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Writing To
Get Business

WRITING
TO GET BUSINESS
with Pat Iyer



C-SUITE
Radio

Licensing Your Books for a Revenue Stream Linda Fostek

Have you avoided translating your longing to write a book into action? Have you written a book that needs “a little more work” to make it perfect? This is the first of several podcasts in which I interview experienced authors. I’m Pat Iyer, the host of *Writing to Get Business*.

Whether you’re at the “if only” or “one more edit” stage of non-publication, Linda Fostek will inspire you. She is the author of nine books, one of which she finished and published in a week. Linda’s example will stimulate you to get that book out into the world. Be sure to pay attention when Linda talks about how she makes thousands of dollars selling a licensing deal.

Happy publishing!

In this podcast you will discover

- The importance (and profitability) of writing to fill a need
- That self-publishing is easier than you may imagine
- The value of having revisions and new editions under your control
- The lucrative market of licensing your book for use by designated co-authors
- How almost anything you’ve written in connection with your business can be repurposed as a book

Pat: Hi, this is Pat Iyer with *Writing to Get Business* and today I would like to bring to you an interview with Linda Fostek, who is a person who I met through Women's Prosperity Network. We get together every Tuesday and do masterminding and brainstorming.

Linda is known as the Crisis Planner and you may think that that's an oxymoron, so I will let Linda describe what is a crisis planner.

Linda: Well, you know, it's wonderful to be here, Pat. A crisis planner is somebody who prepares for a disaster before it happens. Basically, your preparation allows you to get through anything, whether it be a national disaster or a personal disaster, because the planning for all of

these things is pretty much the same, the same things that you have in place. And it allows you to get through it to get off the worry-go-round. You can stop worrying about the things that might happen and be prepared to deal with any kind of emergency you could be faced with.

Pat: And we know there's a whole range of unexpected things that happen to us, and Linda's got a radio show that draws on lots of different types of disruptions in our life. Can you tell us about your radio show before we get into your writing of books?

Linda: Yes. The radio show kind of came out of some of my book writing as well. But the radio show is called "The Linda Fostek Show," and it's "Get Off the Worry-Go-Round. Every week we deal with different types of disasters that can befall us. And, it's all about the solutions to the problems those disasters could have. It's anticipating the problems that you can have and putting plans in place, having documents in place, having things put together so that when and if a disaster does happen, you're ready. Because, unbearably, when we're faced with disaster, we tend to make bad decisions in the middle of a crisis, and our options are significantly reduced.

So, by planning you can recover from a disaster faster. (That sounds like a tongue-twister.) You can also avoid the family conflicts that disaster frequently brings with it. And you can control the chaos, which reduces your stress and allows you to come through the other side and not just survive but thrive on the other side of a disaster.

Pat: I would imagine you said that once or twice before, Linda.

Linda: A couple of times.

Pat: I would like to take you back to where you were in your business at the time that you decided to write your first book. Tell me about what led up to that book, and what was that book about?

Linda: Well, it's funny. I had been invited to retire at the age of 60 from my pharmaceutical job, which I had had for 22 years. I had had a Plan B in place with a multi-level marketing company. I loved the products, but it wasn't in my heart, and I found the Women's Prosperity Network.

And, one of the things that the Women's Prosperity Network does is they expose you to things that you never would've been exposed to. And one of the things they exposed me to was an invitation to come hear Loral Langemeire, who's The Millionaire Maker and Kevin Harrington, who is the father of the info-commercial. He was the one that brought the Ginsu knife to TV. He's also owned the brand As Seen on TV. That's a brand. That's not a label they just stick on things. And somebody had asked him how, from the 50,000 products he gets presented every year, does he pick the 20 to 30 he puts his name on.

And his answer was so simple, and it hit me like a ton of bricks. He said, "Well, if you see something that fills a need, you feel compelled to bring it to the market." At this point I thought of something my father had created 23 years earlier. And it was like a lightbulb went over my head and I said, "The time is now." He had created a home operations manual and because he had seen so many of his friends lose a spouse and the one who was left, was left in total chaos. It sat on the shelf for 23 years.

I said, "The time is now. Baby boomers are dealing with our aging parents. We're dealing with our own mortality. We're dealing with our children leaving the nest." And I said, "The time is now that people really need to be better prepared for the events that are unfolding in front of them." And by being prepared, they can have a better quality of life and really be much happier.

