know, you can't, you, it's pretty hard to monitor that. Yeah. If you have an agent, the agent is usually chasing that stuff down for you, because that's how they get paid. Yeah. But as a self-published author, you're kind of at the mercy.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:50](#)):

And it's hard to enforce.

**AJ Harper** ([06:51](#)):

And very, very hard to enforce.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:53](#)):

Because international law, you don't have the data. They can say whatever they want. (Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.) So my experience now, Penguin handles all my international translations. Last year alone, I literally happened to be checking this yesterday on my flight. We have 12 translations. The most I've ever had in a single year is 18 translations. But 12 new translations.

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

New translations.

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

New translations. Yeah. And a new translation doesn't mean the same book translate to 18 new languages. Now we have quite a few in circles. So all in's been translated into four or five languages now and so forth. They don't seem to have any more luck or effectiveness. And this is a major publisher in collecting on the translation rights. Just,

**AJ Harper** ([07:35](#)):

I mean, as a publisher. Yeah. When I had my small press, we definitely had translation. We sold translation rights. And we had one publisher in Europe that we could, I mean, they changed the schedule. They were incommunicative. Their staff changed. They didn't report for sometimes over two years. (Oh yeah.) It is just very challenging. So, but that shouldn't dissuade you from selling translation rights. It's just that you're at the mercy of, you know, what you don't know. (Correct.) Sometimes that can be mitigated by scouts. And scouts are agents in other countries who know that marketplace and very often are primarily just dealing with the deals, getting the deals. And big publishers like yours have scouts in other countries. (Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>) If, you know, it's usually on their own team. But

# don't write *that* book!

maybe a smaller publisher would hire a scout. It does change the royalty structure because scouts also get a take of it forever. (Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>) But they understand it better. So that's, you know.

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

One thing that I just assumed, which was a wrong assumption, was when a publisher from another country wants to buy your rights for whatever reason, I assumed they would always be established and big. That was just my assumption. (Yeah.) That's not the case. (No.) We had a publisher in Japan by the rights for *Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*, the publisher. Because it was self-published, that book. We negotiate the deal, calls me and says, I need help selling this book. I'm like, I'll help Anyway. He's like, can you produce videos? Can you promote? And I said, sure. I'm like, how many books do you have? He's like, three. I'm like, three? He had *Toilet Paper Entrepreneur* and two others. And I'm like, how'd you pick these books? How'd you find them? He's like, I love *Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*. He's like, I believe in it. I'm trying to sell it now. And I'm start, I started a brand new business.

**AJ Harper** ([09:29](#)):

Oh. So they really weren't a publisher. They didn't have any knowledge of the industry in their own country.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([09:34](#)):

I felt so bad for this guy. Exactly. And knew nothing. And it was a flop. And it just, and he was sharing me story. He's got, he's got six kids and he's, you know, all this stuff. I'm like, oh my God. And he sent me, he was sending me checks. I'm like, my gosh, in Italy, someone wanted to buy *Profit First*. Now it's, this is through Penguin. So what happens in this case is I get the inquiry. Sometimes the author still gets the inquiry. (Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>) What you do then is you forward it. If you have a traditional publisher that has a rights, international Rights department. (Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>) which Penguin does, send to them. Tom there picks it up, runs with it, and he gets back to me, says, I don't know if we're going to do this deal. It's just a one-man shop. And we may just do a holdout or we may just wait until a different publisher presents.

**AJ Harper** ([10:15](#)):

Yeah. Because they're vetting the publisher. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([10:18](#)):

So just, just be aware that just because someone reaches out, it doesn't mean anything. It doesn't indicate their size or their ability or capability. And if you're worth a traditional deal, like I am with *Profit First*, or self-published like I did with TPE, the same people will raise their hand if they're interested in your book. You've got to go through a vetting process.

**AJ Harper** ([10:39](#)):

Yeah. I, you know, those are all deals that came to you. (Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>) as opposed to you scouting them yourself. (Correct.) But you could, through different organizations or on your own, go to

# don't write *that* book!

one of the international book fairs where you can sell translation rights. You used to be able to do it at Book Expo, which is, doesn't exist anymore. W

**Mike Michalowicz** ([11:02](#)):

Where was that held? In London

**AJ Harper** ([11:04](#)):

Book Expo? Yeah. No, the Javits. In New York.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([11:06](#)):

Oh, is it the Javits here in, in New York?

