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PODCAST
TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE 74

CASE STUDY: BookBub Featured Deal v FreeBooksy Series Promo

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Hey there, awesome author! I hope you've had a spectacular week.

I know I certainly did! Last week was the first time the Windhaven Witches series was on sale and boy, did it do well! Now, this was also the first time I was able to test out the Freebooksy Series Promo that we discussed with David Gaughran and Clayton Noblit. Originally, I had an international BookBub Featured Deal scheduled for Secret Legacy during this promo as well, but due to a glitch in communication - meaning, I had the book free, when the BookBub Featured Deal was meant to be 99¢, the BookBub deal got postponed. I had emailed them to let them know it would be free instead, but come the day, BookBub didn't know what was going on and canceled the deal. Thankfully, it all got resolved. However, this little blunder did provide some valuable intel for comparison numbers.

That's why today, we're comparing the Freebooksy Series Deal did last week to the BookBub Featured Deal I had last January. Granted, they are different series and The Windhaven Witches is newer - but I still think the numbers are pretty interesting and I think you will, too.

First, some logistics about the promo - It ran from Monday, March 22 - Sunday March 28th. However, since KDP only allows free days to run for 5 consecutive days, the free days only went from Tuesday March 23 - Saturday March 27th, with Monday and Sunday having Secret Legacy (book 1) at 99c. Its regular price was \$3.99 prior to the promo week.



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The remaining 3 books held their Kindle Countdown Deal steady the whole time. Soul Legacy (book 2) was dropped from \$4.99 to 99c. Haunted Legacy (book 3) was dropped from \$4.99 to \$2.99. And Cursed Legacy was dropped from \$4.99 to \$3.99. This meant an overall savings of 58% to anyone purchasing the whole series.

I will mention that I had a little bit of ad spend going throughout this promo week, as well. Amazon ads for this series averaged roughly \$7/day, Facebook averaged \$15/day, and BookBub averaged \$7/day. But I did increase the ad spend daily, when possible. Of course, Amazon never listens to the rules, but BookBub and Facebook played nice and spent their budgets.

So, with all of that being said, I did have four other promos stacked up next to the FreeBooksy Series Promo. So, we're going to go day by day, so you get a good picture of how my stacking was laid out.

On Monday, there were no promos scheduled, but the sale was on and Secret Legacy was 99c. So, we had social media images going out and I turned on BookBub ads. I tested out 6 different ads to find the best one, then rolled with only 1 ad from there on out. Ad spend that day was \$47.29 and I earned \$47.16. Yes, I was 19c shy of breaking even. There were 12 copies of Secret Legacy that went out, but 59 more for the rest of the series. From what I could tell, there were at least 5 people who bought all 4 books. KU page reads were holding steady for the series at 2574 - which is pretty typical of any normal day for this series.

Tuesday, ENT's promo went out and Secret Legacy officially dropped to free. The ad spend was lower at \$34.6 across Amazon, Facebook, and BookBub and the promo itself cost \$45. Total cost was \$79.60. That day, Secret Legacy had 1338 downloads and the rest of the series had 44 sales. I also had 5 additional sales in books not tied to this series. Overall, that meant 1387 books went out the door that day.

This time, at least 10 people bought the whole series and again, KU reads held steady at 2483. Today, I started tracking Secret Legacy's ranking and it ended the day at #85 in the entire free store, but hit #1 in 5 categories it's listed under. Royalties for the day hit \$86.87, which meant a profit of \$7.27 or roughly 9%.

Wednesday, Book Barbarian was up. This time, Secret Legacy had 1415 free downloads, 41 Windhaven sales, and only 1 additional book sold, making for 1457 downloads. As far as I could tell, there were at least 7 full series sales. I was actually pretty impressed that BookBarbarian's day did so well, considering everyone really touts the power of ENT. However, we may have just been seeing some additional steam from being #1 in so many free charts. By this day, I was ranked #5 in the Paranormal and Urban Fantasy free chart, as well and dropped to #72 in the whole free store. Almost page one! Today, Soul Legacy (Book 2) also earned an orange tag for #1 bestseller in one of its categories, which it held through the end of the promo, which was awesome. Again, we saw KU reads holding steady at 2482 pages read. The total ad spend was \$25.58 for the day. Adding the \$35 for BookBarbarian, total expenses were \$60.58. Royalties for the day ended up a little less than the day before, but profit was higher. I earned \$81.63, with a profit of \$21.05, or roughly 34.75%.

Thursday was the biggie. This was the day Freebooksy hit, along side a Fussy Librarian. That day, Secret Legacy had 3485 downloads. I also sold a whopping 194 additional Windhaven books, with at least 36 being full series sales. I also sold 5 additional books not tied to Windhaven - making for 3684 total downloads that day. This is also the first time I saw page reads take an uptick. They finally rose about a 1000 pages to 3329 for the series.

Now, for the interesting part. The Freebooksy series promo isn't cheap. Granted, it's not BookBub expensive, but it did cost me \$170. The Fussy Librarian, on the other hand, was only \$29.50. Ad spend on this day was \$33.97 - so a total expense of \$233.47 for the day.

