

Daniel Hall Presents



Episode 142

**4 Key Parts to Writing Your Amazon
Book Description
With Bryan Cohen**

Hello! Welcome to the RealFastResults.com podcast! Bryan Cohen is today's special guest. Bryan is a *USA Today* bestselling author, twice over, and he does really well in staying on the leading edge of what's happening in the publishing industry. He's a co-host on the "Sell More Books" podcast, and he's also the CEO of Best Page Forward.

Bryan and his team have written, literally, 2,000 book descriptions that helped to sell more books, and Bryan, himself, has sold over 100,000 copies of his books. So, to say that Bryan knows what he's doing when it comes to selling books and increasing conversions on his Amazon listings is a massive understatement. It's incredible to have Bryan on the show. Welcome Bryan...

**Promise: Sell More Copies of Your Book by
Working on the Description**

Thanks for having me. **If you work on just four parts of your book description, you will sell more copies of that book for the rest of your career.**

First, you kind of need to know the rules. You need to know what works best in each of those four parts. **In the internet marketing world, people know a little more about sales pages than they do in the book world, but we need to treat our book description, the product description, like a sales page.** This is very different from the way you would think about writing the prose in a book.

This is the best time in history to become an author because we have huge marketplaces opened up to us to publish to, which is something that's entirely unprecedented. This allows us to go “toe-to-toe” with the marquee authors of the world and the legacy publishing houses. At the same time, this requires us to be very business-like in our approach to letting people know about our books.

You've probably heard the term “authorpreneur” before, which implies that you should be thinking about your publishing as though it were a business. Even if you just have one book out, you should consider yourself a tiny publishing house, and even if you don't have paperwork filed with your state yet, you have a business. If you think like a businessperson, you're going to make more money.

Can You Give Me an Overview?

Sure. I realize that I have lied slightly. **There are four parts of a fiction book description, but there are actually six parts to a non-fiction book description.** I'll make sure and go over all of the little differences, but for now, understand that no matter what it is that you're writing, it starts with a hook. **It starts with one line that really gets your target reader's attention. This could be more than one sentence, but it should be fairly short, yet powerful.**

That's what your description needs to start with, and then you can go deeper into what your book is about, and then at some point, you need to bring people back to what they are doing, which is buying a book. You'll need to go into what the book genre is and why your reader will like it, and this is what Bryan refers to as “the selling paragraph”. Lastly, you'll have a “call to action” at the end. That's where you actually tell them, often in the form of a command, “Buy this book [to get whatever benefit you want out of it today]”.

I've just broken down the process for writing a fiction book description for you. There are only two things you'll need to add for a non-fiction book. **The first is to show that you are an expert on your topic.** Establish your expertise. Let's say, for example, that you are writing a book on financial management. People are going to want to know that you were a financial manager for 20 years. **After that, you'll want to let people know about the transformational benefits of your book.**

Now let's say that you are writing a book about blogging that's going to help people learn how to blog. Well, you have to help them make that “A to C jump” from wanting to blog to realizing what blogging will do for them. You can't just say something like, “You'll have 10 new posts in no time.” You have to dig a bit deeper for the benefits. So, instead, you might say something like, “You will be able to find dozens of new customers a month to help fund your lifestyle.” You are pointing out the transformation that's going to occur once the reader chooses your book.

How to Create a Description for a Fiction Book

We've identified the four, or six, parts of a book description, depending on what kind of book you are writing. We can now walk through each of them individually. In fiction, let's say you are writing a fantasy novel. In a fantasy world, there's usually some kind of interesting and fictional setting, and

there's normally some kind of character who is probably going to try to save that world. There's also likely going to be some kind of a bad thing happening that the main character in the story is going to try to stop.

The Hook

All of that needs to go into the hook because fantasy readers are looking for a crazy world and a hero or heroine, and they want to know what bad stuff is going on that the good characters are going to stop. Typically, those are the three little parts that tend to go into a hook. I'm actually working on a book about hooks, so there are 25,000 words or more that I could speak about on this subject. I might pull out a few examples later on.

Connecting with the Main Character

From there, on a fiction description, it's all about the main character and helping the reader to connect with that character. There is so much plot in a book. A fantasy book might be 150,000 words long, if it's epic fantasy. I think a lot of authors get nervous about how they are supposed to condense 150,000 words into 300 words or less. That's the thing, you don't have to do that.

