

# **Copywriting and Self-Publishing Secrets**

**Bob Serling Interviews Ted Nicholas**

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Published by to The Internet Marketing Center  
1123 Fir Avenue  
Blaine, WA 98230  
(604) 730-2833  
(604) 730-2480 fax

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

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## Copywriting and Self-Publishing Secrets: Bob Serling Interviews Ted Nicholas

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**Bob:** Good afternoon, Ted.

**Ted** Good afternoon, Bob. How are you doing?

**Bob:** Real good, how about you?

**Ted:** I couldn't be better. It's a beautiful sunny day here.

**Bob:** Well, great, we've got a sunny day here, too. So it sounds like we're in good shape. First, before we get started I just have to tell you what a real pleasure it is to be able to talk to you and pick your brain for my readers and listeners. I've been a fan of yours for many years and your reputation precedes you. I really want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk with you today.

**Ted:** Well, it's my pleasure.

**Bob:** I'd like to cover a few things today and the first thing I wanted to start out with is your incredible resource, *How To Publish A Book And Sell A Million Copies*. By the way, I'm not giving back the complimentary copy I got – it just has too much great information in it!

**Ted:** (Laughs) Well, that's your copy.

**Bob:** Great, thanks. You know, one thing I want to talk about, because most of the people who will hear this tape are interested in improving their business and improving their copywriting, is besides the aspect of self publishing in general, just how self-publishing can be used as a lead generator for more business. I know you've got a lot of experience in that so I'll just sit back and let you go with it.

**Ted:** Yeah, well that's certainly something – we are in the middle of the information age and your listeners, I'm sure are aware that it's very important to use the dynamics of that information age, in a manner that's conducive to building a business. And I'm a big believer in using information products regardless of the business that you're in.

For example, one of my friends who has a plumbing company here in the Florida area was talking to me one day about six months ago and he said, “Gosh I just have a plumbing company, there's no way I could use information products.” I said, “Wait a minute, why don't you consider publishing a report that shows your customers, or anybody that's interested, how to do their own plumbing repairs?”

Now, let’s say for repairs that are very minor up to, say fifty dollars or so.” He said, “Gee, that’s a great idea!”

**Bob:** That is a great idea.

**Ted:** And I said, “Well, yeah. All you have to do is, we can – I’ll help you get a good journalist to put together a report for you. There’s lots of freelance people that will work for a fee that are competent, and basically this will not be a promotional piece for your business but very much of a value for the person getting the report.”

So he went ahead and did that. And basically he lets people have that report free. Now of course, guess who people call when they have a plumbing repair that they can’t handle themselves?

**Bob:** Exactly.

**Ted:** See, that’s the whole idea. So any business can really use a special report or book that’s really helpful for their customers. And I think the first thing to do is to serve the needs and interests and wants of your customers and then in return – you know, what goes around definitely comes around – people will remember their source of that information.

I also have a lot of friends who are – another friend of mine is a very good public speaker and she goes around doing public speaking and she sells tapes of her talks. I encouraged her to get a book completed because when you’re a consultant or a public speaker, or practically any kind of business activity that you’re engaged in, when you do publish material, that qualifies you. There’s something about a book that gives you credentials that you can’t get in any other way.

This particular speaker and consultant did a book, and of course it’s a whole lot different handing someone a book that you’ve authored when you want to identify yourself as a particular, as a person who has specialized knowledge in a given field.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Ted:** This individual’s speaking engagements, as well as her other activities, as well as the sale of her tapes and other things that she markets have been enhanced by the fact that she’s published the book. So, a book can be a very helpful adjunct to practical anything that you would do.

**Bob:** So, basically what you’re saying, the way I hear it is – not only does it – like for a speaker or for any professional who attends trade shows or has speaking engagements or whatever, it acts as a profit center. But at the same time, it’s a very powerful tool for establishing your expertise and credibility.