I fully expected to take a loss this day, as the profit caught up, like it did with the BookBub. Boy, was I wrong. Royalties for the day came in at \$263.40, a profit of \$29.93 – or 12.82%. Not too dang shabby, considering it took me nearly 2 weeks to earn back what I spent on Pendomus' BookBub last year and that's saying something because I put 0 into ad spend last year. With Freebooksy, I turned a profit, the SAME DAY. Think about that for a minute. I'm definitely impressed. Now, by this day, Secret Legacy dropped from #60 in the free store to #25. Plus, it was in the #2 spot for Paranormal and Urban Fantasy. Of course, I was second place to a nekkid chest dude and OH MAN, did I want to dethrone him.

On Friday, I had my final promotion, which was with BookSends. I spent \$50 for the promo and \$49.59 for ads. A total of \$99.59. However, I took a hit that day, only bringing in (I say only lightly), \$95.23 – so it ended up being a loss of \$4.36 or 4.38%. Bummer, man. However, for the majority of the day, I continued to hold steady between the #25 and #28 spot. Alas, I never dethroned the nekkid chest dude, but I'm still pretty proud of my #2 spot and being able to hold it for as long as I did. Today, page reads continued to rise, likely a continuation from the FreeBooksy the day before, as well. They rose to 4341 for the day. With this promo, I ended up getting 1010 free downloads of Secret Legacy, and sold 48 more of the Windhaven books. 7 of which were likely full series buys. I also sold 1 additional, non-Windhaven book.

Saturday was the final day that Secret Legacy was free. I made sure to send out a final reminder email to my list, so they didn't miss out on the deal. This, in turn, at least I believe, helped keep the free downloads at a fairly decent clip. 619 free downloads of Secret Legacy went out, with 59 additional sales in the series (7 of which were again, likely full series buys), and 2 additional book sales. Page reads, on the other hand took a dip, dropping back down to 3617. Overall, I spent \$43.59 on ads and earned \$106.43 – which definitely made up for the previous day's loss and then some. I turned a profit of \$62.90 or roughly 144.5%. Not too shabby.

Sunday, you could definitely see the slow-down happening as Secret Legacy switched from free to 99c. However, the rankings actually were pretty good, as they hovered in the low 16K range for most of the day. Even today, I will say that its maintaining its position around the 28K mark and it's been full price for two full days. Sweet! At any rate, on Sunday, there were obviously no free downloads, but Secret Legacy was 99c for one last day. It had 34 total sales, and there were 35 additional Windhaven book sales, with 8 being attributed to full series sales. No other books went out that day, though, which was kind of a bummer. However, page reads also caught back up, jumping to 6872! Which was brilliant! Ad spend for the day was \$48.33 and my royalties came in at \$89.97. That turned out to be a profit of \$41.64 or 86.16%.

Overall, for the entire week, I spent \$329.50 on promos, \$282.29 on ads, earned \$770.69 in royalties, and took home \$158.30 (or 25.85%) profit.

While that might not seem like a lot, considering the incoming and outgoing, but I challenge you to look at it a different way. We're authors operating on a smaller budget. At least, most of us are. A 25.85% profit is KILLER in terms of most businesses. The average operating profit margin for the S&P 500 is 10.31%. See what I mean?

So, what if you add zeros to the end of those numbers. Suddenly, spending \$6110, to earn \$7700, and make \$1580 in profit isn't so bad. What if you add another zero? \$61,100, to earn \$77,000, and make \$15,800? Dang, I'd take those odds if I had it. Wouldn't you?

Okay, so now you see where this past week ended up. What about how it compares against the Pendomus BookBub deal last year?

Well, I will tell you that at first blush, number wise, it seems like BookBub should have kicked Freebooksy's butt all the way home. But as I drilled down into the numbers, that wasn't the case.

During the BookBub last year, Pendomus had a total of 13,094 free books go out during the week – in comparison to the 7,913 for the Freebooksy week. Pendomus also managed to drop to #12 in the whole free store, versus Secret Legacy only getting to #25. However, during the Pendomus promo week, there were only 106 paid book sales and 10,031 page reads. The Windhaven series, on the other hand, had 495 books sold and 25,698 pages read. I also earned \$158.30 in profit the SAME week as the promos, where it took me 2 weeks to recoup the costs of the BookBub and other promos last year.

Now, with all of this being said, it's pretty clear to me that while BookBub has an incredible reach, Freebooksy's Series Promo has more bite. At least, it did for me. Could it be a BookBub Godkiller? I don't know... but readers were more interested in the full series and in particular, BUYING the rest of the series from FreeBooksy. Needless to say, I have already booked my next series promo and can't wait to try it out on Diana Hawthorne's series once book 3 launches in December.

All right, so there you have it, my friend. I have to say I was genuinely surprised by the results from this past week's promo stacking, but super excited to give it another try. I hope it's convinced you to check it out and maybe even give it a try, as well.

Now, don't forget that you can head over to today's show notes at authorrevolution.org/74 to download today's transcript or get a link to things we discussed today. I'll be sure to post a link to the BookBub results episodes, as well. There are two of them – one where I discussed the immediate results and one from the end of the year where we took a look back to see if it did as much good as we thought.

If you'd like to talk more about promo stacking or the results from this case study, let me know by posting a comment in the Author Revolution Facebook Community. In the meantime, go forth and start your author revolution!