All you have to do is hit the little broad strokes of what the character is dealing with at the beginning, what sets them off on their journey, what problems they run into, how does this impact that character emotionally, and what's the big cliffhanger. What is it that the character wants that's very unlikely he will get? That's what it will be in a fantasy book. If it's a fantasy, or sci-fi, or a thriller, this is probably going to be something that could lead to certain death. If it's a romance, it will probably be what's threatening to tear the two lovers apart. It pretty much comes down to, "What is going to stop them from getting what they want?"

Selling Paragraph

Next, you'll get to that selling paragraph that lets the reader know, "This book is a romance," or, "This book is a fantasy." So, you, kind of, bring them out of the story a little bit. After all, if they haven't bought after you shared the story, then they'll need a little more encouragement. They need to know, "If you like incredible world building, Elvish characters, and witty humor, then you'll love this fantasy book." **This is how you take the people who are on the fence, tease them a little, and get them over it.** If they hadn't hit the "buy button" at this point, this is your last chance to talk them into it, except for, maybe, seeing a retargeting ad later on.

Call to Action

"Buy this fantasy book to unlock an incredible world today!" This might be the call to action that tells them what to do next. This lets them know it's their chance to be a part of the story and to see these characters in action. If they don't buy after this, they may not have been your target reader anyway.

But, if they do buy, then they are the exact type of person that will be reviewing your books, buying your books, joining your email list, and all of the incredible things that happen when you run into these fans.

To reiterate, you want to start off with a hook, and basically, you are giving people a compelling reason to continue reading your book description. Then, you key them up to the story by, sort of, walking them through an abbreviated version of the journey that the protagonist is taking. After that, you try to end that portion of the description with some sort of cliffhanger. Finally, you give them a clear call to action, telling them to go buy the book.

Just as a point of emphasis, always make sure that the synopsis portion isn't just a regurgitation of the plot. It's about emotion and what that character is feeling. I always use this example. My mom used to work at a day camp, so she used to do creative crafts and help all of the little kids. Well, she worked at this camp when *The Hunger Games* came out. When the kids came to her, they didn't say they wanted "Hunger Games hair," they said they wanted, "Katniss hair". The reason for this, or for wanting to have a Harry Potter scar, or whatever the case may be, is because readers connect with the characters. It's not the book title, or the world so much. **They connect with the characters.**

What this means is that if you infuse your description with as much character emotion as possible, they are going to start that journey with that character. Hopefully, this will lead to them wanting a random camp counselor to braid their hair like your character. That's the goal for all of us, of course.

[*Flesh and Blood* \(The Vampires of Shadow Hills Book 1\)](#), by Willow Rose, has a great description on its Amazon listing. You can take a look by clicking [here](#). A description for a thriller book isn't that different from a fantasy one. You are establishing a world, you are establishing the "bad guy," and you are establishing the hero or heroine. In our headlines, you want to end with a strong word that people have visual cues related to. "A neighborhood murder," and, "A paranormal prowler," are good examples. With the word, "prowler," you get this image of some creepy, evil person, and a reference to the "paranormal" sets the mind to think the book probably is about vampires or something "out of this world".

If you were to end the hood with, "How much can she trust her own flesh and blood," that ends with the word, "blood," which is always a fantastic choice. From this description, you can tell that there's a female protagonist, and she has to determine if she can trust her own flesh and blood because her flesh and blood is probably the prowler, and probably the one who did the murders, so we can connect it all together with that. There's the hook.

Examples of a Call to Action

I'm a big fan of the word "Buy". "Buy This Now," is a good example, but I know some people don't feel as comfortable as I do, using a phrase such as that. I think that you need a verb at the beginning, and you need to let them know their next step is to take a specific action. That's why it's called a "call to action," because you are actually trying to get them to take action.

I like words like, "buy," "unlock," and, "experience". Whatever you want to use, if you don't want to use "buy". I like to bring the title back into it. So, "Buy Bryan Cohen's *Fantastic Journey* to watch an elf

become a hero today!” To be a part of that character’s journey, or to see the character do this thing. I love all of those wonderful buzz terms. I love copywriting and using that call to action.

I like to think of buyers as having seven different windows open, the TV is on, they have their tablet on their lap, and their kid is pestering them to change the channel. They need just a little mental encouragement to say, “Buy this book today!” They might not be able to deal with anything else at the moment, but they click, it’s bought, and they can read it on their Kindle later. But we need that little extra “oomph” so that they don’t get distracted by the wide world of many entertainment options.

