



# **Amazon Book Marketing— Everything You Need to Know with Dave Chesson from Kindlepreneur**

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Pat Flynn:

Alright. We're about a month away, a little over a month away from the publication of my brand new book, *Superfans*. And like with a lot of things I do, I love to kind of take you behind the scenes and also bring on experts on SPI to show you who I'm learning from about certain things. So next week you're going to hear from my book coach, Azul Terronez, and how he helped me through writing *Will It Fly?* And how I've applied those things to *Superfans*, how to know what to write your book about, how it gets involved in your business, and it's not just like a book that stands alone. But that's for next week.

This week, on today's episode, you're going to hear from Dave Chesson from [kindlepreneur.com](http://kindlepreneur.com) . . . That's right, Kindlepreneur. This is his job to teach people how to use Amazon and publish books on Kindle and get it in front of more people. And we're going to talk about so many amazing strategies today. So whether or not you are writing a book, you have a book, or you are just still contemplating whether or not you want to even go down that route, this is going to be really interesting because you're going to see the amazing opportunities that you have in front of you using the giant search engine called Amazon. So we're going to talk about keywords today, we're going to talk about reviews, we're going to talk about your Amazon sales page. We're going to talk about strategies, just all and around launching and how to get in front of the most people, how the algorithm works, just anything and everything. And really, this is a very selfish episode too, because I learned from Dave during this conversation, and I specifically asked him questions that would help me, knowing it's going to also help you. That's the kind of beauty of this situation here. And as *Superfans* will be coming out very soon, you're going to see a lot of what we're going to talk about today applied to the Amazon sales page, and a lot of our strategies as well.

So by the way, if you haven't checked out *Superfans* yet, if you go to [smartpassiveincome.com/superfans](http://smartpassiveincome.com/superfans) and pre-order the book before August 13th, you're going to get access to the audio book for free, as well as some other bonuses, and that page will just show you all the instructions on how to redeem that. So, [smartpassiveincome.com/superfans](http://smartpassiveincome.com/superfans). Thank you to everybody who has helped support it so far,

comes out in a little over a month, but right now, let's dive into this conversation with Dave right after the intro music. Here we go.

Announcer: *Welcome to the Smart Passive Income podcast where it's all about working hard now, so you can sit back and reap the benefits later. And now your host, skydiving is not on his bucket list, Pat Flynn.*

Pat: All right, and welcome to Session 378 of the Smart Passive Income Podcast. My name is Pat Flynn, here to help you make more money, save more time, and help more people, too. And to help us do all those things, today we have Dave Chesson from [Kindlepreneur.com](http://Kindlepreneur.com). I already told you what we're going to talk about, so let's not wait any longer. Here he is, Dave Chesson, the man. Here we go.

Dave, welcome to the Smart Passive Income Podcast. Thanks so much for joining us today.

Dave Chesson: Absolutely, Pat. It's really good to be here.

Pat: Dude, I'm stoked you're here. [Kindlepreneur.com](http://Kindlepreneur.com), that's your jam. What is [Kindlepreneur.com](http://Kindlepreneur.com)? What can we expect there?

Dave: Well, it's a website that's devoted to teaching authors how to sell their books and how to market them.

Pat: How did you even get started with this? I mean, you've been doing this for a while, I know, because we've been chatting for a very long time. When did this solve again for you?

Dave: You know, a couple of years ago, I was in the military and they sent me all the way to Korea without my family, and my wife and I had this kind of conversation about what is it that we wanted to do with our lives. I didn't have dreams of being an admiral, but I had always wanted to be a writer. The problem is, is that I've always been afflicted with a form of dyslexia. So I've always been really timid about my writing in front of people and just having people see what I do. So it was really a hard thing for me to grasp. I decided that

instead of just sitting down and kind of writing anything I wanted, I wanted to analyze, like, what would be the best way to serve the market that already exists? You know, understanding what it is people want, and then finding that and being able to answer their questions. And so it really got me into understanding the Amazon Marketplace, why Amazon chooses to show some books over others, and some of the things that authors can do to really give their books the best chance. And from all of that knowledge collected, I kind of put it together and created Kindlepreneur.com.

Pat: Tell me a little bit more about dyslexia, because I know there's a lot of people who are listening who may have it or have kids and often see it as a crutch and something that's kind of not really helping them with pursuing their dreams. How do you feel dyslexia was actually used to your advantage?

Dave: Well, to tell you the truth, I actually was fearful of it. I was kind of brought up within my family that, "Let's just not make that evident out there." And so, I kind of learned to do things and not really realize that I had it, but deep down in my heart, I was always afraid. If you ever watch me write . . . Mine's in hand-eye coordination, by the way, and if you ever watch me write, it's like nails on a chalkboard. It makes doctors look like wonderful artists, but I would actually shy away from anything writing. A matter of fact, I even went to go become a major in physics just because I was like, "That's as far away from writing as I can go." So one thing I would say is, is that if you or your child ever has something like that, I think embracing it and giving them strength will help them to find what they're really good at. I spent so many years running away from it, and I don't know, I could been a much better writer if I had just kind of embraced it and faced it head on.

Pat: You know, I know a lot of other entrepreneurs who grew up with dyslexia who are incredibly successful now and have told me stories about how it was those challenges that they faced when they were growing up, similar to what you're talking about, that actually made them stronger, more courageous entrepreneurs now, and I feel that in you as well. Talk about some of the books that you've sort of been

involved with, that you've written. You had this dream, and thank you for your service by the way, how did you get started with writing your own stuff? And then I'd love to eventually transition into everything that you know about Amazon and how we could best utilize that platform, which is your special sauce. So what were some of the first things that you were writing about?

Dave: Well, the first thing was, was that I started going to Amazon and just kind of looking at Amazon and saying, "Alright, what is it that people were searching for?" Right? Here's a great example of something that . . . It was a project I almost did and I never actually followed through on just at the time, but there was a time period where everybody was talking about Evernote, right? It's this tool that would help people to collect their information, and there were a lot of books coming out on it. Now, I had had a unique experience with Evernote and kind of a way of laying it out and using it. The problem was, was that there was no way a writer like me could get my way or use of Evernote in front of readers. However, though, I started doing my research and I found out that there were a lot of people typing into Amazon at the time, things like "Evernote for students", "Evernote for writers", "Evernote for project managers", and through that, it would have given me an ability to get my writing in front of those people, so long as I could write it to fit their need. So again, when you start looking at it, you can find these wonderful opportunities to fill a true niche or to fill a true desire by the market just by understanding what they're looking for.