**Ted:** It really is, yes, exactly, it does that. It does it in a way that a résumé for example does not. Or even a newspaper article does not. A book is really the ultimate way of establishing credibility. So, and I believe that there is at least one good book, you’ve heard me say this before, Bob, at least one good book in everyone. And my work is devoted these days to helping get at least that one book out of everyone that attends my seminars and reads my materials.

**Bob:** Great. Let’s back up a little bit to the general aspect of self-publishing, more from the standpoint of a profit center. Why would you recommend to business people that they self-publish as opposed to trying to have their book done by an outside publishing house?

**Ted:** Well, a number of reasons. First of all, the chances of an unknown author getting any book published today is almost nil. Publishing houses are just inundated with unsolicited manuscripts from people, many of them very expert in their field, and they just simply are unable to publish all the worthwhile material that there is out there.

But let’s say you were one, let’s say you’re one out of five hundred and somehow you got a publisher’s attention and you got published. The problem with what I refer to as New York or conventional publishing houses is that they use a shotgun approach to publishing. They really do not focus time, attention and marketing direction to each title.

They basically throw a lot of titles – but that’s the nature of their business, they’re not doing anything malicious in any way, that’s just the only way they really know how to do it. They just go out with a lot of books, and out of a hundred books that the New York publishing establishment puts out, perhaps five of them more than break even. The other ninety-five are losses for the publisher and they just go out of – they just basically become remainder books and never sell the first printing. So that’s not very good for the author either.

The difference when you’re self-publishing is that you’re focusing your own energy and passion and attention on the marketing of your book. Now, my first book, which is now nearly a million copies in print...

**Bob:** Wow, that’s great.

**Ted:** ... which is *How To Form Your Own Corporation Without A Lawyer For Under Seventy-Five Dollars*. Had I gone -I was turned down by nine conventional publishers, by the way, when that book was written.

**Bob:** That’s amazing.

**Ted:** And they did me a great service because I started my own company. Enterprise Publishing, which published the book and it’s – I’m proud to say, one of the

largest-selling business books of all time. But the reason that it is, is not by accident, it's because I wrote over one hundred ads. So far I've written, I counted one day recently, over a hundred and twenty thousand words of copy and the book itself only has thirty thousand words of copy.

**Bob:** You've written four books on selling it.

**Ted:** That's right. Now, I can guarantee you that no major publishing house would have devoted that time, energy and attention to the book. So an individual author, and it's not only my own experience, people like Dr. Wayne Dyer for example, couldn't get a publisher for his first book, *The Erroneous Zones*. So he self-published it and got in his car and went bookstore to bookstore getting his book out and gradually that book started to sell, and ultimately was bought out, he was bought out by a major publishing house that later distributed the book through bookstores.

**Bob:** Right.

**Ted:** But he started out as a self-publisher. And there are many others, Doug Casey, who's a good friend of mine who wrote one of the largest selling financial books of all time called *Crisis Investing*, self-published his book. Other people like William Donahue who's quoted every day in the *Wall Street Journal*, and he has the *Donahue Money Fund Report*, he self-published his first book as a result of reading my first book on self-publishing sixteen years ago.

So, lots of contemporary authors these days are self-publishes. Peter McWilliams is another one who has several best sellers.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Ted:** And he's a self-published author and has his own small company called *Prelude Press*. So, the opportunities are huge for the – especially these days with desktop publishing and the technical side of it, getting the book together has been so simplified with the advent of the computer, desktop publish software, and all of those things that – the technical production side is very – you can handle quite easily.

If you can't – if you're not a computer buff yourself, and I'm not a big computer buff by the way, but I appreciate what the computer can do. I utilize the services of someone who is expert in that area and who sets my books on the computer. And of course, you can get a book printed in virtually any town or city in the United States. So, the production of the product, in many businesses, you know, production is a huge problem.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Ted:** But in self-publishing production is no problem at all. So, then it gets down to distribution and marketing like most businesses, which's where you should be spending most of your time. And that's where I spend most of my time and I advocate your listeners spend most of their time, regardless of the business that they're in. Because without marketing, there are no customers and without customers there is no business.