**AJ Harper** ([11:12](#)):

Yeah. And so international publishers would come in and just select books. They had tables. You, they, you, you know, most, most of the time they were being pitched. They were, people were pitching them, or small publishers pitching them, agents pitching. There were a lot of deals made at Book Expo. They did also have a separate building for international fairs at one point. It's been a few years ago, but there's Frankfurt Book Fair. London Book Fair. Bologna. You know, so I wouldn't, if you're a first time author and you're <laugh> just starting out, I would not attempt this. You know. But that said, there are organizations that can go there for you, you know, handle it for you. (Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>) You just have to always be careful about investing any money in this stuff.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([11:53](#)):

Agreed.

**AJ Harper** ([11:53](#)):

I, I just wouldn't invest a lot of money in it. (A hundred percent agreed.) Because the advances are generally small. Unless you're a big deal author.

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

The biggest advance I've ever gotten is \$10,000. The typical advance is \$2,000.

**AJ Harper** ([12:04](#)):

Yeah. And for some authors it's even less. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([12:07](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. That, that just gives context. And the smaller, the potential readership and just, just look at that language. How popular is the language? Number one language in the world is Chinese. English is up there. It's in top two or three maybe, but you look at like Dutch or something, and you're getting to more and more narrow and smaller (Right) distribution. So those countries in my books have been

# don't write *that* book!

translated to Dutch are generally small, lesser advances than China. (Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>) or, or Spanish is huge. That's a, that's usually get more for Spanish. Let's define what translation rights constitutes though.

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

So it's their right to publish your work in their, that country, or it might be multiple countries within that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([12:51](#)):

And is there a flexibility, do they have to do a literal word for word translation? Are they required to, can they take some poetic license? Like how does that work?

**AJ Harper** ([12:58](#)):

Well, sometimes they have to, because there just isn't that term or phrase in their language. Yeah. So sometimes they do have to take license.

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

So here's my experience. You want them taking that license.

**AJ Harper** ([13:09](#)):

Yeah. Because they know their culture.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([13:12](#)):

Yeah. Particularly us. So we use a lot of pop culture references in the books we do together and I had a case it was with *Toilet Paper Entrepreneur*. The translation was a direct translation, a literal translation word for word. And so I talk with Spanish readers and they're like, it's not a good book. It's, it doesn't make sense. <Laugh>. Then what I did with *Profit First* when I got the translation rights, it was Penguin has a location in, in Mexico, specifically for the Mexican Spanish as opposed to just Latin America, you know, I mean, as opposed to Spain. What was interesting was just because you have a publisher that has another location there doesn't mean that you still have to go with them, nor does it mean they're going to make an offer. So there were still like negotiations and stuff happening once they bought the rights. I brought in a Spanish author. Oh my gosh, her name is skipping my mind. She wrote a, a book called **Pequeño Cerdo Capitalista**, which means small little pig. Capitalist Small Pig or something. And I cannot wait, I can't remember her name. She's very popular for personal finance in Mexico. She offered to help with the translation and then did the live read for the book. So it brought credibility. I negotiated that.

**AJ Harper** ([14:34](#)):

Oh, smart.



# don't write *that* book!

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:35](#)):

That's part of the deal. And the book is *La Ganacia es Primero* is the Spanish version of *Profit First* is crushing it. She gets some attribution. Her name is on there as the spokesperson for it. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. So it adds to her credibility. I also had two people that I'm close friends with that are Spanish speakers in the country, go through it and do edits. And when I hear back from people in that country, like this book is amazing. Because it references the pop culture references common to Mexico, which wouldn't translate necessarily to the us.

**AJ Harper** ([15:04](#)):

Yeah. And there's, there's cultural references, colloquialisms. I mean, you, you, you know.

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

All that stuff. Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([15:10](#)):

But you were involved in that. That surprises me. Most publishers are handling the translation on their own.