So, that is what inspired me to start the business. Now that was in August, and in September I said, "Well, how am I going to do this?" His project was so overwhelmingly big to me in terms of what it needed to become, and I said, "How am I going to get my name out there so that people are going to know what I'm going to do?" And that's when I started writing my first book, which was something that I said I needed to get people's attention, and I wanted people to kind of get to know me through this book, and that book was *Shit Happens*.

Pat: A memorable title.

Linda: And you know I deliberately made it look like something familiar. I reversed the colors of the Dummies books, and it's designed to be a reference book for disasters, and that was my first book. And when I first started going out networking, that was all I had, I had no other

products. I had nothing else. I just had my book, and I was doing something that nobody else was doing. And quite honestly, that was the thing that made it memorable, when I stood up in front and introduced myself as the author of the new book, *Shit Happens*.

So, that's how it all started, and the book really gave me credibility immediately. It also gave people something that they could read and hold and touch to get to know me. And that really opened a lot of doors for me over time. And that was followed by eight more books that I've written in the five years since.

Pat: Eight books in five years? That will stop some people right in their tracks when they hear that.

Linda: All my books are some sort of a reference or some sort of a book to keep records in. So, they're more manuals, but there's writing in there as well. So, they're really how-tos and ways to organize yourself. And I have at least five more books that I've outlined that are in the works to be written.

So, I've sat down. I know what needs to go in them. Things are always evolving and changing. And obviously, we're dealing with a major crisis right now in the whole world and you know we've never really looked at pandemics before quite this way. And you know it's like, "How do you prepare for that?" "How are you ready for the next time this happens?" I mean, it's not unheard of that things happen. Sir Isaac Newton created calculus when he was quarantined during the black plague. He had to be really bored to create calculus.

Pat: I don't know. I think you must be bored to take it, personally. I'm not a math person.

Linda: Well, it will put you to sleep. It's not exactly my most exciting subject. So, what I do is so connected with what people are experiencing every day, and writing is just a great way to express it. And whether you're writing a book or you're writing a newsletter article or a magazine article or a newspaper submission or anything, writing is the best way to get your message out.

Pat: Now tell us about how you got this first book published? Did you independently publish it? Did you go to a publisher? Did you use an indie publisher?

Linda: I used an indie publisher, Parker House Books, which is a small indie publisher out of Tallahassee, because I had no idea what I was doing. And, basically, I used her specifically for the formatting, the uploading, and editing. One of the things that I was told when I was in the ninth grade was that someday I would be a famous poet with somebody to correct my spelling. Well, thank god for spell check and grammar check, but even those are not infallible as we all know. But I've always loved to write, and I have filled books with poetry over the years. I've not yet published it, but one of these days I will get around to doing that, put a book together with that.

It must be in my blood because my mother actually wrote and published two novels in her 70s and early 80s and has written a third one that unfortunately she never quite finished because she had Alzheimer's and that kind of took over, and her storyline has a few holes in it that need to be fixed. One of my dreams is to finish that book for her and publish that also for her because the story is a great story. And hers were all fiction, but there's writing in my blood.

Pat: My father was not a writer. I have a sister who writes novels and fantasy, and I've got a brother who writes music books. He takes guitar music, for example, and translates it into harmonica and has written several music books, and I've written. All my books are nonfiction.

Linda: And you've written several books also.

Pat: Yeah. So, you went with the indie publisher, did you stick with that publisher for subsequent books or did you do that a different way?

Linda: Okay now I've used her again when I did finish the *HOME System Series* which was born out of my father's project. Because this was five books that really needed help formatting, so this was a major undertaking. And you can see there are many, many pages in here, a lot of fill-in-the-blank kind of things, but still a lot of writing. I was surprised how many words were in each of them. And each book serves a different purpose and that's part of the HOME... *The Crisis Planner HOME System*, which stands for Home Operations Manual and Emergency System. So, HOME means something. And that is part of a whole system that comes with a toolkit for your house and a box to store all your documents.

This was my vision on that day with Kevin Harrington, to take my father's pathetic thing he had put together and to have it evolve into something that would be more meaningful and useful for people. I took his book, which looked something an engineer put together, and made it more user-friendly, in language that people could understand. My dad was an engineer. He wrote the way he spoke.

But the other books that I've written, the *And Now What?* book and *Love/Hate Networking* and the *Password Passport*, I did all by myself. I uploaded them, formatted them, make upgrades and changes to them at will. So, truly, once you understand how easy it is to do that and to work with a self-publishing platform, it's really very simple to work with. And even for me, and I'm a technophobe. I'm not very good at technology. I get stubborn and then frustrated, because I'm stubborn enough not to get up until I get frustrated and then I call for help.

