

Daniel Hall Presents



## Episode 51

# The Method for Monetizing and Re-purposing Your Work With Templates

With Joel Friedlander

Welcome to this episode of the Real Fast Results podcast! Today's special guest is Joel Friedlander, who is an award-winning book designer, blogger, and writer who speaks regularly at industry events. He is also the author of *[A Self-Publisher's Companion](#)* and the co-author of *[The Self-Publisher's Ultimate Resource Guide](#)*. Furthermore, he's the owner of the immensely popular blog, [The Book Designer](#), and he was named by *Writer's Digest* as one of the 10 top people to follow in book publishing.

In addition to all of that, Joel runs a site called [BookDesignTemplates.com](#), and he's done a really good job of creating templates that help people. Not only does he provide valuable book templates through this site, he is the webmaster at [AuthorToolKits.com](#), where authors can find digital products to help with their marketing and business activities, and he is the webmaster at [BookPlanner.com](#), which is the only project planning tool that's specifically designed for indie authors. Welcome to the show Joel...

## Developing Template-Based Products

Today, I'm promising to deliver a method for monetizing your work and re-purposing material that you may have developed as well as making use of the community that you are trying to gather around yourself – with templates.

**The great benefit of developing template-based products is expanding your ability to monetize on the work that you've already put in somewhere else.** Or it's creating another product very quickly. It's also the advantage of being able to quickly create a product that could be massively helpful to a lot of people.

Templates and checklists. I love them. **I love using them and I love making them for people because they love them.** This is my process, which I have developed with my partner Tracy Atkins. The first step is, you have to identify a need. This is a very complex step, and I'm going to get back to this later, when we go into more detail. The next step you have to take is to analyze how to fill that need. What would actually work to fill the need that you've identified? The third step is to plan, and that's a two-pronged process, where you plan out the solution that you're going to prepare for your buyers. Then, of course, you publish and promote your product, and that kind of loops you back to Step 1, and I'll explain exactly why.

## Step 1 - Identify the Problem

Step 1 is to identify the problem. Now, a lot of people try to do this based on their own experience. You know, "I had a problem with a parking meter that wouldn't work, so darn it, I'm going to go out and create a better parking meter!" But, maybe that was the only one that had that problem, so you might be off on a wild goose chase that's not going to benefit you in any way. So, the reason I say that it's complicated is because, where are you going to get that information? **Do you have a mechanism in place where you are available for that kind of feedback from people?**

For me, I am in the indie publishing space. That's what I write about. I write about how to make books and how to promote books, how to use Amazon, how to use Ingram. All of that stuff about independent publishing. **Now, because my blog is pretty popular, I get a constant stream of questions, queries, and complaints.** This is within the comment section, and it's people just writing to me because they consider me an expert. So, I am keenly aware of the problems that people are having in the indie publishing field.

I'm going to use, as an example, a recent product that we developed called The Amazon Success Toolkit. It's a guide with a set of templates that goes with it. Due to my experience in talking to authors that are new and coming into this field, it was quite obvious to me that many people had no idea how to deal with Amazon. Amazon is a great retailer for print books, for eBooks, for audiobooks, but there is a ton of detail that you need to know. I get questions like, "Well, how big in pixel size should my JPG be for the cover of my ebook?" You know, it's just endless, all of these questions... "Can I use authors' names as keywords in the keyword field?"

It's just non-stop between technical stuff, marketing stuff, keyword research, what categories to put your books in... This all can be very, very confusing. So, we realized that there was a big problem that authors were having, dealing with all of these things that Amazon demands, or actually being successful on Amazon is going to require you to

do. So, that was our Stage 1. **We identified a problem that many of our customers were having, and then we started to analyze it.**

**There are tons of ways to find out what people's need are.** I'll tell you, one of the things that I did, which may or may not be practical for some people, but I belong to a book-publishing group in my area. It's called The Bay Area Publisher's Association. There are many of these, as well as writer's groups, around the country, in the US. So, what I would do...