Pat: How do you know what they're looking for?

Dave: Well, one way you can do this, is you can go to Amazon itself and you can start typing in things into the search bar. And Amazon actually tries to guess what you're going to type next by knowing what people have typed in the past. Another thing that you can do, too, is that you can look at some of the books that are out there, especially if you start to see that it's very topical or it's very niched. And you can take their Amazon bestseller rank, which is a number that Amazon gives with the number one bestselling book in all of Amazon being number one, and the worst-selling book being seven plus million,

whatever it is today, and you can put it into a calculator we created, just go to Google and type “Kindle calculator” and it should pop up. And it will convert the Amazon bestseller rank into how many books that day the person sold. So now you can actually start to see what's really popular and what people are actually looking for and buying. Another way that you can go about it too is just kind of reading the reviews. I've seen a couple of books where people write in the review like, “Oh, my gosh, it's been such a long time since somebody addressed this thing that I've been looking for.” And this can give you higher opportunities to understand what it is that people are actually going to Amazon for.

Pat: So I'm at Kindlepreneur.com right now. I typed in “Kindle calculator” in Google, and I see it's very simple. All I have to do is fill out this form with the bestseller rank, and that's publicly available. If you go to Amazon and go to any book, you scroll down, there's a lot of information related to the publisher, the publish date, one of those numbers is the bestseller rank. So if I were to type in five thousand and I click here, it says, “A person who's ranked five thousand is selling about thirty-four books per day.” And how do I use this information? What numbers are good? And should I be only looking at certain books with a certain ranking? Tell me some more info on how to use this calculator.

Dave: Well, to be very general, I think an ABSR of a thousand or less is a good indication. That means that the person's probably selling at least one book per day. Now, that may sound very small, one book per day, it's like, nobody's going to get rich off of that, but that does give you an understanding of where there's an existing market. Where a lot of people run into issues is they have this great book idea, and they spend all this time writing it and they pay money for editing and book covers and all this, and they throw it up there only to find out that people aren't actively going to Amazon and looking for that sort of book. Instead, though, this isn't about changing what you're going to write, but instead you can use some of the information to find where your book best fits in the existing market. And so you can start to look, and you can see through the Amazon bestseller rank what's really popular, what's not, ways that you can



maybe pivot a bit on your book to get it in front of those shoppers. And by the way, for any of the listeners out there, if you're saying, "Well, I have this great story and maybe people aren't looking for it," that doesn't mean that you can't write that book and that you can't sell it. It just means that with the research that we just talked about, if you go to Amazon and you post it on Amazon, you can't depend on Amazon to sell it for you.

Pat: Right, right. But Amazon can obviously be a huge sort of support system for the book that you have, and this is something that I have never really paid attention to. I mean, I'm blessed to have an amazing audience and fans who will buy my books and not everybody has that. But even then, I know that I could and anybody could be using and utilizing Amazon to reach even more people and ultimately serve more people, which is our goal here. What other things can we do in preparation for our book, using Amazon, to help us with research to better define sort of what our book will be and ultimately sell more?

Dave: Well, another thing you can do too, though, is that if you do identify who your target market is, you know who you're trying to fix a certain problem, or you know who you want to entertain to, you can also go to certain Facebook groups, forums, and start asking them to talk about it. I was once working with a veteran who was working on a book on PTSD. This was a very important subject matter, definitely deep to my core. The thing was, was that the imagery that he first used in his book cover didn't reflect what a lot of the veterans were feeling. And so, going to some of these Facebook groups and talking with them, he was able to find the right imagery as well as the right words that those veterans use when they described the pain they were going through and what they wanted to solve. So not just on Amazon, but you can also turn to other sources to be able to get a good idea of how to best connect with your target market.

Pat: I see. So you had mentioned the cover, and obviously that's very important. Very similar to podcasts, it's the cover for your podcast that's the first thing people see before they hear anything. People will see the cover of your book before they read anything. Any other tips related to the cover? I love the idea of going into Facebook groups

and discussing with those people in those groups about what imagery would relate to them. Any research on existing books out there and like . . . I always have the question, okay, I see all these books in the same category I want to be in, do I match them or do I try to be different? I mean, I'm just trying to figure out the best practices there.

Dave: Well, one good thing I like to tell people about is that when you've identified the target keywords or the things that best describe your book, you then use that to make sure that it's very fitting for your cover. To understand this better, let's look at the process of a shopper on Amazon. Most people will go to Amazon, they go to the search bar, they type in whatever it is on their mind that they're looking for and hit search, and then Amazon tries to figure out which books to present to them. Now imagine this, let's do a fiction example since we've been kind of solely nonfiction.

Pat: Sure.

Dave: If . . . say, for example, there are a lot of people that type in "Victorian second chance romance," which people really do. If your book cover doesn't personify that phrase, then even though you may get in front of those shoppers, they're not going to click on your book. It doesn't fit the feeling. Same thing with something like "space marine alien hoard," which, no kidding, people type that in. If they don't see what looks like a space marine on a spire, shooting down at a whole bunch of alien bugs crawling up, it's not going to fit what they were looking for, and they'll select the next book that does represent that. So understanding the words that your market types into Amazon not only helps you to get in front of more shoppers, but it helps you to better design a cover that fits what they're looking for. It also helps you to create a book description that really grabs their attention because it's pretty much using their words. It makes them feel like, "Ah, yes, this is the kind of book I'm looking for."

We can turn that on its head and go over to nonfiction, and in nonfiction, it's really about pain points. It's about solutions, and more importantly, how they feel from the solution they get. So it's not about



just the problem of how to quit smoking, it's about getting back your freedom and rejoining the groups because you were able to quit. These are things that you need to incorporate. So if I'm dealing with this problem and I see a cover that shows someone who's broken the cigarette and going to a group of people, this will make me feel like this is the right book for me.

Pat: Mm-hmm. How do you know what people are typing in? You had mentioned the autofill in Amazon, which, obviously, are based on other people's searches. But what if you don't even know some of those keywords to start with? Are there any other tools or tricks that we can use to know what those words are, so that we can use them as keywords for our book?