Pat: And I understand that one of the books that you put together is a book for which you licensed the rights to other people to be able to use. That's not a concept that we have discussed on *Writing to Get Business*, and I would like you to explain that for our listener who is unfamiliar with what you're doing in the way of using licensing rights.

Linda: Well, that book is my *And Now What?* book, and it's funny. It started out as a stapled together, printed in my basement pamphlet that I put together for a workshop, so that I had to have something I could sell. And I threw this thing together in a weekend and sold \$200 worth of these little booklets at this workshop because it was a useful thing. Well, it then evolved into a 50-page book, very simple, a simple cover. (Let me try not to get glare on it.) It's a lot of fill-in-the-blanks and it helps people organize all their documents, and then it tells them what to do. It's a life planner and survivor's checklist. So, it's all your planning beforehand and then what to do when somebody dies and then the healing afterwards. So, it was just a little book that I threw together.

People started saying, "I really like that." Professionals, attorneys, and accountants, and people who did home organizing. And so, the first thing that started was I started white labeling it. And what white labeling is, is you take a book like that, and I moved everything up just a little bit and made enough space to put their logo and their

contact information so that they could give it to their clients as a value added. That's called white labeling. That doesn't change any of the content inside. The only thing they're doing is they're putting their label and their contact information and their logo on the front cover. And they had to buy 50 books, and I charged them a set-up fee to do the cover.

That has since evolved into a licensing program. And a licensing program is when you have somebody either license the book under their own name or license them as a coauthor. In my case, I'm licensing them as a coauthor. Some people are uncomfortable with just licensing their own name if they're only writing two pages of the book.

They kind of feel that that's not copacetic, but as a coauthor they get their name and their picture on the cover with me and my name. They get their name on the spine. They get their picture on the back cover with their name. They get to write the two-page forward. Now the forward is usually written by somebody who has expertise that they want to share that relates to the value of this book. So, the forward is going to be written by that person's perspective on how this book is going to be used as a tool. And then they also, in the back, get their full-page bio with a picture.

For the person who doesn't have the time or interest to write the book entirely on their own, they literally can become a coauthor. And when they stand up and make a presentation, they can say that they've coauthored this book because that's what it is. The cover is exclusive to them. The background they pick is going to be exclusive to them, and they also get exclusive geography. So, if there's an attorney in Nassau County, I'm not going to have another attorney in Nassau County who's a coauthor. They're going to be somewhere else. And they'll each have a unique cover. They are the coauthor of that book.

They get 50 books with the package. They get a marketing program for their business, not for their book. So, they would have an appearance on my radio show, and they get featured in my newsletter. There are marketing pieces that go with it. And for a coauthorship, you can charge a lot more money than you can just for a white label.

Pat: Give us an idea of what you might think would be typical ranges, so our listeners understand white label versus licensing the rights or coauthoring?

Linda: Typically, with the white label they purchase the 50 books, which are discounted from the cover price, and they pay a one-time fee to design the cover. So, that package is usually \$500 for their first purchase. When they reorder, they don't have to do a new cover, so they're just paying for the books. The coauthorship, because there's a lot more involved in it and the marketing program with it, that's about \$2,500.

Pat: You identified that potential coauthors are not limited in your case to attorneys. There are other professions who see this book as valuable that they can hand to their clients to show that they're experienced. They've got expertise. They have credibility. They have instant authority without going through the labor of writing the book.

Linda: Exactly, exactly. I mean, I have insurance agents, accountants, attorneys, anybody who's a professional that's either dealing with seniors or any of the planning activities that one would be involved in could become a coauthor. This is especially true if they're doing speaking, and they know that a book has value, but they don't want to spend the time to write their own book.

Pat: And it does take time, doesn't it?

Linda: Yes, it does. Yes, it does. But it's fun and it's exciting. And I mean, I look at my bookshelf now and I'm like, "Oh my goodness, I have all these books that I've written." And you know the funniest thing is I have one outlier because all the other books that I've talked about have all been about planning and systems and organizing. And I have built my entire business through networking, and I had been invited to speak on a LeadHership cruise about networking. And about three weeks before the cruise, the woman who had coordinated asked me if I had written any blog posts or anything, articles, or anything on networking. And I said, "No, but I'll work on it." A week later, I had written *Love/Hate Networking* and it became a...

Pat: Oh, my goodness, one week later?

Linda: In one week, self-published, became a bestseller on Amazon. And it's all the basics of the way I view networking, so it's on how to be an

effective networker to literally get your return on investment from the time and effort and money that you spend networking. And she was shocked because I had the books with me on the cruise. And she was like, "Oh my god!" Then I said, "Well, you know." I knew what I was going to talk about. If you're doing webinars and if you're doing talks or you're writing blogs, you have so much material already written for a book.