**Bob:** That's right.

**Ted:** So, it's the ultimate and the most important activity for any of us to engage in.

**Bob:** You know, what I find the most interesting of many of the things you just said is the fact that the control you get when you self-publish and the amazing shelf life of your book, *How To Incorporate Your Own Business For Under Seventy-Five Dollars Without A Lawyer*. I mean, it's been how many years that the book has been selling?

**Ted:** Yes, it's the twentieth anniversary edition of the book. Well, you're right. Bob. And that's another thing with self-publishing, you control all aspects. See, the New York publishing establishment, they look upon books as fashion statements. They want the next hot book, for the next year or six months or even three months or even two years, and I believe that that's not the future of publishing. Now that's beginning to change somewhat, but it's still pretty much, they handle books like fashion statements.

When I do a book, I handle a book as, “How can I write a book that's going to fill people's wants and needs forever?” Because I want things that are going to sell on a perennial basis. My work is devoted toward helping entrepreneurs and helping self-publishers.

How can I do this in a manner that's timeless? Because that's the kind of work I'm interested in doing and many self-publishers are interested in doing.

Well, that just goes against the philosophy of many of the conventional publishers. When you are a self-publisher, you have absolute control over the editorial content and exactly what you publish. And of course you have control over many other things. I spend a great deal of time, for example, on book titles. I believe book titles are as important to a book as the headline or a teaser copy is to a space ad or direct mail piece.

**Bob:** I agree.

**Ted:** Yeah, you would agree, because you're an excellent direct marketer. Well, many of the publishing establishment people, they title a book over lunch with an editor after an author spends two years in hard work putting the book together because they don't have a sense of how important in many cases that title is.

So, as a self-publisher you obviously – for example in my book on forming a corporation, I wrote two hundred and seventeen different titles.

**Bob:** Did you really?

**Ted:** Yes, before I selected the final title. And I advocate – and I teach at my seminars how important it is for the self-published author. That was one of the things that I spent a lot of time on. Spend a lot of time on your book title because contrary to the myth that you’ve heard, the myth that you don’t judge a book by its cover? The reality...

**Bob:** Right.

**Ted:** Everyone judges a book by its cover and by its title. So your book title has to be good enough to sell the book without saying anything else about it.

**Bob:** Sure, it only makes sense. Like you said, it’s just like a headline, you’re only going to have a few seconds to grab somebody’s attention. So I can see what you’re getting at, that title better be as powerful as a good headline if you want to get the readers to take a longer look.

**Ted:** It had better be. And I’ve made all of the mistakes. The reason I’m qualified to teach the things that I do these days is because I’ve made more mistakes than anyone could possibly imagine. Because I use of course, the Babe Ruth philosophy of life. Where you know, he was remembered of course for all the home runs that he’s hit. A lesser-known fact is that he struck out more than anyone.

**Bob:** That’s right.

**Ted:** In direct marketing, the people remember all my space ads and direct mail pieces that worked. But I’ve had more that have not worked than anyone else and I’ve had more book titles that haven’t worked than anyone else, probably.

So, what I do with book titles is when I have a book that’s a failure but I feel has a market, I just change the title. Now, an example of that is a book that I did a few years ago. I did what everyone does at some point, which is to have a cutesy title for their book. And I came out with a book called, *How to Get Out If You’re In Over Your Head*. And it’s a book about managing debt.

**Bob:** Right.

**Ted:** Now, my graphic designer got carried away and we had on the cover a picture of a swimmer getting out of a deep pool of water. When I went into bookstores, the book was put into the sports section of the bookstore.

**Bob:** That’s amazing.

**Ted:** And of course, the book was a colossal failure. I think we sent out five thousand and we got four thousand and nine hundred and ninety nine back. I think the only person that bought it was one of my friends.

So, I basically re-titled the book *How To Get Out Of Debt*. We went back out with exactly the same book, changed the cover, had a beautiful new cover design – and the book went out and became a strong perennial seller. That’s an example of a book and a book title, just the change of a title made a substantial difference in the sale of the book.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Ted:** So, I don’t – I’m not an advocate, either in headlines or book titles of what I call oblique headlines where you have to make the person think it through, sort of in a tricky way. Because when you do that, you just lose the reader. People don’t have time to think through the puzzles in your communications. You have to make it very clear, very simple.