Dave: Yeah. The first thing you can do, like we said, is talk about the autofill from Amazon. That can be a great indicator.

Pat: Okay.

Dave: One of the things that I did create was software called Publisher Rocket, [publisherrocket.com](http://publisherrocket.com). And in this case, it goes even further and pulls even more keywords and phrases that people use, as well as gives you an understanding of how many people per month type that into Amazon, and even can tell you how competitive that term is, you know, to rank for. Not only identifying keywords can be a really important part for you to create a better book for an existing market, but also getting it in front of people is that next step.

Ranking on Amazon can really help you to get more sales. One statistic that we did at Kindlepreneur was we tried to figure out how many people actually click on books based off of where they rank? So what we found was that if you rank number one for a keyword in Amazon, twenty-seven percent of the people that type in that keyword will actually click on your book. But if you rank number two, then it drops down quickly to eleven percent, and then nine, eight, seven, six. So as you can see, not only identifying a good word where people are typing it in, but then ranking near the top is just as

important. And so, right there in the software, we give all that information.

Pat: In terms of ranking close to the top, is that . . . I know keywords are a part of it, but what else are factors involved in rankings on Amazon?

Dave: Well, okay. So I usually, when I talk about this, I'll break down three things. So one is identifying the right keywords you want, then the second step is getting Amazon to say, "Yep, this book should show up for it," and the third is improving your rankings. So we talked about how you identify the right keywords, but the second thing is how do you get Amazon to index it? The first thing you can do is that when you go to publish your book, Amazon just asks you, "Hey, what are seven Kindle keyword phrases that we can use to index you?" That's one great way. The second thing, too, is that Amazon also takes into effect the words that you have in your title and subtitle. This is much easier for nonfiction. You should have a subtitle that is using the words of your market inside of it. Also, the things that you put in like your book description as well as what people write in the reviews help Amazon to figure, "Oh, this book should show up for these things." So that's the indexing.

Finally, is ranking. One of the best ways to increase your rankings is, when people type in that keyword, if they see your book and select it and purchase it. This is like the best indication to Amazon that your book should be near the top. Here's something I tell a lot of authors, and by the way, this will help authors to get discovered, but this is not a "hack," okay? When you go to publish your book, if you've identified the right keywords that truly fits your book and you know somebody's going to go buy your book, what I would recommend is just telling them, "Hey, thank you so much. I'm so glad you're going to buy my book. Just go to amazon.com, type in whatever that keyword is, find my book and pick it up there." This will drive you right up to the top, but here's why it's not a hack and it's not going to ruin Amazon. This gives you an opportunity to be seen, okay? But if your book truly doesn't fit for that keyword, when other people type that into Amazon and they instead don't click your book, but click the second or third or forth, you'll naturally drop down to where you

probably should be. So use that tip as a way to get above the fold and really give your book a chance, and Amazon will take care of the rest.

Pat: I love that. Okay, so if I publish a new book, which I am, many people who are listening to this know that I have a book called *Superfans* coming out in August, which is really exciting, don't just send them directly. I mean, yes, I'll have links to the book directly, obviously, but if there's an opportunity to have somebody maybe work a little extra hard to go and find the book to help support it in such a way like you described, it wouldn't be letting them know to go to the search bar and type in "Superfans." It would be, go to the search bar and type in whatever relevant keywords would be related to this book, "how to grow your business" or something like that, and then find it from there. They would potentially have to scroll a long way to find that, right?

Dave: For the first couple of people, maybe, but it's funny because the truth is, there are a lot of books that make sales because of the target keyword. Those are going to be at the top. But then there are books under that that haven't made sales from the keyword at all. And so, from the first person that finds your book, it will probably jump right to where that spot is, where it's going to be above the books that haven't sold and it will be right below all the other books. So the first person might have to scroll for a bit and might have to go to page two, three, or four or something, but then the next person will probably find it at the bottom of page one, and then the next person will probably find it at the middle. It really depends on the competitiveness of that keyword. But again, for new authors, this is a great opportunity, as well, to be able to give your book that chance. And if you've done what we've talked about already in this episode, which is making sure that your cover truly represents what that target market wants, that you're using the words in your description, as well as in subtitle, to really make them feel, "Yes, this is it. This is addressing my problem," then you will find that you naturally do get the clicks. So that when you get up to the top, that next person that's never heard of you, that's really looking for the next solution, they're

going to see your book, and yours will get the click, and yours will get the sale. And then you will stay up at the top, and you'll benefit from that traffic.

Pat:

And like you said, as long as it fulfills that promise that the book is offering, then it'll have that click-through rate and people will continue to see that book up there. It's when you don't do that, yes, you might get a little boost from your people, but then it'll kind of fall naturally back to where it should be. This is great. I didn't realize that Amazon worked in this way. I mean, there's, I know, a billion points that they look at, but click through rate, I didn't know was as important. I know it's important for Google. If your search result is close to the top and people don't click it, then eventually it'll kind of drop, which is why the title of your blog posts are important, and the description of your blog post, and I would imagine, very similarly, the cover, the title and the subtitle, just as important for your Kindle book too. That's an awesome realization. You had also mentioned that the reviews are something that can help with ranking as well in terms of the words that are used there. Does the quantity of reviews play a role in the rankings as well?

Dave:

Recent quantity, yes. So one thing that's really important for Amazon, and just kind of take a step back, is really when you look at ranking, it's really about what makes Amazon more money, right? If you are the book that seems to sell best for this keyword, then obviously you should get that top real estate at the top right? You should benefit from it. It helps make Amazon, as well as the author, more money. The next part to that, though, is Amazon also wants to make sure that people are happy. Let's face it, if Amazon continues to sell really bad stuff, people aren't going to come back to it. So what Amazon wants to know is that, are people happy with the purchase they have? Which is why the review can play a big part in your rankings as well. It also plays a big part on whether or not people decide to buy you. If your book has only one star and the book under it has five stars and a great grade, guess who's going to win, right? They're probably going to choose the other, because it's like social proof.