They run a Q&A session every month at the monthly meeting. Now, many people skip that Q&A session, for whatever reason. Maybe they didn't want to get up at 9 o'clock on a Saturday morning, or maybe they thought they already knew the answers to the questions. I don't know. Very few people show up, except the people with the questions, but I show up. I'm sitting at the back of the room, and I'm writing down every question they are asking. I did that for about 2 years, and the questions that were important were the ones that people were asking month after month, no matter who the people were.

**You could also attend webinars.** You know, there's usually a Q&A session at the end of a webinar and people start asking questions. You can go into forums where Kindle authors go, and they like to talk about things that are working and things that aren't. People that are newer are always going into these discussion forums and asking newbie questions. That's gold. That's exactly what you want, whether you have your own audience like I do or you have to go sit in on somebody else's audience. You're going to be able to find that audience where newbie people are asking all of those newbie questions and saying, "I can't figure this out. What am I supposed to do?" That's your market research.

### Joining Facebook Groups

It depends on what field you're in. If you're a non-fiction author, a subject matter expert, then it's likely that you already know some of the organizations that people join who are the enthusiasts or professionals in your field. But, yes, particularly if you are somebody that wants to research a field or start selling products to a certain group of people, then I would say, "Yes. Join them all, and try to go to as many live, real-life interactions as you can." **Another thing that I do is I speak at a lot of events within the publishing industry, but even if you're not speaking, you can go to those events.** There are always like, "Ask the Pros," sessions, where people are asking their questions. They're describing where they are getting stuck.

There are just tons of ways for you to find information about where people are getting stuck. **That's going to be your most valuable research because you're looking for an opportunity in the market, and those people are telling you where the opportunity is.** I'll tell you another one. You know, a lot of magazines, special interest publications, run Q&As in the magazine, or their newsletter, or online, if they've moved online, where they invite new readers to write in with their questions.

## Step 2 - Fill the Need

Okay, so you've got all of this information from the groups. You've identified a problem, and like you say, there are Facebook groups, there are Goodreads groups, there are LinkedIn groups. There are tons of groups where people are asking questions. So, with a little research, you'll turn them up in your field. Once you've identified the problem, and in my case, it was that a lot of authors couldn't figure out all of the requirements, or the best practices, for publishing their print books, ebooks, and audiobooks on Amazon.

**For one thing, it takes a lot of time to dig out the actual technical information.** Like, the question about pixel size... It's going to take you a little while to find where that information is on Amazon. It's there. I'm not saying that you can't find this out. What I'm saying is, how much time do you want to invest in finding out the pixel size of your JPG? Is that an important thing? So, what we do is... In the analysis stage, we're going to look at exactly what the problem is. We're going to break it down to specifics.

We know that people need to know how to prepare their files. That's a discrete set of information, and they need to know where to upload their files and how to do that. They need to know how to optimize the page that the file is going to generate. When you upload a book to Amazon, it generates an Amazon page for the book. Now, you could go through Amazon and see all of the pages where authors just uploaded their book, typed in a two-sentence description, and said, "Okay, I'm done," but that's not really a good way to be successful on Amazon. There are many other things that you need to do with that page, like go and join Author Central, etc. So, there are many steps.

**In the analysis, what we're going to do is start planning for Step 3 because we're going to separate out the things that apply to everyone and the things that just apply to you.** That analysis is really important. The analysis is going to tell us where we need different pieces of our template product. Our template product isn't just going to contain a set of templates. It's going to have a guide book that walks you through the process. It's going to have templates, where you can put in your own information. It's also going to have worksheets where you can interact with our material. We're going to prompt you to put in the information on your own book. Like, "What's the subtitle of your book?" Like, you know, "Do you have keywords in there?"