You can put them altogether in some sequence that makes sense. Make it flow from one chapter to the next, and you have a book. And most of us are doing a lot of written communication one way or the other, whether they're blog posts or newsletters or things that you're sending out to clients on a regular basis, information that you're sending out, and emails. And if you compile all that information together, you have a lot of material for a book and a lot of people don't realize that that's how books get put together.

Pat: It is. It's one of the joys of repurposing, to be able to not have to start from scratch. You can put all of that together, figure out where the holes are, what new material you might need to write to fill in a hole. And recycle, repurpose, rinse and repeat, and get the benefit of all the work that you've already put into that topic.

Linda: And it's amazing. I always have books with me wherever I go and one of each, maybe occasionally I'll bring a second one, of the smaller books. They're in my bag and invariably somebody asked me, "Do you have a copy of that? I want to buy it." I always come back from a trip with gas money. I never leave someplace without somebody handing me money. Because when you're an author and you have books, people are interested. Especially when you stand up and you say it in an introduction at a networking meeting, "Hi, I'm Linda Fostek, the Crisis Planner. I want you to get off the worry-go-round because when *Shit Happens*, you're going to ask yourself *And Now What?*" And I hold up to the books and that's all I have to say. And people come and talk to me and they want to know more.

Pat: What advice would you give somebody who is thinking about writing a book and is procrastinating?

Linda: My best advice to the procrastinators out there is if you have a book in you and you know your stuff, it's not like you're writing about

something you don't know about. Write an outline and start working on it. And if you've already written a lot of stuff, pull it all together and see how it could flow together in a book. I mean, most of us have so much stuff already written. It's not like you're starting from scratch.

So, when you're talking about they're procrastinating, they're procrastinating because they don't know where to start or how to do it. And let me tell you, this woman right here, Pat Iyer, she can get you over that hump so you can stop procrastinating.

Pat: Thank you, Linda.

Linda: You're a woman of action and you inspire others to act, really.

Pat: I figure that my knowledge doesn't do anyone any good if it stays in my head or it stays on my hard drive. And that's the other issue that I run into, is with people who have almost finished their book, but it's not quite good enough. It's not quite perfect enough, and it sits collecting electronic dust. What advice would you give that person?

Linda: It's never going to be perfect. And even after it's published, you are going to find things that you're going to want to change. And that is the magic of self-publishing, because you can change it like that. You can fix things like that. This book now, this *And Now What?* book, this is probably about the twelfth revision I've had on this book over the last five years because I continuously revise, update, add to, just make it better.

Just get it out there. It's like the painter who can never let anybody see their artwork. I guess I'm not the perfectionist as a painter. When I decide the painting is done, it's done, and I never look back at it. Because the next painting I do is going to be different and it's going to be better because I've learned something, "I'm going to do that differently the next time."

Just know that it is going to be as good as you hoped it would be and nobody else is going to see that you could've changed this paragraph or changed that word. Nobody else is going to see that the way that your critical eye is going to look at it. They want you to share your knowledge with them so that they can become a better version of themselves. So, if you're bringing that to the forefront, trust that you are bringing... it is perfect just as it is. And it... For those people who

say, "It's never done. It's never going to be good enough," who are they to judge their own work? Let somebody else love it because they will love it.

Pat: Linda Fostek, author of nine books in five years with another five books that are tucked away in the file folders of her brain somewhere and...

Linda: No, I have the things typed. I know my outlines are all ready.

Pat: Outlines of five books. You'll be hearing more about Linda Fostek in the future and be sure to tune in to her radio show. Can you tell our listeners how they can find you on radio and learn more about the services that you offer?

Linda: Okay, they can tune into boldbravemedia.com/show/the-linda-fostek-show or they can reach me on my website, which is thecrisisplanner.com.

Pat: And Fostek is spelled F-O-S-T-E-K.

Linda: Yes.

Pat: Perfect. Thank you, Linda for being...

Linda: You can get my books online at Amazon or at The Crisis Planner, either place.

Pat: And be sure to check out Linda's HOME System. I own it. And my husband and I have been going through it and filling in the blanks, and causing us to do some research and keeping track of all the things that are either in his or my head that needs to be put down on paper. It's a real important aspect of managing your affairs and getting your papers in order.

Linda: Thank you so much. This has been so much fun.

Pat: Thank you, Linda. It was a pleasure.

