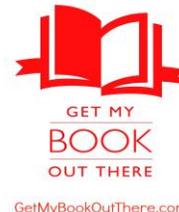


Get My Book Out There Podcast #8 Knowing When To Move to Audiobooks



Narelle Todd:

I'm Narelle Todd.

S.E. Smith:

And I'm S.E. Susan Smith.

Narelle Todd:

We are the self-publishing author and marketing duo that has sold over two million books. But we didn't start out knowing how to sell books. Fast forward past many failed promotions and a lot of lessons learned, you will see how we went from self-publishing newbies to hitting The New York Times Best Sellers list and making the USA Today Best-Sellers list 19 times and counting.

Narelle Todd:

We created the Get My Book Out There Podcast to give you simple yet effective marketing strategies to increase readership and book sales, so you know what to do, when to do it, and how to do it, as well as some tips for staying mentally and physically well.

S.E. Smith:

Let's get started.

Narelle Todd:

We're talking audiobooks books today. Susan is going to share with us three things that we need to keep in mind with audiobooks, when to go to audiobooks, and

S.E. Smith:

What type of audiobooks there are, and where to distribute it once you've finally decided that this is what you want to do.

S.E. Smith:

This is one of the things that I've been really, really fortunate about, I feel really strongly about as well, is audiobooks are, when should you go? You should've already been in it. All of the studies are showing that audiobooks are actually where eBooks were when they really took off between 2010, 2012.

S.E. Smith:

The biggest opening is the fact that you can download from the library with Overdrive. You can put them right on your devices. There's so many different devices that you can actually listen to the audiobooks while you're

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riding, while you're working out, while you're cleaning house. Even when you're at work. If you're working at a job that's pretty repetitive or allows you to do that, and you're going from place to place.

S.E. Smith:

There's a lot of people that listen to audiobooks, and it's a great way to help expand your reach. Not only to a different group, readers, listeners. You'll find that there's a lot of readers who may have read your story, but then they want to get audiobooks.

Narelle Todd:

Readers say that being able to listen while they're doing something else is one of the things they love most about it. Whereas if you're reading, obviously, you have to sit down, and it's a conscious decision just to do that. Whereas audio, it allows you to do a couple of different things.

S.E. Smith:

It allows him to multitask, which he's not very good at. And another thing is, is because ... for example, a lot more men are getting into audiobooks as well. And the reason for that is, is because they do have a very busy life. There are a lot of things that they're trying to get done. And when he is out working in the yard or he's working on a project, he'll be plugged into his audiobook, and he can actually listen to it.

S.E. Smith:

But as you get older, it also is less strain on your eyes, if you're looking at devices a lot. And he is not known for being the fastest reader in the world. A three, four, five hundred page book, that would normally take him a month or a month and a half to read because he's, again, such a busy person. He's up and down and here and there. And now he can listen to it, and within a week, he's listened to the entire book.

S.E. Smith:

I know as a grandmother and a mother, just how busy my life is, so being able to listen while I'm driving around or getting things done makes a huge difference.

Narelle Todd:

What are the things that an author would need to be aware of when they go to create the audiobook?

S.E. Smith:

There's different things that you need to be aware of. One is, is called PFA, so it's per finished hour. And what that means is that if you pay \$300 per finished hour for an eight-hour book, you're going to pay \$2,400 for that audiobook. That sounds like a lot of money, but when you look at the amount of time that the person narrating the book will not only they have to, basically, read your story first so that they understand what they're going to be reading. Then they actually sit down and they read the story. Then somebody else will listen to it and go through the book as they're listening to the story and catch any mistakes. Then it goes back, those mistakes are picked up and corrected. And then everything is polished, so you don't hear the breaths and the lawnmowers or the airplanes or whatever else that may be going on in the background.

S.E. Smith:

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When you're looking at an eight-hour CD, it may have taken anywhere from 40, 50, 60 hours to actually create. As an author, I've tried just reading a paragraph out of my book. 25 takes later, I still haven't gotten one paragraph without a mistake in it. And you've got to have that right type of personality. Your ability to speak clearly, so your enunciations come clear. And then also bring it to light so that it's interesting for somebody to listen for eight hours or more.

S.E. Smith:

When you're looking at the different types, you're going to be looking at the per finished hour. Now, if you're paying for the story flat out, then you own it. You're known as an RH, the rights holder. And so you own that, and you can do whatever you want to with that audiobook. Now, there's also two other options.

S.E. Smith:

One is a royalty share, and that is where the narrator basically takes most liability, or the chance that if this book does not sell well, they may never make their money back. But if they do, then on the royalty share, you would get 50% and the narrator would get 50% for the life of that audiobook. Most audiobook contracts, when you sign, are for seven to 10 years. If it sells great, it's going to be a real big boost for the narrator because they're going to get back what they originally invested the time and everything into plus every bit of 50% of the royalties for that seven to 10-year period. If they don't, then they can lose. So there's always that possibility.