**Bob:** I agree, especially in these times when people are so interested in instant gratification. They won’t take the time anymore. If that message isn’t right there hitting them right between the eyes, I agree with you, it’s just not going to get through.

You know, what I also appreciate is your ability to talk about your mistakes as well as your successes because I believe in that very much myself. I believe that anyone who’s a success has a long line of failures that they can talk about, that you can really learn from and teach people from. So, I really appreciate that aspect of...

**Ted:** I couldn’t agree with you on that more. That’s a very misunderstood concept. I know that people have come to my seminars. I always ask the first day, how many people would like it if whatever they tried in life, they never again would fail. And the whole room raises their hand. In fact, people stand up, you know. They want to know how to do that.

And what I begin to – what I share is that there really isn’t any such thing as failure. It’s a state of mind. That essentially there isn’t any way to be successful without failure – you know, success is no accident.

**Bob:** Right.

**Ted:** You’ve got to go out there in the marketplace with your ideas, and anyone that thinks that they’re going to go out with their very first book, perhaps their very

first ad or their very first direct mail piece and be successful, more than likely that’s not going to happen.

What you have to do – what you have to be willing to do – is go out and try something. Don’t bet the ranch on it. If it doesn’t work, change it, try it again. If that doesn’t work, change it, try it again. If that doesn’t work, change it, try it again. Now a lot of people call those things failures but they’re really outcomes and results. I use the word outcome and results and substitute it in my vocabulary for failure.

Because failure is a thing that we’re taught ever since we’re little kids, all of us in this society, is that to fail in anything, even a grade in school, is a terrible calamity. Now, I’m not advocating people go out and fail grades in school, but if you fail a grade in school for giving it your very best effort, nothing really bad happens. You just take the class over again, and that’s really how life is. It’s a perception of how you look at circumstances that enables you to learn from those setbacks and how you perceive those setbacks helps you go on to ultimately have results that you prefer.

So, I am much more inclined, to now look at my life and look at my work and look at all those things because now I have a higher batting average than I had when I first started in direct marketing. But I had setbacks. Everything that I do doesn’t work. Every offer that I make doesn’t pull the way – doesn’t have the result that I would like. But I change it, try others and ultimately I hit the home runs.

So, that is I think a very, very important thing. And I think very misunderstood in my travels and meeting entrepreneurs and people that want to be successful in direct marketing and the like.

Your listeners and readers are people who want to succeed in direct marketing, are they not?

**Bob:** That’s correct.

**Ted:** And I think that is very, very important. There isn’t any copywriter, any marketer that’s ever lived that everything they do is going to win all the time, is going to make a profit each time. The thing to do, that we all have to do, is to learn from the times that we get off track and the setbacks that we have, and the time we go out with the mailings or space ads and we get no replies or one or two. That’s something where we’re missing the mark, that we’re not meeting the wants of the people. I want to talk about wants whenever you’re ready.

**Bob:** Sure, why don’t we go into that right now.

**Ted:** Okay, it’s my observation as far as real unsuccessful people in all forms of business, business in particular, have bought the same thing that I bought when I – the late Napoleon Hill who was a great man and who wrote a wonderful book, *Think And Grow Rich*. I remember reading it a long time ago. Have you read it?

**Bob:** Yes I have.

**Ted:** It’s a wonderful book. And in that book and in many other books and in school, we’ve been taught in business classes that to succeed in business you have to find a need and fill it. And I advocate that that is the cause of more bankruptcies, personal and business bankruptcies, that concept than any other concept that I know of in the business world.

Peter Drucker, for example, the famous professor, also teaches that concept. And the reality is, it simply isn’t so. People do not buy what they need; they only buy what they want. So, I teach the principle that to find a want and fill it is the way to a fortune.