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

Yeah. I had insert myself, I, I could have said, yeah, yeah. Handle it. I said, I want it to do very well in Mexico. May be involved. I've been involved in the German translation and the Dutch translation. Okay. Where I reach out to the publisher and say, Hey, I know you bought the rights. I want to give you guidance. What was great about both the German and Dutch translation, the translator was connected with me directly and said, when you say this, what, what do you mean? Like I can't remember some of the references, but they were just colloquialisms.

**AJ Harper** ([15:46](#)):

I mean, this is why you don't want AI doing the translation for your book. And then you try and sell it in that country on your own.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([15:53](#)):

Oh. It sounds like AI then.

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

Yeah. So you should point, I would love to point out that all those books have different covers and a lot, most have different titles.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([16:02](#)):

Yeah! I want to talk about that. It's so funny. So I just got a inquiry in on cover design approval for *Fix This Next*. It's sold in, I, I don't remember the language now. I think, I can't remember. But they said, are

# don't write *that* book!

you, do you approve this design cover? And then they translated back to English. So they said, Fix This Next doesn't make sense. So we're going to change the title and the layout to be fix things in sequence, I think was the translation. Okay. And they said this, we want the, the cover to look like. And I came back to him and said, I love it, but don't abandon the color. So ours is red, yellow, and black as the cover, the primary color. They went with a green, purple and orange or something. I'm like, do what you're saying, but leverage the exposure the brand has here, because there's some people that are going to recognize it and they'll connect better. And they said, oh, that's a great idea. So you, you can have influence over the design too.

**AJ Harper** ([16:56](#)):

Yeah. It's but sometimes you can't.

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

Yeah. Sometimes you can't.

**AJ Harper** ([17:01](#)):

Yeah. I will tell you also, when we, with my little publishing house, we also had to separately work with, you know, sometimes you they want the illustration as well. So if there's an illustration on the cover, they want that. Yes, they want to transferred over. But you have to make sure that you can do it. So if you've been working with an illustrator of, say you're self-published, you have to make sure that you have the right to do that. Mm. Because that's actually a separate, right.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([17:27](#)):

Yeah. That's interesting. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Now the question is who handles the Right. So sometimes the author can, if you're self-published, does the publisher or the, if you have an agent, I don't have an agent, does the agent handle translation rights? Or is it the publisher once they have it? The primary

**AJ Harper** ([17:41](#)):

Publisher? So it can be both. You know, a lot of times you know, much anticipated books, hand hint books that have a lot of buzz <laugh>. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, they can get—

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

The debate continues.

**AJ Harper** ([17:52](#)):

They can <laugh> those rights will be sold before the book's even done before. Even when sometimes the deal is secured. I remember one time we had an article in Publishers Weekly about our publishing house. And before we even had finished the collection, we were, there were, there was a big article in pw. We had emails, we want to buy the rights. Hadn't seen anything. So you can get early purchasing it.

# don't write *that* book!

That might end up being through an agent that might end up being with the publisher, but the agent still has to coordinate with the publisher if you have one.

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

So that's interesting. With the, the deal, once you get it, what are the parameters as far as, you know, that we're negotiating when it comes to translation rights? You negotiate the, the term. Is there a, a term in regards to the monetary component? Component, advancement. The advance. Do you also negotiate how long they have the rights and they're what's, what's typical?

**AJ Harper** ([18:52](#)):

I find it's five years. Yeah, five, five is pretty, pretty standard. The challenge is you, you know, the other, well, the other factor is when is it coming out? So if your deal is for five years, but it doesn't come out for two years. Right. You know, then you are maybe not giving it a good go. So I would negotiate understanding that it's going to come out. So one of the clauses we would put in our contracts that you have to publish it within 18 months. So, because sometimes these small mom and pops that you don't know, they're so small, they're buying up all these rights, but they're not actually publishing. (Yeah.) So how is that helping you?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([19:26](#)):

It is not helping them either, which is kind of peculiar.

**AJ Harper** ([19:27](#)):

Yeah. It's odd. But, you know, I, as a former publisher, I can tell you resources are tough, man. It's usually small operations. (Yeah.) And people make big plans, and they can't execute.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([19:39](#)):

That's right. And then they lock up a title. So you can't go shop it elsewhere, you know? Yeah. So you're in trouble there.