But another really cool thing that just happened—I would say about six months ago—Amazon started doing this really cool thing that if you scroll down to the bottom of the Amazon sales page, and you look at the reviews . . . Just above that are these little word density clouds. These are words that Amazon has identified inside of reviews. Like they say, “Hey, when people are talking about this one book, they keep using this phrase like ‘mage’, or ‘quit smoking’,” and it's really cool because they're not putting “the A is”, they're finding genre-specific or niche-specific terms that reviewers are actually using when talking about the book. I believe that this is a very clear indication that Amazon is seeing and counting what the reviewers have to say, and that they're showing this to other reviewers as well, and I think they're also using it in their indexing/ranking decision.

Pat: Yeah, I'm reading mine for *Will It Fly?* now. I didn't even notice that tag cloud was there. It says, “Starting a business”, “step by step”, “thanks, Pat”, “passive income”, “thinking about starting”, “time and money”. So these are all relevant things. “Highly recommended” is in there too, by the way, “must read”. So that's good. Those are good signs for *Will It Fly?*. Wow. I mean, what a great way to even do research on other books in, I imagine, the space that you might be putting a book into to see, well, what are people talking about? What are people describing? It's kind of a fun way to scour the reviews quickly like that. Thanks for sharing that. That's really awesome. I didn't even know that existed.

Dave: Well, Amazon's actually getting more and more interested in the words that best describe books. And we can tell because, like I said, six months ago they did that. But another really cool thing that I think they did just this month is that if you go to look at the categories, especially in fiction, if you look on the left side, they have kind of a breakdown of more information. Say, for example, you're looking at like children's books. There's actually a filter now where you can select certain award-winning names like the . . . what is it the Caldecott? And others. And so once you select that, they'll show you those. But again, that's only going to be for children's books.



They also have words and phrases as well as ways to describe things. So if you're in romance, you might find a whole bunch of romance-specific, very genre-specific terms in there that will also give you an understanding that Amazon thinks those words are so important that they actually added it as a filter on the left side. So we're starting to see Amazon really care about the best way shoppers search for their books, and they're giving us more and more opportunities as shoppers, as well as authors, to understand the market even better.

Pat: Lovely. Going back to reviews, I know it's a popular tactic to recruit a team before a book launch, which I still recommend. It's great to get people behind you to offer the manuscript ahead of time. We've had podcast episodes with a number of people in the past from Jeff Goins to Daniel Decker to talk about, okay, the importance of a launch team. And so, in exchange for getting people into a launch team, and offering them the manuscript, and providing value to them, often you can get a whole load of people giving you a review on day one. I don't know what the best strategy is. I sometimes hear the other side of it, which is, "Isn't it kind of fishy to have a hundred reviews on the first day? Shouldn't they be spaced out?" Any thoughts from your expert view on reviews and velocity, especially immediately after a launch?

Dave: Well, I wouldn't judge any review, whether it's one month later all condensed together. One thing that we as authors though kind of run into, we know the system, we kind of know what's going on. But remember, though, the shopper is not as in tune to things. Like my grandmother, she goes shopping and she looks for her book. Muzzy, she's this cute little old lady, I love her. And she just looks at stars and she clicks on that and she buys it. But she's not going to look and say, "Oh well, Jeepers, that book had a hundred reviews in the past two days. This is wrong." She doesn't go as in detail. And I would say that a majority of Amazon shoppers don't think to go through and look at how many reviews came in, how quick, and, "Let me look at the individual profiles of shoppers and see what else they bought." I think they just look at how many reviews does it have, what grade does it have, their social proof, "I feel good about this because other



people feel good about it. I'm going to make the purchase." And that's just how people do.

So if you have that team, I would say that the best thing is, is that just helping them to know when the book launches, and to let them understand, too, why it's important. That's a really important aspect. Like I said before, authors know the importance of review, but readers and people out there, they don't understand that. So one thing I try to do is that when I'm trying to have the team and get the momentum, is just reminding them of how important that review is. "Just be honest, absolutely, and I just really appreciate what you're doing and this really means a lot."

Pat: I mean, how would you specifically phrase that to an audience to help get more reviews? I mean, what kinds of things would you say? I mean, is it just, "Hey, thanks for supporting. Please help," kind of thing, or are there any other benefits that we can include in our messaging there?

Dave: Well, one way to go about it, and this is also something you can use at the back of the book as well, is that, remind them that you're an author, that you've been working on this, and let them know about the importance of reviews—not just for the book itself, but also for you, because you're going to read those, and you really care about what they have to say. That does a couple of things. Number one, it reminds people that you're human. That sounds ridiculous to say. But remember, when somebody who doesn't know who you are picks up your book for the first time and they're reading it, they might not have remembered your name, they might not even know who you are. They just read the story. Right at the end, you're reminding them who you are, that you care, that this is an art, and this will give them more of a reason to leave a review. And the truth is, they're reminded that you're human, so it might be an even better review than it would have. Maybe they're thinking, "Oh, this is a two star and, well, okay, maybe a three star." Or they were going to give it a four and be like, "You know what? Nah, honestly it is pretty good. I'm going to go with a five." But that tactic right there, especially at the end of the book, will help you to increase the number of reviews you get, as well as

the grades you get. And that same thing can be used in the email. Just remind people how much that means and that you're going to read them because you care.

Pat: I love that. So email is important, and I think that a lot of people have many different creative ways to collect email from a book. And for nonfiction it maybe is a little bit easier because we have other bonuses that we can include. I included a companion course for *Will It Fly?*, I'm doing the same thing for *Superfans*. For both fiction and nonfiction, any good suggestions on collecting those emails? Because, unfortunately, Amazon doesn't give us those emails, and so we have to work hard to collect those so that we can communicate with our audience, just like you said. So any best strategies or practices for that from your point of view?

Dave: With nonfiction, I one hundred percent recommend you sitting down and thinking, "What can I provide that adds to the book?" Not something random, but like what would be a good companion with a book where it's like, "I need this." It's not something, necessarily, that means I can't read this and get all the way through without it, but it's something like, I'm going to lose out on value if I don't have it. You did an amazing job with that follow on course that you had with *Will It Fly?*.

Pat: Thank you.

Dave: It was obvious that this is—I should sign up for this, so that I can get even more out of this purchase I made. So nonfiction's pretty easy in that you should start looking at how you can increase the value. Now, fiction, on the other hand, I've got a really cool tactic that I love. I'm actually using this with Orson Scott Card. Him and I are working together on an upcoming self-published book of his.

Pat: No way, dude. That's awesome.