I work out for a couple of hours every day because I believe in a balanced life and health is very important. And I was reminded of that the other day. I don’t often go to fast food places but I was in a hurry and I stopped at a McDonald’s and asked for the low fat burger that they’re selling. I asked the lady behind the counter, “How is this burger going?”

And she said, “Not very well, not many people buy it.” So, I ordered one and I was sitting there thinking, you know, people need to have a low-fat diet, but they buy what they want, they buy hamburgers with more fat in it that taste better. And that’s just one example and there are many, many others. People do what they want.

**Bob:** That’s a great illustration.

**Ted:** Yeah. So in direct marketing I think it’s extremely important because again, I’ve created so many products that I feel the world needs. So many of them have not succeeded in the marketplace because it’s not what people wanted. So, I have to find – and very often, what people want is also what they need and that’s fine. But I think it’s very important to make that mental distinction and to the extent that one does make that distinction, there’s a lot of money that’s going to be unnecessarily lost.

So, to be really successful in your business, if your listeners have a business now, the real key is finding out what your existing customer base wants in addition to what they’ve already purchased from you, your product or service, and then refining it and improving it and having other variations of what they want. Then selling that, making it available to them, and everybody wins. They get what they want, you provide it, and you get what you want. In other words, I’m a believer in

*to get what you really want, you have to give a lot of people what they really want.*

**Bob:** I agree with you a hundred percent and I want to add one comment to that. The greatest failure rate I see with my clients in direct marketing are people who come to me and say, “I’ve written a book or I’ve created an invention or a product or whatever and I want you to help me sell it.” The first thing I say to them is, “Who wants it and why do they want it and why do they want it more than something else?”

“Well,” they answer, “I don’t know, we just really need to figure out how to sell it because this is something that everyone can use.” And actually they’re saying this is something that everyone needs. It’s kind of implied in that statement.

**Ted:** Yeah, it is the common mistake, isn’t it?

**Bob:** It sure is and I strongly agree with you. If you can develop a product by doing research, or a book or report or whatever by doing research on what the people want more than by thinking somebody needs something or developing something and trying to fit it to a need, then you’re going to be way ahead of the game.

**Ted:** You are. Now, there’s a very good shortcut that I use with all products, books and other products that I direct market. Because I’m best known for books but I’ve direct marketed confectionery products, exercise equipment, many things on a direct marketing basis because these principles apply. And I agree with the late Robert Collier that if you can sell books, you can sell anything. Books or ideas, concepts, than you can basically sell anything at a direct marketing basis using those dynamics.

So, what I do with myself and with my clients when they come to me and they say – what I get them to do is this, if you’re thinking of a book or information product or newsletter, I want you to write your version of the ad for that product before you ever produce it. They say, “What? I need to produce it first.”

I go, “No, you’ve got to write the ad for it because it then forces you to think through the product from a benefit standpoint.” Because unless there’s enough benefits for the potential buyer, it’s much better to abandon that product and go on to something else where there a lot of benefits for the buyer.

Now, there are hundreds of thousands of books in the United States written every year just on the basis that you described earlier, Bob. The book is written, the person figures, now I’ve written this book I want to figure out a way now to sell it, and they haven’t thought through, there’s no market for it.

**Bob:** Right.

**Ted:** No one wants it except maybe the individual’s mother, stepfather and so you know, stepbrother and so forth, just the relatives. So, if you do it – that’s the biggest shortcut that I know, is if you write the ad first. When I ran Enterprise Publishing Company, when people would come in with ideas for products, I would say, “Look, write me your version of an ad for that product and sell me the product in the ad. Don’t just come to me with the idea, because then I have the problem of creating the whole marketing campaign for it. I want you to think it through from a benefit standpoint.

So, we got it so a lot of our key people were able to now start thinking of products from a benefit standpoint and we had a much higher success rate when we went out to the marketplace with a new product.

**Bob:** You know, here’s an interesting turn on that. I believe in that concept too. What I advise my clients to do is take their ad or their sales letter and show it 10 people they know but don’t tell them that it’s for their product or that they wrote it. Then ask people if based on that ad, would that person buy the product? And with people who would be interested in that type of product, it’s a real test of truth. It’s a trial by fire to sit down and see whether people are truly interested in their brainstorm or not.