We have three basic parts that's going to become the Template Pro: a guide, templates, and worksheets. We might also throw in a checklist, but I don't want to go into that; it's too complicated. **In other words, the analysis and the planning are really two separate steps, but they influence each other because when we analyze the product, we break it apart into the parts that are generic, completely generic.** Like, it doesn't matter what your book is, the pixel size of your JPG for your Kindle book is always going to be the same. So, that goes into one place, and the stuff that has to be customized goes someplace else. That's what we're planning.

## Step 3 - Planning

**The planning is breaking it apart and planning each piece.** Again, in the guide book, we're going to walk you through the steps needed to upload your book. So, we're going to have written instructions. The templates going to have all of the information, specific to your book that you're going to put in there, and the worksheets are going to be a way for you to interact with our teaching, so you can customize it for your book.

**The point of this analysis is to figure out what to put into the end template.** Like I said, there are things within the process, whether you are doing an audiobook, or an ebook, or whatever... There are parts of that process that are somewhat generic, that are boilerplate, such as pixel sizes, file formats, and stuff like that. This is just generic technical information.

Now, the author needs to have this information, and it can be a pain to go and find it, so that's part of the basic selling proposition behind the template product that we're going to end up with at the end of this process. That is, you know, "You can work this all out yourself, but what's your time worth? And, how long is it going to take you to discover what the best practices are? I mean, I could tell you the pixel size, but that doesn't tell you what should be on that cover, does it?"

**In other words, the analysis and the planning are really where the rubber meets the road.** It's where we see, "Okay, these are the problems people are having, and this is where the greatest point of leverage is. If we could put something in there, right at that point," like if I have a metadata worksheet in my product... Because when you go to upload your print book, or your ebook, or your audiobook, you have to have your metadata already in place and ready to go for that upload process. So we're going to supply you with a metadata worksheet, and if you remember, the worksheet is where we customize it for your specific instance.

What we're trying to do is put the tools into people's hands in these three pieces. That's the guide that walks you through it, the templates that you put your own information into, and the worksheets, where you get to interact with our instructions. So, it helps you hone in on what you need to do for your book. Obviously, if I'm doing a book on canoeing, I'm going to have a different orientation of this process than if I'm doing a book on creative writing because the markets are completely different. You know, it's not that there aren't canoeists who are creative writers, but you can't sell to that market. You have to sell to either one or the other.

This is a key part of the template development process. **It's to understand how these three pieces work together and how we're going to try to put them at the exact point, where the person who is experiencing that pain, that obstacle, and that point where they are stuck.** Where they are just getting mad and saying, "Geez, I don't really know. I better put this aside, and maybe I'll come back to it tomorrow." No, we want to sit you down with all of the tools that you're going to need to just go right through that process, fast and easy.

This particular product has been wildly successful, and that's because it solves those problems. Anybody looking to publish on Amazon, really, you need to put yourself in the place where you're most likely to succeed. I mean, I can't guarantee you that your book is desirable, or that your cover is great, but I can tell you how to put yourself in the position to be successful. That's the whole idea.

Now, we've done this repeatedly, and the process is repeatable. Obviously, once you've planned it out, then you have to create your documents. The products that we do are all digital. So, we're not going to ship you anything. You're going to download it, and many people print out our guides because they want them sitting next to them. They are made to be print-out-able.

We did the same thing when we made a product with Joan Stewart on how to create a media kit when you're an author. It's the same thing: the guide book, the templates, and the worksheets. It walks you through the process. It solves that problem. We have another one called Book Launch Toolkit. It's the same thing. It's the big guidebook, all the tools you're going to need, and the templates you're going to use to create the pieces that you have indicated that you need, and worksheets... Like in the Book Launch Toolkit, a lot of them are oriented to your calendar, and how you're going to plot that out on your calendar.

So, we've done this over and over again. We've sold thousands and thousands of these templates simply because it's so practical. The template is something, first of all, that you can use over and over again. Second of all, someone else has done all of the hard work for you. I love that. What's not to like?