Dave: Yeah, I know—

Pat: Congrats, man.

Dave: I'm such a diehard fan. Yeah, he's a really nice guy, too. But anyway, I call this the Kobayashi Maru tactic. For all the Star Trek fans out there, we had . . . And for those who don't, let me explain it. But the Kobayashi Maru was a test, and it was something really big about Captain Kirk, where if . . . Like it defined his character. It defined why he operated the way he did. Now, we didn't need to see the Kobayashi Maru test, right? We just needed to know. The characters kept talking about it, and it was this lore, sort of. Finally, in one of the recent movies, we got to see the Kobayashi Maru as how it happened, and it was neat. Here's the thing. This is why this is a great email signup. When people buy a fiction book, there's a really good chance they're not a fan of you yet. They just found your book through your ads or through keywords or whatever, they picked it up, and if they got to the end, it means they like your story. It does not mean they like you. A mistake many authors make is that they just offer up another story, some random story of theirs, "Here, sign up to get my next story." That won't convert because people don't care. It's not a mean statement. They just don't care about you yet. Instead, though, offer them something that's still a part of that story. More importantly, use the Kobayashi Maru tactic.

I say, when you're writing that fiction book, start to either do one of two things. Have a prequel in mind, a short story prequel, or build up some kind of lore, some kind of like story, background story that people keep bringing up. And then at the end of the book, say to your fans, "Hey, would you like to know about such and such? Would you like to hear the story of the Kobayashi Maru and what actually happened to Kirk? Check it out here."

A couple of examples of what we've seen is, for example, a romance book, these characters kept talking about this one, "Mr. X" date that just went horribly wrong. They never said what happened, they never said who Mr. X was, but they just kept bringing it up as kind of a laugh, like, "Oh, let's hope it's not another Mr. X event." And they're like, "Yeah, no kidding." It was like, "It took me about a year to date another man after that." And so, everybody's like, "Okay, okay. It

doesn't detract from the story." But then, at the end, it's like, "Would you like to read the story of Mr X date?" All of a sudden, the signups went four times greater, just because people wanted to know. Curiosity is a beautiful thing. And now, they fell in love with the main story, they get a little bit more of the story. They've read your stuff twice, and now they're on your email list and you have an opportunity to build that connection with them, one handshake at a time, and build up the point where they remember your name and they become a fan of your work.

Pat: That's really cool. Would you beckon that extra thing into the end of the book as sort of a, "Hey, now that you've finished this, if you're interested in this, go here?" And is that just a landing page?

Dave: Yeah. So at the end of the book, the next page after the end is I'll put in there the, "Thank you. I hope you enjoy this book. If you would like to hear about the tale of Mr. X, click here," and it would be a short link—it's usually the best idea—a short link that will point to a page where they can sign up to get said book. I definitely recommend making sure it's always a short link, and any links you put in there it's a short link for two reasons. Number one, is that sometimes you may have to change that landing page and it's so much easier to change where that short link points to than having to reformat your book and upload a new book. Number two, is that some books, like for example if you do a print book, people can't just click the link there. They have to actually go and type it. So make it short and easy for them.

Pat: Perfect. Thank you for that. Now, I remember from my experience getting on Kindle for the first time back in 2013 with my book, *Let Go*. There were a lot of things that I just didn't even know I would have had to make a decision on. And I would imagine for a lot of, especially new authors today, it's the same thing. You go and put your book onto Kindle and they ask you things like, "Do you want to participate in Kindle Select?" How would you describe to somebody what that means? Is that important? How do we know what to say yes to, what to say no to when we're in that upload process?

- Dave: That's a really, really good question. Kindle Select is a great program where you sort of get a lot of benefits if you select it. What happens though, is if you put your book on Kindle Select, it means you can't sell it anywhere else. You can't sell it on iTunes, Kobo, Barnes & Noble, none of those. Now that may sound like a terrible, raw deal, but if you talk to most authors that actually sell on all markets, it's a very small percentage of their sales are on iTunes and Barnes & Noble and Kobo. Matter of fact, I think mine, and I work really hard in the international markets, mine only sell twenty-five percent outside of Amazon, and I'm pretty sure that's a really high number compared to most.
- Pat: It sounds high, yeah.
- Dave: Most people see something like ten to five percent. So you're not really losing much, but here's a couple of reasons why it works. Number one is that if you are in Kindle Select and I'm shopper, and I see your book and another book and yours is Kindle Select, I'm going to choose yours, because if I'm a Kindle Select participant, I get it for free, right? Whereas, I'd have to pay extra money to buy the non-Kindle Select book.
- Pat: But the author still gets paid.
- Dave: That's right. They get paid through the Kindle Pages program where, basically, they have a set giant pool, and for how many pages of your book are read, you get paid a certain number. So you still get paid. But again, look at the customer's perspective, right? If you're a part of the Kindle program, are you going to pay extra money for that book when you're undecided? The answer is no. You're going to take that Kindle Select book, because to the shopper, it's free. Now, what Amazon's algorithm sees is that, well, every time somebody types in this keyword, they choose this one and not that one. So a lot of Kindle Select authors actually see their sales, their rankings all improve because they selected it. So that can be one thing that really helps an author.

The other thing, too, is that they have programs where you can actually set your book for free for a certain period of time every ninety days. A lot of authors may be saying, “Why would I want to make that free? That's terrible.” But it can give you an opportunity to, say, two months after your launch, be able to put it out there and build up momentum again. Also, it can be an opportunity where, to those who are on your email list, “Hey, you can pick it up for free. Check it out.” And it's an opportunity for them to leave a verified review. You can work this into a strategy that helps to keep your book relevant and keep new reviews coming in, and Amazon seeing it consistently getting clicked and downloaded. So it gives you a great opportunity.

But here's the other thing too, though. You'll talk to a lot of authors, and they'll be like, “I don't want to put all my eggs in one basket. I want to have other markets.” And that's cool. If you decide to do that though, my number one recommendation to any author is spend time in those other markets then. We as authors are like, “Oh, Amazon, Amazon reviews, Amazon this, Amazon that.” The authors that take time to get a couple of reviews in Barnes & Noble and a couple of reviews in iTunes actually see greater return on their time investment. It's funny, it's like it may take you twenty reviews or so to beat out a competitor on Amazon, and it might just take you two reviews on iTunes because nobody else got a review. So if you choose to go wide, spend time, do a little marketing, a little effort in those other markets, and you'll see more than the five percent that most see.

