

## EPISODE 58

# *Books Are Like Christmas Trees*

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Welcome back to the Author Revolution Podcast! I'm your host, international bestselling indie author, Carissa Andrews - and CEO of Author Revolution, the indie author's source for all things rapid releasing.

This episode is sponsored by AppSumo. The decision to become an indie author isn't always easy. Like we've talked about in the past, there are a lot of moving parts. From just getting words to paper...to editing, marketing, and more. So much to think about. Luckily, there are those of us who have gone before you who have blazed the trail and made things just a little bit clearer. I'm super excited to tell you that for a limited time, the good folks at AppSumo have taken in my course, Indie Publishing Fundamentals and put it up at a steal of a deal. Ordinarily \$497, Indie Publishing Fundamentals includes 5 core modules, 3 bonus modules, and a grand total of 52 lessons. But with the AppSumo deal, you get it all for just \$79! And in case you're wondering, yes, this course is different from Rapid Release Roadmap. If you want to get used to my teaching style or want to dip your toes into the waters of Indie Publishing, this could be the way, my friend. Head over to [authorrevolution.org/appsumo](http://authorrevolution.org/appsumo) to check out the limited, but lifetime time deal.

Alright, so here we are, roughly two weeks away from Christmas. And it's got me thinking books in many ways are like Christmas trees. They're totally, 100% Evergreen. So, what do I mean by that? I mean that a book, whether you launched it yesterday or launched it six years ago, can still be leveraged to earn you big money.



**EPISODE 58: BOOKS ARE LIKE CHRISTMAS TREES**

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There's a preconceived notion in our industry, particularly in the indie industry, that a failed book launch, or a lackluster book launch, equals a failed book. But that really isn't the case. I've talked to a lot of authors who have launched their books the first time around to kind of lackluster results, but they've gone on to revitalize the title, or revitalized the series by leveraging the books with better marketing tactics later on.

There are a number of things that you can take a closer look at if you feel that your book is not living up to the standards that you would hope for it. Chances are there is something that can be done or tweaked that will help you increase your royalties on a book you've already written. So what's not to love about that right? Some of the things that you can take a closer look at include:

Cover Revamp – So, I hate to say it but most of us, when we first start out, don't really know what we're looking for when it comes to a cover. Most of the time, we just kind of do what we think we like, or what we think our audience might like. But in reality, we probably don't really understand our genre enough to be able know what makes a really good cover. This is why it's important that if you designed your own cover, perhaps out of necessity, like I did -- or if you used a really cheap designer -- to go back and look at the bestsellers in your genre and categories to try to figure out what cover designers those authors are using because many of them are tapping into the same designers. And there's a good reason for that. It's because those designers understand the market, and they understand the genre (assuming you hire a designer who does covers solely for your genre—or pretty close, anyway). They're designing covers that sell, otherwise, they'd be out of a job. Here's a little story... when I first started writing the Pendomus Chronicles series, I designed the covers in a far different way than what they look like now. Over time, I learned what the YA scifi/fantasy genre was (and still is) promoting and I redesigned the covers to match. The cool thing is, once that was done, my book started selling far better.

Amazon selected Pendomus as a Prime Reading book, and it even ended up becoming an international bestseller. Now this happened in 2018, guys. The book came out in 2013. So, no book... no matter when you write it, is ever off the table for doing great things. And sometimes it really just comes down to some simple tweaks like a revamped cover.

Updated Blurbs - However, if you feel that you have a stellar cover, you've worked with a good designer, whatever the case might be... then your next step is to take a closer look at your sales page on Amazon or whatever platforms you're using. Once you're there, I want you to study your book blurb. Oftentimes we kind of just throw up a quick synopsis and it's not really doing the job it needs to do--which is selling books. The book blurb on any sales page should really be written with a copywriter's hat on and not so much from the authors perspective where you want to tell all the things that happened in the book, because that's not going to hook your audience and entice them to buy it. You need something with a good hook in it. Something that sparks their imagination and makes them want to click that buy button. It's the whole purpose of a book blurb on a sales page.

Better Editing - Another thing you can really take a closer look at is your editing. I know in the beginning it's really hard to be able to justify spending money on editors, but editing is one of those top tier, must-have expenditures when it comes to being an indie author. If you want to be able to compete in the book space you have to treat your books your stories like the product that they are. Your books are up against thousands and thousands of other books just like it. And if your book has errors or issues that are going on that you haven't fixed yet, Amazon, or any of the other book sites, for that matter, are not going to promote you to the best of its ability. Plus, there's nothing worse as a reader, than stumbling onto a book that could be incredible, only to find out that the author really didn't put a whole lot of energy or time into editing the book properly.

What ends up happening is you put the book down, and probably make a mental note NOT to read a book by that author again. Yikes! The whole goal of editing is to make your book shine, and have it put into the same rankings as all of the traditionally published authors who are out there. So, if this perhaps sounds like you, know that there is still hope though. You can always go back in and edit your book properly to make it shine. Re-release it as a new edition if you want, too. Let's say your reviews on the first release were less than stellar, as an example. All you have to do is create it as a new book, take down the old book, so then you start fresh with reviews all over again. You can do these things and what ends up happening is the people who perhaps read the unedited unpolished version will stumble on your book again and realize just how great it is! And at that point, maybe they don't even realize that they started reading your book before. Maybe there's a little hint of, "oh, I think I read this book" but if this version is better and it's good and it's not causing any of the same red flags to go up, they're going to keep reading it. So, as I said, there is always hope my friend.