**AJ Harper** ([19:47](#)):

Yeah. By the way, can I say something? (Yeah.) If you are working with a small press, even a mid-tier press, always ask who handles your translation rights. So if they handle it in house, you need to make sure that that person is qualified to do it. But we had a contract with a literary agency to handle the translation rights for our small press because they have the experience to do it. And they had the scout connections. And so they were able to handle, they found some deals, but they were also able to handle the contracts and then also deal with the problems.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([20:23](#)):

What were some of the problems?

# don't write *that* book!

**AJ Harper** ([20:24](#)):

Not pay, you know, not reporting on payment. (Yeah.) Not paying on time. Not delivering books for authors. Because you can also say, I, you know, part of your deal is you get five copies or whatever shipped to you so that you get your foreign language, you know cover approval, things like that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([20:44](#)):

I would say between 15, 50 and 25% of the books. So the worst case, 50%, best case, 25% of books that have been translated of mine have never been delivered to me. So I don't know what they look like, what they are. Which is funny because the author, I want to promote the book. I want to have a picture of me holding it, send it back to the publisher so they can see it and use it for marketing pieces. It's shocking. They don't get it to you.

**AJ Harper** ([21:12](#)):

Is in your contract?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([21:12](#)):

Yeah. Oh yeah. Every single contract.

**AJ Harper** ([21:15](#)):

Yeah. So, you know, you can chase that down. That's

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

What we're doing.

**AJ Harper** ([21:18](#)):

It, it's, it's you, it usually requires a lot of chasing. A lot.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([21:22](#)):

So what I did with Penguin is we listed out all the books. Collective Translations is now 80, I think. So there's 80 translations. (Amazing.) It's amazing. First no surprise, the most translated book. I think it just surpassed 28 unique languages. And so we've let all listed out and now I'm seeing what do we actually have and what don't we have, and circling those and saying, can you see if you can collect these? And we'll...

**AJ Harper** ([21:46](#)):

I mean, it's just a, it's just an admin. Someone needs to just keep pounding it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([21:49](#)):

Yeah. It's a, it's a pain. Yeah.

# don't write *that* book!

**Mike Michalowicz** ([21:52](#)):

I also like to have the books for internal promotion to say, look at how well *Profit First* is doing. And you can say, translate. It's interesting, I think to the end reader, they don't know what it means to have it translated into 10 languages or 27 languages. I don't think you have context. I think in the world there's only 300 commonly used languages. I know it's 3 million, but 300 commonly used one ones. So if you have 30 language translations, you have 10% of the possible languages. In the world, which is probably 90% of what people speak anyway. So, but I don't think people run those calculations. But when you have all the physical books you stacked up and people can see, oh my gosh, that starts giving people a perspective. So it's a good marketing tool. I, I've got to share another little story that happened and the technique to adjust to it.

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

So the Spanish translation came out for *Profit First*. In *Profit First*, the English book, It says, you know, if you're reading this and committing to this, email me and it does go to my inbox and I will respond to you. It's your commitment to being profitable. So the Spanish translation said, we're going to put this in. They wrote my name and my email totally wrong. I mean, oh no, not even close. So Mike is like, Miche, it's M-I-C-H-E. And then the mike at Mike Michalowicz is not, I don't even know what it is. So I called him immediately. And the reason I found out is because people were saying, I'm trying to email you. It's bouncing back. And then finding my actual email and saying, I can't email you. I'm like, how many emails am I losing now? So I called the publisher, that was a nightmare. And they're like we'll change it. Next thing. No, there's no changing. So I'm like, oh, buy the domain, you idiot. So I own a domain that is mike mic lipa ddu.com <laugh>. And I have an email there. And so all of a sudden I open it up and bing, bing, bing. All these emails start pouring in.

**AJ Harper** ([23:40](#)):

How smart.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:41](#)):

Yeah. So a little tip if a mistake happens, you may not be able to correct on that side, but can you adjust on your side?

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

So smart.