## Step 4 - Promote and Publish Your Product

Step 4, the final step, loops back to Step 1. **In other words, you try to get information from your potential market, the target that you're targeting for your product.** It's not really enough to get a couple of thoughts from people. You want to really understand this, and the reason for that is when you get to Step 4, and it's time to promote and publish this baby, you want to know what the appeal is. What is your offer? The offer has to be directly related to the obstacle that people were experiencing.

“You don't know how to publish your book on Amazon? Try the Amazon Success Toolkit, and we'll walk you through the process.” So, all of the market research, interactions you had, the struggle you had to understand the problems that people are having, that's all going to fruition when you close the loop and you can now come back with something that answers the questions that people have been asking. **If you think about it, this is the marketer's dream because what you want is to know that your product is going to be a success before you ever show it to**

**anybody.** You know, once it's out of beta, and I do love beta testing, but... In this scenario, you're basically guaranteed to have a successful product.

## Why Should a Consumer Buy Your Templates, and Why Should I Consider Selling Templates?

**I started out as a blogger, and basically, I was blogging to try to find people who wanted their books designed.** You know, in the normal course of events, you don't run into many people who need their book designed right now, like before my mortgage comes due. It's always a challenge, and I started blogging to do that, but my business changed over the years because a huge community grew up around my blog. Then, I started having this "endless conversation" with my blog readers about what they were doing and how to do it better. The tag line on my blog is, "Practical Advice to Help Build Better Books." That's what I'm doing.

**The advantage, to me and to any product creator is, you get to have a really close embrace with your audience.** There is nothing better than that, if you want to make a living online, or develop a side business, or maybe try to develop a product. Any blogger with any audience at all should be able to go through this process fairly easily. Contrast that to someone saying, "Okay, I'm going to write a book and sell it." Are you kidding? That's hard work. I'm not saying that you shouldn't do it, but you know, that's a product that may come to fruition and pay you back, maybe a year from now, where template development is a small thing. We're only trying to solve a small problem.

**I've got another template called "Your Publishing Business in a Box".** It was written with the help of an attorney. The attorney wrote all of this authoritative information. Her name is Helen Sedwick, and she's also a self-published author, so she knows both sides of this equation. You tell me, how much would it be to sit down with an attorney and plan your publishing business? I'm going to tell you right now. It's going to cost a lot of money, but you buy the publishing business in a box product, you can get it straight from Helen. She's going to tell you authoritatively, as long as you're in the US, about all of the laws which pertain and the best ways to go about things.

It's got worksheets, a guide, and templates to help set up your publishing business. I mean, come on. The product cost \$97. That's almost a joke that it's so cheap because you can't even talk to a lawyer for \$97, let alone get this incredible wealth of information. For me, any content creator on your call, could enhance their reputation, raise their authority and preeminence in their field, and they could start developing a line of products that will help you pay your mortgage, or pay it off, or whatever.

## Connecting with Joel

The best way for people to reach out and connect with me is to come over to my blog, which is at [TheBookDesigner.com](http://TheBookDesigner.com). I would also like to offer you a discount today on The Amazon Success Toolkit or any of the other products on my [AuthorToolKits.com](http://AuthorToolKits.com) site. This includes all of the ones that I've talked about today (Publishing Business in a Box, Book Launch Toolkit, the media kit, etc.) They are all there, and anyone who wants to go and look at them is welcome to. Again, that's [AuthorToolKits.com](http://AuthorToolKits.com). You can use the coupon code "Thanks10". When you use this coupon code, you can get 10% off of any purchase made off of the site. This is just my way of saying "thank you".

## Links

**Books by Joel:**

[\*A Self-Publisher's Companion\*](#)

[The Self-Publisher's Ultimate Resource Guide](#)

[AuthorToolKits.com](http://AuthorToolKits.com)

[TheBookDesigner.com](http://TheBookDesigner.com)

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