S.E. Smith:

And then they have what they call the royalty share plus, and that is where narrator may require the author to pay a specific amount to help maybe cover the basic cost because when you do per finished hour, then the narrator is the one that pays for the editing and the engineering part of it. So they have to have somebody listen to the story. And if it's an eight-hour book, they're listening for eight hours to this book as they're following along and marking any error the narrator may have made. And then again, you have the person who is going to be engineering it.

S.E. Smith:

Because you get one chance to really impress the listener, and if you don't do a good audiobook, they're not going to buy the next one. And you may not get a good review, which will hurt your sales overall. So you want to make sure that you do very well on that.

S.E. Smith:

That's some of the things to look for. What do I personally do? I actually paid for mine upfront for two reasons. One, I like having full control of my work. The second thing is, is I hate the idea of a narrator having to have any money out of pocket, because I know what it's like to have a family to raise, and you're trying to stay in business.

Narelle Todd:

Okay. We've got our audiobooks out there, or produced I should say. Distribution, tell us about that one.

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S.E. Smith:

Well, you've made the decision to publish your audiobook, and then you've decided, okay, I'm got to pay for it. I'm going to do a royalty share, or I'll pay partially upfront and do a royal. Now you've got to figure, where am I going to distribute it to? And that can come into many different places.

S.E. Smith:

The most common one that everybody knows about is ACX, which is Audible. Everybody's heard of Audible, and they have been in the business for the longest. They do a fairly good royalty share. If you've got the full ride, they do about 40%, depending on if you're in one of their packages and that can vary how much you get paid for it. But you have to be either exclusive or non-exclusive. So you're only going to get that 40% royalty if you're exclusive with ACX Audible.

S.E. Smith:

There's some benefits. Again, you've got a name brand behind that, but they only do digital. So you're going to be on Audible, you'll be on iTunes. The advantage is also, after the first 60 days, you'll get paid each month for your audiobook sale.

S.E. Smith:

Now, there are other distributors, so this is something that you'll definitely want to look at. There's Findaway Voices that you can upload, and you control the pricing, so you say how much you want to price it for. You can also help choose where you want to put your audiobooks. Again, they are only digital, but it does open you up to a lot more places.

S.E. Smith:

You've also got Kobo. Kobo is doing that. And you have some of the other distributors that aren't as well known, like Publisher Stride. Two of the big subscription-type services and distributors are Blackstone, which has their own subscription service called Downpour, and Tantor, which also has their own subscription service.

S.E. Smith:

Now, all of these will distribute to Audible and iBooks, iTunes so you'll still sell on those, but you'll make a little bit less royalty-wise. Again, because you're non-exclusive, you're going to be cutting down from 40% to about 25, but you get a wider read. With Blackstone, they do offer a CD for retail purchase, so you can have an actual physical copy.

S.E. Smith:

And they're really good about giving your audiobooks to libraries. And libraries are a fantastic way for readers to discover who you are. Once they've discovered your book, then it opens up a whole new world because then you're looking at paperbacks and you're looking at eBooks, as well as additional audiobooks.

S.E. Smith:

The biggest thing is, is really do your research. Who do you want to distribute to? Look at what their royalty rates are, and decide if you want to be on ACX and iTunes, or do you want to be in the libraries? Do you want to have physical copies that can actually be sold to retail stores? Once you have all of this information, that's

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when you know how you can set up your marketing and how you can stay focused on how you're going to build your audiobook collection for readers and listeners.

Narelle Todd:

Awesome. Our takeaway is go into audio, it's a really good time to be in audio. Have a think about how you're actually going to structure the narrator and how that payment's going to work. There's three different options. There could be more. And then the third one around distribution is having a look at doing your research as to which is the best options. Do you go wide, exclusive? The best place for you to then distribute your book.

S.E. Smith:

And remember the more you diversify, the more it's out there, the more the listeners have to choose from and the more likely you are to find new listeners.

Narelle Todd:

Awesome. And that's what we want, more listeners.

S.E. Smith:

There is a fantastic blog that I like to listen to. Great information. I would highly recommend it. Narelle is going to post it down below, so make sure that you take a look at Karen's blog. Fantastic narrator, has some great information for authors who are looking to get their books into audiobooks.

Narelle Todd:

That blog is Karen Commins, so K-A-R-E-N-C-O, double M, I-N-S, .com. For those looking on video, I'll put a link in the video itself. Yes, check out Karen's blog. It's a pretty good one with lots of good tips on audiobook.

S.E. Smith:

Have a great week, everybody.

Narelle Todd:

Hey, thanks for joining us today. You know we've got way more information we want to share with you to increase your book sales, so please come and join me at facebook.com, Get My Book Out There.

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