Pat: Now, *Superfans* is going to be in Barnes & Noble, I'm told. Hopefully, my team is putting all the right pieces into place, but that's going to be the hardcover version. And if we were to have the hardcover in Barnes & Noble and other places, can I still select Kindle Select for just the ebook and have the ebook only available on Amazon?

Dave: No, because you're still selling your book on a different market. Amazon wants exclusivity.



- Pat: And that's for both ebook and paperback sort of together, or hard cover?
- Dave: That's right.
- Pat: Okay.
- Dave: Yeah. The same thing too, if you have your ebook and you have it on Kindle Select, however, though, you're also selling it on your own website, they'll knock you for that, too.
- Pat: Wow. Even on your own website?
- Dave: That's correct. And they crawl. Because I've got a couple of horror stories from a couple of authors that were like, "They took down my book because I violated." It's like, yeah, they got a system.
- Pat: Yeah, that's crazy. Cool, that's really good information. In addition to the sort of ninety-day period or things that you can do after the launch of your book to keep it out there . . . And I think that's great too, especially for nonfiction authors who know that a book is going to lead to more opportunities such as perhaps online course sales, or coaching, or speaking opportunities. It's worth having your book be free, especially on Kindle—it's just an ebook—and getting yourself more out there so that you can have those other backend opportunities, I think that's really smart. What other post-launch opportunities are there to help us market our book and get it into more people's hands?
- Dave: My favorite is Amazon ads. So Amazon, about a couple of years ago, created their own ad system. It used to be called AMS, and then they changed it again. So if you see that term, that's what they're referring to. But this is sort of one of those where you say, "Hey, Amazon, I really want my book to show up for these words. I want these kinds of readers to see it when they pick up their Kindle and they're ready to read. I want my book to show up in front of this book." These sorts of things you can actually control. And Amazon, you said in a bid, like,

“I'm willing to pay this much for every click,” and then Amazon gets to work to get your book in front of those.

What I love most about the system is a couple of things. Number one, is that we talked about those conversions and your rankings. What a lot of Amazon ads, people find, is that when their ads are doing well, their book starts selling naturally in other places better. That's because Amazon sees conversion. It's like, “Oh, this is cool. Hey, let's put in these other keywords. Let's put it showing up for these other things.” So it can help to revive a book, as well as keep it thriving and relevant in the market. Another thing that I really like about Amazon ads over other ad system is that, like with Facebook ads, you have to convince somebody who's maybe watching a cat video, or checking out on Aunt Selma, or whatever, to stop what they're doing, go over to Amazon, not only decide to buy right now, but then to buy your book. This can be really, really difficult because that's a lot of things you got to convince them to do right then and there. What's cool with Amazon ads though, is that you're getting in front of people who've already decided that they want a book and they're ready to buy, they're just looking for their next pick. So this can be a great system. It helps benefit all your sales, as well as reaching a market that wants to buy instead of convincing them to buy.

Pat: How did you get started with ads? Where do you even begin?

Dave: Well, I've actually got a full free course that can help any author. It's just, go to [amscourse.com](http://amscourse.com), and right there, it will give you everything you need to know about Amazon ads, what they've changed, and ways to get started, so you can start getting your book in front. And I highly recommend Amazon ads being a part of your marketing campaign, not just from the launch, but to continuously do it so that your book stays relevant, and you can see it making sales months, if not years, down the road.

Pat: How much would you recommend a person at the launch of their book to allocate, budget-wise, for Amazon ads? And what might one expect from that in return?

Dave: Well, I think that's really dependent on the author themselves as well as the niche they pick. If you're in fiction and you're writing romance, you should probably have a bigger budget than, say, if you're writing a book on Evernote for authors. The other thing that you're going to run into is how can you convince Amazon to show your book more? Evernote for authors, you're going to find there's a limited amount of things that you can really target. But if you're in like Victorian, second-chance romance, I mean, you could target "second-chance romance", "Victorian romance", all of these much larger terms that can be broken down. So there's a lot more opportunity in some of those books. However, though, the beautiful thing about Amazon is it's not like Facebook where if you say, "Hey, Facebook, spend ten dollars a day," Facebook will spend it. Amazon's actually more of the line of, "Hey, okay, ten dollars per day, please." And it's like, "Ah, a dollar, two dollars, three dollars." So there is a lot more room for forgiveness in case you mess that up or you forget about your campaign, but understand you're going to have to work hard to get Amazon to show it.

Pat: Yeah. And full disclosure, Dave has helped me with *Will It Fly?* back in the day with getting it on the ad platform on Amazon, and we did see a return from it. I mean, it was really interesting and it did seem like it was a process to figure that out. You had given me a little bit of homework related to some of the keywords and stuff like that, and there's definitely a process there, but it seemed to work out and I'm definitely excited on how we might be able to continue the exposure of *Superfans* once it comes out right at the launch and beyond with ads to support that. And I'll definitely be going to you for more help with that stuff, Dave, because you're the expert there. What was the URL for the course one more time for people who are just interested in sort of giving that a shot?

Dave: Amscourse.com

Pat: Amscourse.com. Awesome. What else are we missing here? I know there's other things on Amazon specifically that can help us promote our book, for example, frequently bought together. People who

bought this book also bought this one. How do we . . . If at all, is there any way to sort of take advantage of that or game . . . not game that, but hack that a little bit, tricks that you have up your sleeve for that sort of thing?

Dave:

Actually, I think one way to answer this is kind of talk about our sales page, our Amazon books sales page. There are a couple of things that authors can do to really help increase their conversion rate. And when we say conversion rate, you could do great keywords and you can have a great cover. That gets people to go from Amazon to your book sales page, right? You could do Amazon ads, and again, that's another method to bring people to your sales page. You could do your launch team, you could do all these methods and that brings in there. But if your sales page stinks, let's face it, you're not going to see as much of a return on all of that effort.