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

Another tip is, it is more for our international audience, but you don't have to publish in English first. You can. Right? So I was talking to someone and they're like, oh, they were a Spanish speaker. It was a Spanish speaker, native Spanish. She's like, I, I've got to publish this in English so I can get into the US market and I'm going to have it translated into Spanish. I'm like, are you kidding me? Like, you're going to write a better book in your native tongue. His English in particular, it's, you can definitely have a dialogue. He doesn't get the, he can't get the nuanced stuff. Like it's not his native tongue. So I'm like,

# don't write *that* book!

dude, don't redo, don't do this. Put it in Spanish and then let's go for an American deal for who translates it. And, and I'll be the guy who helps you. He's the guy who helped me with *Profit First* going into Spanish. So, little tip for you. That's good advice. Yeah. Titles can change. You said that earlier.

**AJ Harper** ([24:35](#)):

Yep. Covers.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:36](#)):

Titles can change. Covers can change. They may actually not include your website. So what I tell people to do that translates it into Spanish, please put in my domain Mike Mitz and if you're able to slash your language slash Chinese, and I'll set up a dedicated page on my website with some Chinese that says, welcome. I'm the author of So and So. We haven't done it recently. And I, I don't recall why we did it, but we used to, when someone looked up *Profit First*, as an example, and go to the *Profit First* page. We had all the translated books there too, with links back to the—

**AJ Harper** ([25:11](#)):

Yeah, I remember. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:12](#)):

That, I don't know why the, that went down. I think we updated our website and didn't do that. The challenge was getting all the links back to the proper websites all over the world. It's hard to find your own book.

**AJ Harper** ([25:24](#)):

It's... Yeah, it's a lot of maintenance.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:26](#)):

So a little trick I use is you can do so have an admin do this, but go to mainstream, public mainstream retailers in different countries. Yes. And in Google, your, the only thing you can search is your last name. And generally you'll find you can't search for the title because it's been translated. You know, *Profit First* becomes La Ganacia es Primero, which means the gains come first, which is so *Profit First* won't even find it. But if I tell you Malowitz, except for Spain, everywhere else they spell correctly. And you can find your name.

**AJ Harper** ([25:56](#)):

So. Hmm. That's a good tip.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:57](#)):

Yeah. Any other tips you have?

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

Honestly, it's just, you've got to keep your expectations kind of low. I think people have maybe this idea about how much you actually get from an advance or, you know, being able to hold it in your hands or have it happen really quickly, or that one is going to lead to a whole avalanche of more. And, you know, it's, it's great to get a translation. Right. I think it's fantastic. And also just keep your expectations low about, you know, the outcome.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:30](#)):

Yeah. And they, they'll keep trucking along. If your book is doing well, they'll keep trucking along. it's a good source of income. It's great for speaking. So I do a lot of speaking, including day for tomorrow. I'm flying down to Mexico City for a speaking gig. And the book everyone has is La Ganacia es Primero. So it gets exposure. Another tip I have for you with Pen With Purpose, we have an author who, her native tongue is English. She has an office in France and a French team and an office in somewhere in Mexico and has a Spanish speaking team. Actually, she just recently moved to Mexico. She said, I want my own, I want authority and control to translate the book in these different countries. I want total authority over it. So when we got the publishing deal, we exclude, we gave the publisher worldwide rights for, to facilitate translations except for Spanish and for French. It was part of the negotiation and they agreed to it. And they even came back and said, we want first writer refusal, meaning we'll get the best deals we can get and if you can get a better deal, we'll back out. And the author said, no, I just want total authority over it so I can go about it at my own speed or own pace. And we said, okay, that's what you want. But you can carve out different languages.

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

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([27:44](#)):

So if you have interest for that...

**AJ Harper** ([27:45](#)):

Sometimes, I mean, I don't know if you'd be able to do it with the Big Five.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([27:49](#)):

Yeah. This was not a Big Five publisher, but this was a, a big boutique, like a well-known name and they said, yeah, we'll do it. This, this author has a lot of influence in the space that they work in, so, okay, cool.

**AJ Harper** ([28:02](#)):

Yeah.

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**Mike Michalowicz (28:02):**

They, they would leverage, negotiate, negotiate. They leverage their authority. I wonder if there's anything else with translation rights.