Update Your Title - Another thing you might want to take a look at if your covers good if your blurb is good if you're editing is good is whether or not your title is resonating with your audience. Sometimes we set up a title and we think it's going to be great but it's not what really resonates with readers. So sometimes experience catches up to us and we realize that we could have better titles that really make the concept of the book or the theme of the book obvious to the reader so that they know for a fact this is a book they're going to love. If this ends up being you, or sounds like you, don't be afraid to change the title. I know many authors who have gone in and decided to update their title and re-release their book or their entire series under different names and it's worked out phenomenally for them. Bryan Cohen is one such person. Now for those of you who don't know who Bryan is, you might be living under a rock. He's pretty out there in the indie author industry.

He runs Best Page Forward, which is a company that helps authors with their book blurbs, he's also on a number of podcasts himself including the Sell More Books Show, and he's also running the Amazon Ad School. However, what you might not know is he's also a ya scifi author. When he originally wrote his first series, which is now called the Viral Superhero Series, his first book was called Ted Saves the World. The thought it was campy and fun. Kind of a spin similar to Buffy the Vampire Slayer. But after taking a closer look at his genre, and after being in the industry longer, he ended up realizing that not only did the cover miss its mark, but the title didn't work so well, either. He ended up changing Ted Saves the World to the Dark Souls and the book has gone on to do much better. So, if this sounds like you, and it might, just know that there is president to changing your title and still go on to have a really great successful launch with it. One little small caveat I will mention is that if you do change a title make sure that there is some sort of notation somewhere in the book blurb area letting readers know that this was originally published under a different title.

Better Ads - One of the biggest impacts with having a backlist that can sit in evergreen, is that as you gain readership, gain knowledge, and ideally gain more royalties, investing back into your books and your back catalogue can be the game changer you're really looking for. What I mean by this is, taking the time and energy to be smarter with your marketing strategy when it comes to ads and promos. In the beginning, we all want to have our books be successful without having to spend a lot of money on ads. Am I right? I know for me, in the beginning of my author career, outlaying any money on advertising was a really hard thing to do. Not because I didn't understand the concept (although, to be fair, I didn't understand it as well as I do today) and not because the platform was difficult to use, but simply because I didn't have a lot of funds to be able to put back into advertising in the very beginning. But as you get better, you do earn more royalties.

And when you earn more royalties you should be reinvesting some of that money into yourself as an author and back into all of your books. What ends up happening when you do this, is all of those books that you've released and worked so hard on in the past, they now can continue to bring in passive income. And let's speak for a moment about passive income shall we? When I say passive income, it doesn't mean you gain readership out of thin air. It means you're earning money off of something that has already been created. You no longer have to actively be hands-on with the product. You're just literally throwing money at an ad the ad does the work for you at this stage of the game. There is no "build it and they will come" baloney here. It's a loud, busy world and if you want your books to be seen or noticed, you have to put them in the places your audience can see and notice them. Okay, rant over.

Book Funnels – Now, last but not least, I want you to be thinking about the way that you handle your email marketing. If you don't have a list, your first objective is to get one right now today like literally go sign up on Mailerlite, I can get you a link that saves you some money once you get past your first 1K readers, and start playing around with it OK? Your email list is your little corner of the universe where your readers have direct access to you, and you have direct access to them. And when you have that, you have a special opportunity to be able to use your email marketing platform automations to your advantage. We've talked about this with Stephen Gordon before, and I think I briefly mentioned it again last week, but that's because I'm getting the details pulled together for a new podcast episode where I'll be talking specifically about book email automation funnels. But here's the thing, you can create some very targeted emails that can pull readers into your universes once you have a backlist of books. In essence, you can pull them through an entire email sequence that puts them on a journey where they're not only encouraged to read a book but they're encouraged to leave a review, they're encouraged to talk about your book to others, and they're even encouraged to become an ARC reader.



This creates a synergy that operates behind the scenes that excites your readers and continues to sell books for you in the background. That, my friend, is true passive income, if I'm being honest. Plus, it's revitalizing older books that maybe didn't make huge waves at first but can continue to help you flourish in the future.

So, long story short, remember as indie authors we are masters of our own universes, and our books that we've spent hours and hours on. There is always a way to revitalize and renew any story, along with readership, if you take a closer look at a just a few things.

Getting your book seen and readership up is an ongoing process that we're all working toward – but it's a process that keeps on giving. So, I guess your books are not only like a Christmas tree, but they're basically presents, too. To readers and to us.

To wrap up this episode, I want to remind you about the special limited time deal on AppSumo. My largest course (with the exception of Rapid Release Roadmap) is currently just \$79 with the special AppSumo deal. If you want to get a good grasp on indie publishing from start to finish, you don't want to miss this deal. Head over to [authorrevolution.org/appsumo](http://authorrevolution.org/appsumo) today and get started.

Last, but not least, if you'd like to download today's transcript or get more information to the items we talked about today, you can always swing by the show notes at [authorrevolution.org/58](http://authorrevolution.org/58).

Alright my writerly friend, that's it for this week. I hope you go on to do great things as we wrap up 2020. Just three more weeks, my friend. Then, on to bigger, brighter, badder things.

So, go forth and start your author revolution.



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