So some of the things you can do is making sure that you have a good-looking book description. Like really spend time and think about that thing. I used to not put as much stock into book descriptions, I'm not going to lie, until I started doing an Amazon ads and I could directly see that, "Hey, we showed your book this many times. This percentage of people clicked on your book, and only this tiny, tiny percentage decided to buy your book." And when I was like, "Wow, okay, let me improve that book description," and when I did, all of a sudden I saw my conversion rates go up. Matter of fact, I worked on a book called *Battlefield Earth*, and that particular book description was horrendous. So we went in and we updated and changed it, and immediately three times their conversion rate, just from the one thing. So I highly recommend taking necessary time to not only write a great book description, but also format it as well.

If you type into Google "book formatting" or "Kindle book formatting", we have a free tool out there that will help authors to be able to just write in, and then click buttons and make it look the way you would want. And when you're ready, just click "get the code" and then paste that into Amazon. Or if you know HTML, you can do that, but it'll help

you to make it look better. So there's your book description, and don't neglect that.

The second thing, though, is also you can set up an author central account, and through there, you can create an editorial review section. You can do a lot more with your page, and so, legitimacy. If you have an editorial review section and you know people in the industry or you know a veteran, like, say for example, the veteran example, get those people to write a comment and to say what they feel. By the way, in the rules, you can put anything in there. It's not like the other reviews that people leave. So if it's, say for example, I'm writing a book and I'm like, "Hey, Pat, I know we're friends. I'm just wondering if you checked out the book." "Oh, yeah, Dave, I did." "Great. Would you mind kind of giving me a review that I can post in editorial review section?" "Yeah, no problem, put that in there." Those things are great to help convince people the legitimacy of the book, and who's reading it, who cares about it.

The next thing is, we talked about reviews. We talked about some of the strategies you can do to increase the reviews, like for example, humanizing yourself at the end, making sure that your email list or followers and things understand the importance and what that means to you and that you care to read them. Those things will increase what people say about your book and the quality and even the level of detail they put in the reviews which, like we just talked about, are words that Amazon cares about. So that will help to index you more.

Pat: Do you recommend, or is it even worthwhile to . . . And thank you for all that. The sales page is important. I mean, we've had Bryan Cohen on the show before too, and he's just the description wizard.

Dave: He really is.

Pat: He is, and he's awesome. I'll link to that in the show notes too, all these other parts too. On the reviews, this question came to mind. Are you allowed to incentivize people to leave reviews in some way?

- Dave: No, you are not. So reviews and the rules on reviews get really confusing. As matter of fact, I created this YouTube video to explain everything because it's weird how Amazon will say one thing but not another. You can, to this day still, one hundred percent, give your book for free and request a review. That is one hundred percent okay. And their Vice President of Customer Services, Mr. Chee Chew actually came out and said, "You can't do that for physical products," but Amazon still holds the time-old tradition of allowing publishing companies and authors to send their books for free in return for a review. However, though, where it gets into nuances is you can't say, "Hey, if you buy my book and you leave a review, I will give you the money for that book." You've just incentivized it. It's kind of the same as giving them the book for free, and then telling them to leave a review. However, though, they don't get the money until they leave the review. So you've incentivized them giving you a review.
- Pat: Yeah, you're basically paying for reviews at that point.
- Dave: That's right. So it's okay to give your book and for them to leave a review, but you can't do things . . . Here's another trick I've seen a couple do that's like, "Ehh, I don't think that will work." Some people will do like, for example, a contest. And to enter the contest, they say, you have to leave a review. No, you can't do that, because now you've made it that they get something by leaving a review. But what you can do is that you can do a contest and say, "Hey, all you have to do is click this link and you're entered. And by the way, that link takes you to the book review page for my book. If you've read the book and you haven't left a review, please go ahead and do that, but do understand that you're still entered just because you clicked the link."
- Pat: So it's not required to leave it, but you're kind of "forcing" them to see the page at least. And since they're there, hopefully, they would fill it out.
- Dave: By the letter of the law, you are now compliant, and that actually is a good opportunity. So long as you're open and honest about it, "Hey, I'm sending you to that page, and if you haven't left a review, that would be awesome. And if not, well, no problem. Enjoy, you're still in



the book is free right now, you can go get it. And if you do and you like it,” or whatever, “please leave a review,” that’s not bad. They don’t have to say, “I got the book for free,” because you didn’t send it to them, Amazon made it free for them.

Pat: It was “purchased” or delivered through Amazon.

Dave: That’s right. So that’s a little tiny nuance difference between the two.

Pat: And going back to what you said earlier, doing it in that sort of promotion with the free promotion through Kindle Select, that then enables those comments and reviews to be verified, purchased comments, which, are they weighed more? I know they look different with the little check mark or something, so they are a little bit more legitimate to the potential customer. But are they weighed more, as well, in terms of the algorithm, or?

Dave: Yes. So a verified review is Amazon’s ability to prove that this person did, in fact, have the book and therefore left a review. Therefore, that review, in Amazon’s mind, is more legitimate than one where they can’t prove that the person ever even read it, much less seen it.

Pat: Right.

Dave: So that definitely helps. So if you have had people who want to leave a review, but say, for example, you sent them a PDF copy as—say for example, a pre-order, or as just a heads up, it’s coming out—if they haven’t left a verified review, when it’s free, that’s an opportunity for them to download the book and then leave a review that’s now seen by Amazon as a verified review.

Pat: Cool. Thank you for all this, Dave. I have one more final topic that I want to discuss before we finish up here. This is super helpful for me and my team, and I know it’s helpful for everybody else listening as well, and just thank you for your time today. Bad reviews, negative reviews, how might one best respond, or should they respond or deal with that? These things can eat up an author so terribly, and they have for me in the past, and luckily, I’ve grown a little bit of a thick skin over

the years to be able to deflect those sorts of things. And hopefully, the quality of whatever it is that you're creating will be great enough such that there'll be more positive comments than negative comments. But we are very likely to receive negative comments and potentially even hateful and disrespectful comments as well. How might you recommend we authors best handle those as they come in?

Dave:

The first thing I would say is don't respond. A lot of people get really fired up and they want to write something as a comment, or they want to bash this obviously heinous or wrong review. And that never does anything. Amazon's not going to say, "Oh, yeah, it totally sounds like the person didn't read the book. Yeah, we'll get rid of it." And authors may spend more time trying to damage the review or get Amazon to change it, when they can just be working on either their craft, or their next book, or their marketing efforts.