**AJ Harper (28:08):**

I mean, I think, I always ask your publisher too, what is your translation rights plan? Who's out there? Who's getting it? When were you, when are you going to tell me about it? Yeah. How are you going to write? Just ask. And I think people just don't ask. They don't, they just sort of, it's mysterious. They don't know what it all means. And it's important, this is true for any, anything to do with your publisher. Yeah. Is instead of waiting to find out and waiting to be disappointed or frustrated or confused or feel like you missed a window or something like that, just ask. Just ask. What, what do you guys, you know, especially in the beginning when you're going to sign a contract, how do you, do you have a plan? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> for translation rights, how do you go about it? Do you do it in house?

**AJ Harper (28:50):**

Who's representing you? How many scouts do you have? What are your strength areas? What are the relationships pub? Which countries do you have the best relationships with? It's okay for you to ask those questions, but when you are trying to get a deal, you try not to ask too many questions. Yeah. You know, you just want the deal, especially after a long time of trying to get one. Yeah. But there's nothing wrong with asking. And I would be, I actually think it's a good litmus test. Do you want to work with the publisher that's willing to answer those questions?

**Mike Michalowicz (29:18):**

I agree. You know, I agree.

**AJ Harper (29:18):**

Because any good publisher will just answer. Even if, even if they say we don't have scouts or we don't have a plan, at least they'll answer. Yeah. Any publisher, they would say you know, that's proprietary or we'll get into that later. I would, that would be a red flag. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz (29:35):**

A couple more things for me. This is, without running the number numbers, less than 5% of my overall royalties come from international. It's, it's a still a small amount, even though so much has been translated. The second thing is the audio books. If you can partner up with people of influence already in that space, there to be your reader. So I, I told you Sophia Macias just came back to me. Sophia Macias is the, the reader also of the book of *Profit First* in Mexico, but in the Netherlands it's Femke Hogema.

**AJ Harper (30:09):**

Oh, Femke. Yeah.



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**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:10](#)):

Femke, yeah, who reads it. She knows *Profit First* inside out. She's authorized to speak on it. Now, they wanted to hire professional voice. I said, I would like to bring Femke to you. So she gets more exposure and the book is read more appropriately.

**AJ Harper** ([30:22](#)):

You're dealing with this as custom each thing, each much as can deal.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:26](#)):

Yeah. As much as I can. It's been translated into Arabic. I don't have access or know anyone out there. And so then, then—

**AJ Harper** ([30:33](#)):

You're just letting them run with it. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:35](#)):

Just run with it as best you can. Yeah. And the last thing is, even if you write a children's book, it can get translated. Yeah. You know, *My Money Bunnies* is in Italian.

**AJ Harper** ([30:42](#)):

Is it?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:44](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. And in that case—

**AJ Harper** ([30:45](#)):

I want that? I want that copy. Oh

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:46](#)):

Yeah. It's in my house.

**AJ Harper** ([30:48](#)):

What's it called?

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

I don't know.

**AJ Harper** ([30:49](#)):

<Laugh>. Okay.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:51](#)):

*My Money Bunnies*, I think. But the cover's exactly the same. Oh, they, they took all the illustrations and just translated and it's really cool to see.

**AJ Harper** ([30:58](#)):

Oh, love. I love that many more for that.

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

Alright, my friends, that's today's episode we did a couple shorties in a row. We hope you're getting tons of value out of these getting insights experiences and thoughts that you have never heard before. And hope you are, are, are seeing your book in a new light. I invite you to go to [dwbpodcast.com](http://dwbpodcast.com). We have more free materials waiting for you at the website. You can join our email list by way you can get connected with aj. You know, she has the best book in this space, right? A must read and that's what you're meant to do. So check out her book. She also has her workshop. We've had some people inquire about it with me personally. But you can just go to it's top three workshop top three books, workshop and you will be the authority in the space. She only does one a year now. Alright, my friends, the other action I want to take is you can email us at [hello@dwppodcast.com](mailto:hello@dwppodcast.com). And please do raise and review us on your favorite pod catcher. I appreciate you joining us. We'll see you next week. And as a reminder, you know the routine. Now don't write that book. Write this one.