How to Create a Non-Fiction Description

Sure. With non-fiction, we’ve got those six parts, which include the hook, the synopsis, the expertise, the transformational benefits, selling paragraph, and call to action. So, let’s go over each one.

The Hook

The hook in non-fiction is different. Hopefully, there’s no murderers in your non-fiction, unless it’s true crime. **A non-fiction reader is often trying to solve a problem.** That’s why they are buying a book, and that’s why they are reading it. You need to say, in not so many words, that your book solves this problem.

We like to convey this in a problem/solution format. The problem is a question, such as, “Are you looking to get out of debt?” Or, it might be, “Do you want to learn how to write faster,” or, “Are you trying to sell more books?” You want that all important “yes,” at the beginning. In other words, you want your target reader to be saying “yes” from the get-go. Then, you say, “This is the book for you,” essentially. You say, “Discover the 5-step system,” or you say, “Unlock the tools you need to achieve your dreams,” or, “This is the book that is going to…” “Do you want [this thing] fixed? This book is going to fix it,” basically.

That’s what the hook does. **Creating a hook for non-fiction is significantly easier than creating one for a fiction work because if you can identify the solution that your book is providing, the problem that it’s solving, you can get a hook for it.** So, that’s the hook.

Expertise

Now we are going to go into the expertise. **Why is your book worth reading? Why are you a person who would be considered an expert?** I think a lot of authors have trouble with this. If it’s modesty, or if it’s a feeling that you don’t want to talk yourself up too much, you have to remember that 9 out of 10 readers assume that you didn’t write your own description. They assume that a publisher wrote it.

You have to think like a publisher and like a business. Would I go into a conversation at a party and refer to myself as a *USA Today* bestselling author? No. Would I do it in a description? Absolutely. That’s because readers and potential buyers need to know things about you pretty quickly that are worth

conveying in shorthand. Whether it's twenty years of experience in the personal finance sector, 2000+ book descriptions written, \$7 million dollars in sales, or whatever the basis of your expertise is, don't sell yourself short on this. I even see big-time people doing this.

I was working with a big-time author recently, and he was pushing really far back on the fact that he's a *Wall Street Journal* bestseller with 40 million+ podcast downloads and is world renown, etc. He didn't necessarily want to put that stuff in the description, but I was pushing for it because someone who hasn't listened to that show, or hasn't seen his work, wouldn't know otherwise. So, it's not just you. People who have done incredible and outstanding things often don't want to talk about themselves in that way either.

You really need to make sure that you do, even if you are just pointing to the fact that you are an author, and you are an author if you wrote that book. What are the first six letters of the word "authority"? They spell "author". So, give yourself that authority, and give yourself that expertise, and do it right at the get-go. You want to do this in a sentence or two, right away, that conveys the highlights of your expertise. You want to communicate this to the reader of the description in a way that they can move on, at least semi-convinced that you know what you're talking about. They are going to spend their hard-earned money, so they need to know that you're worth reading.

Synopsis

Next, you are going to go into your synopsis, and in non-fiction, there's no character and no character journey, but what you do have is the chance to explain how the information inside of your book is conveyed. Are there anecdotes, or are there case studies? Is it more of a narrative non-fiction book? You need to get into a little of that at this point. "This book explains the process of this, through that," is what you are trying to get across to your potential reader. So, an example might be, "This book explains how to get out of debt through 20 case studies," or, "... through studies we've conducted with 100+ people."

You don't want to repeat the table of content to them. You just want to let them know what's in the book, how is it conveyed, and how is it going to help you? You can do this with bullet points, but we usually save those for the transformational benefits. Normally, we let the reader know how the book can help them and how the information is conveyed in two or three sentences.

The Transformational Benefits

After that, we get into "the magic stuff," like, "You're not just going to get out of debt, you're going to be able to take that vacation." Here's another example. "In this book, you will discover how to balance your budget so that you can go out with your wife every week." All of those things that people say, like, "Oh, I want to stock away a little extra money." You don't really want to stock away a little extra money. You want the things that come from having that extra money. You want the exciting things, or you want the security things.