However, though, I will say that sometimes a review, a bad review can really help. You can read through and realize, "Oh, man. Huh. That's a good point. Yeah, I probably should have covered that more. Oh, I might've been wrong there." If you're able to read the review from a fact-finding perspective instead of subjectively, it can be a great opportunity for you to improve. But if you can't, one hack that I recommend is have a friend, or your spouse or something, read them for you, and then have them condense them into something that's important.

So if somebody is like, "Man, this guy's an idiot. I hate them," you may just throw that one out. But then they say, "Because he did this, and if he had just not done that, maybe I could've gotten behind what he's saying," your wife or your spouse can look at that and say, "Okay, we'll take out the hate. We'll take out the ridiculousness, and let me let Dave see this part, maybe even not make it so hateful." Just say, recommend in the future that the person stopped using this form, or recommend the person get a better editor, something like that. And that will help you to grow and not lose time, sleep or energy over the hate that you might receive.

- Pat: What if the comment was, in fact, from a person who was obviously misunderstood and they're saying things that would completely deter somebody who is maybe on the fence of purchasing a book? Would you not recommend responding then if they were just blatantly wrong? And shouldn't we fight for our book if it seems like somebody's trying to—maybe even not even purposefully damage it—but it could be sort of a damaging review?
- Dave: Nine times out of ten the answer is going to be no, but there will always be that one time where it might actually be a good opportunity to respond to try to help. And I think that's kind of my go/no-go question is, will my comment help? Not me, not my pride or not my anger over all this, but will it help that person or others? And if the answer is yes, then absolutely. But if what you're doing is argumentative, it's just best to step back and just focus on what you're doing because it's always going to happen. You'll see something maddening, like somebody will say, "I didn't even read this book, I don't even know what it's about, but I give it one star." It's like, "What?"
- Pat: Or like, "Oh, the book came damaged." And it's not your fault, but you'll still get a one star. Those, I just leave me because I would hope that most people would see that and go, "Oh, that's not a real review."
- Dave: Right, exactly. And what I've also found, too, is a lot of people, instead of reading the one star or the five star, they usually . . . I mean, we're talking the pro book readers out there, they like to look at the two star and the three star. Because to them, one star and a five star is like glowing, super happy, or super hateful. But the two, three, four is the person who's trying to . . . they thought about it, there's some good, some bad, and they find some of the best stuff there. And to tell you the truth, a lot of people will look at that one star where the person is just a hater, and be like, "Okay, but let me read the two, three and four and get something from that. Why did this person not give them a full five? Or why did this person not give them a full one?" And sometimes, even the two star, three star or four star can actually be a great thing to help you in sales. So I'd say, nine times out of ten, it's best just not to answer. But if you know that your answer or your action can help others, then take that action.

- Pat: Video reviews, are those important?
- Dave: They can be. For new authors, I really want to stress over that. Video review is just another way of showing legitimacy and that people liked it so much that they took the time. However, though, with you, Pat, I would definitely say that's a great opportunity. I'm sure some of your incredible listeners out there will be like, "Easy. Just grab the iPhone, record a video holding the book, and pop that up there," and that definitely helps. But as a new author, I wouldn't go out of my way to try to push that. There's a lot of things you can do for book marketing. That's just a little bit of icing on the cake.
- Pat: Cool. Dude, this is tremendously helpful. Dave, thank you so much. And for anybody out there who wants to learn more about you and what you have going on and the things that you have to offer, where would you recommend they go?
- Dave: Just hit me up on [Kindlepreneur.com](http://Kindlepreneur.com), and I also tell people, too, that if anything that we talked about, or there's questions or so, just go to my contact page, hit me up there. I still answer every one of those. I'll be happy to help out as much as possible.
- Pat: Dude, thank you so much. I appreciate it and looking forward to working with you still. Thanks, Dave.
- Dave: Absolutely. And again, it's great being here. Thank you.
- Pat: All right. I hope you enjoyed that interview with Dave Chesson from [Kindlepreneur.com](http://Kindlepreneur.com). If you want to check them out and all the great things he has going on there, [Kindlepreneur.com](http://Kindlepreneur.com), that's where you go. And we discussed a lot of different strategies and a lot of different resources and links in previous episodes where we've talked about books with other people, other guests who are amazing as well. So all those links and resources for all of your book writing needs will be available on the show notes page at [smartpassiveincome.com/session378](http://smartpassiveincome.com/session378), [smartpassiveincome.com/session378](http://smartpassiveincome.com/session378).

If you enjoyed this episode, let me know on Instagram or Twitter @PatFlynn. And if you want to tag Dave as well, @kindlepreneur, I'm sure he'd appreciate that. And again, Dave, thank you so much. I know you listen to the show, you're a big fan. I'm a big fan of you as well. Thanks for all the help and I'll definitely be, if I haven't already, applying a lot of the strategies that you talked about into my upcoming book, *Superfans*, which, as a reminder, you can all get it. Pre-order right now before August 13th, and you get a bonus as well. You get the audio book plus some other goodies. If you go to [smartpassiveincome.com/superfans](http://smartpassiveincome.com/superfans), you'll get all the instructions there. And if you're listening to this after the fact, you can still get the book, *Superfans*, at [smartpassiveincome.com/superfans](http://smartpassiveincome.com/superfans).

Thanks to everybody who has helped support that. Thank you to Dave who's helping me on the behind-the-scenes stuff related to that element of it. But of course, the actual writing process of the book, how the book is involved in the rest of the business environment, plays a huge role in this as well. And so, make sure you subscribe because next week we're going to talk with Azul Terronez, a book writing coach, and he and his partner just do amazing work with some top leaders, helping leaders write books to help support their leadership and get their message out there. We're going to talk with Azul because he's directly helped me sell more books and write *Will It Fly?*, which went on to—as a self-published book—become a Wall Street Journal bestseller.

We'll see what happens with *Superfans*. I have no idea how it's going to do. Hopefully, you'd consider three years worth of audience growth since *Will It Fly?*. Hopefully, *Superfans* will do even better, but no matter what, all that matters is it gets in your hands and you read it and you apply it to your business. So number one, make sure you subscribe to the show to not miss that episode with Azul next week. Number two, get *Superfans*, [smartpassiveincome.com/superfans](http://smartpassiveincome.com/superfans). I appreciate you. Cheers. Take care. You're amazing. Love you so much, #TeamFlynnForTheWin.

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