We usually bullet-point those things because people will sometimes scroll down until they see bullet points. If they are going to scan over the description, and on the Internet, people have a tendency to

scan and not read every word, you want them to at least stop over the bullets and say, “Oh, that’s pretty darn good. It says here that this is going to help me to vacation,” or, “It’s going to help me to get a bestseller status,” or whatever the benefits of your book might be. That’s what we hit hard. Usually, we use five bullet points because we like that odd number. That’s where we focus a lot of attention, visually, in the description.

Selling Paragraph

Just like in a fictional description, you have the selling paragraph and the call to action. The selling paragraph is similar to the one you would have in a fictional description. “This book is a walk-through guide for how to get out of debt,” would be one example. Another would be, “This book is the only resource you need on paying less for your child’s day care.”

The adjectives that you use tend to be a little different in a non-fiction versus a fiction description. **In a fiction description, you are talking about the characters and the world building, and in a non-fiction description, you are trying to get across to the reader that your book is easy to understand, that it contains down-to-earth advice, that they can expect a “tried and true” system, and other such things.** You’re hitting those sorts of buzz terms. You want to make sure that if your book has those things, and it would be good for a reader to know that they are in there, then you’ll want to make sure that you include them in the selling paragraph.

Call to Action

Non-fiction authors tend to be a little less “on the fence” about including a call to action because a lot of those types of authors also have businesses and sales pages. “Buy Bryan Cohen’s guide to better daycare to save money and make your kids happier today!” That’s the kind of statement you’ll want to use in order to close your description out.

You’ll want to close things out that way because if the last thing they think about is that when they buy the book good things are going to happen to them, that’s not a bad place to leave your potential buyer. I was recently working with someone whose original description ended with, “... and this book will help you get there.” Now, that’s not bad, but it’s not overt enough. It’s not clear enough.

It’s not enough to say, “It will get you there...” Get you where? I want to know where it’s getting me. I want to know what I need to do, not “This book will do whatever.” That will make me turn around and say to myself, “Okay, I’ll look for it in my library.” No, you want them to buy the book.

For a lot of people, this kind of language feels “over-the-top,” but for a publisher it’s nothing. For a sales page creator, it’s nothing. You need to really think like that. You need to think like a person who offers products on the Internet because that’s what you do. You just need to be very clear about what actions you want your reader to take. Left to their own devices, they probably won’t do what you want them to do. So, tell them what you want them to do.

Why Should I Use Bullet Points?

A giant wall of text is the opposite of what you want on a description. If you have a wall of text, one long paragraph, with no breaks, no white space, or anything like that, it's going to keep people's attention. You may have seen the abbreviated term "tldr," which stands for "too long, didn't read". That's what people often feel when they see a wall of text. If you break things up instead, with a little bit of white space, short paragraphs, and bullet points, these are the kinds of things that are going to make your book description easily scannable for people that aren't going to read everything. That way, they don't just ignore it and click away, and they actually take a look at it.

What's the Difference between Generic Benefits and Transformational Benefits?

A lot of authors will essentially list their table of contents and tell the reader what's in every chapter in the entire book. Instead of that, we recommend, kind of, explaining what form the content will take and what that will do for the reader. We don't necessarily make an "A to C" jump. "A to B" would be "you read this book, and you get out of debt." On the other hand, an "A to C" jump would be, "You read this book, and you'll get the vacation." So, the first paragraph is kind of more, "A to B," and the transformational benefits are more, "A to C". They relate more to the emotion and what the person is really going to get out of reading the book.

Connecting with Bryan

Just email me and my team at Bryan@SellingforAuthors.com. You can get in touch with my staff that way, and we'll take a look at your description. If you think it might need help, but you aren't sure, just get in touch with us. If you know it needs help, you can always go straight to BestPageForward.net and order a description. We'll do it for you. That's what we do, and we also offer a lot of education about descriptions. We have books out there about descriptions too. It takes time to learn, just like anything.

We do consider ourselves experts. We've put in those 10,000 hours, which is the old Malcolm Gladwell rule. So, we do love working on these every, single week. Either email us or come work with us because we like meeting new people, and it's always fun to help authors get more sales!

Resources

[*Flesh and Blood*](#)

Real Fast Results Community

If you are diggin' on this stuff and really love what we're doing here at Real Fast Results, would you please do me a favor? Head on over to [iTunes](#), and make sure that you subscribe to this show, download it, and rate & review it. That would be an awesome thing.

Of course, we also want to know your results. Please share those results with us at <http://www.realfastresults.com/results>.

As always, go make results happen!