**Ted:** Yes, that’s excellent. I like that.

**Bob:** Of course getting them to actually do it is something else. But it’s like you said, I think you really have to test the market first. In this day and age, you’re wasting immense amounts of time, effort and money if you go ahead and create the product first.

**Ted:** Absolutely, absolutely. Now, there’s one great product that you can sell, it’s one of the reasons that I like it so much, you can sell it in advance of creating it. And it’s perfectly legal and ethical to do that, and that’s a newsletter. Because a newsletter, you can describe it and sell it and then produce it.

So, it’s a wonderful product from that standpoint. It’s really a marketer’s dream. And I’ve published many newsletters in my Enterprise Publishing Company but I haven’t written one myself until recently. And I’ve just completed my first issue, which is going out very soon, of my own newsletter called the Ted Nicholas Letter.

I believe that there’s a great need for more newsletters in the marketing area because that’s the key to business success. And I like what I read in the marketplace that I’ve seen in the direct marketing area, but I feel that I’ve got a lot to share that has – is not being written about anywhere because it’s my own life experience.

So, I thought that the best format for that, as things keep changing in our life and the marketplace, and it's a moving target all the time. So I think a newsletter gives me the best format for that.

The Ted Nicholas Letter is basically devoted to helping people become more successful with their direct marketing or with their products or services. The first issue, for example, deals with something I've never revealed before anywhere, which is really how to write effective headlines. Headlines or teaser copy which are really ninety percent of the success of any space ad or direct mail piece regardless of the product that you have. And I show how to create benefits that are so compelling that one must buy the product to get the benefits.

Also, I refer to something that I've never, and no one ever has written about, because it's a theory and so far as I know, I've never heard of anyone doing it this way. Some of my best headlines are created by using a technique that I call “the hidden benefit.” And I deal in the newsletter with how I create benefits for products that have nothing whatsoever to do with the product itself or nothing whatsoever to do with studying the product but what is the real underlying reason that someone would want the product.

**Bob:** Well, I'm anxious to see that issue myself. You know, when you talk about this in terms of creating that many headlines and you talk about your ability to share your experience, I just want to add a little information here for people reading this. You know, there are so many marketing people who promise certain information in their books and newsletters and never deliver. But I want everybody out there to know that in case they don't know it you have sold, what, over two hundred million dollars worth of books, haven't you?

**Ted:** Yes.

**Bob:** And created the majority of those ads and sales letters that sold them on your own.

**Ted:** About ninety-seven percent on my own.

**Bob:** Right, so I know you might not come out and say it directly but your newsletter comes from direct experience. It's not academic, it isn't some wild new idea, these are proven, tested techniques that you've used to sell just a phenomenal amount of products.

**Ted:** Well, thank you for the compliment. Yes, it's definitely based on my own life experience and there are too many people out there who are teaching, writing newsletters and doing seminars who've never really done it themselves. Who've never really put their own money on the line, never really risked a penny. And therefore, their advice, I think in many cases, not only in direct marketing, but I mean, when one goes to seminars or one subscribes to newsletters -which I love

going to people’s seminars, I love getting newsletters, but I work really hard to find people who are doing or who are practicing what they’re preaching. People who actually have done what they’re writing about and what they’re talking about.

And there are not enough teachers. I’d like to see more and more teachers especially in the direct marketing field. Here we have a two hundred million dollar method of marketing in this country and there’s only a handful of teachers. Bob, as you know, you can count them on one hand – those that are actually people who have done it.

See, the problem is, the ones that are the best at direct marketing are entrepreneurs, like my friend Joe Sugarman who has a company JS&A. He did a couple of seminars a few years ago, and I was fortunate enough to attend one of them. But he’s not teaching, not doing seminars any longer, and a lot of people like him, are just running their own companies and not teaching others.

**Bob:** Right, they’ve got their hands full with their day-to-day operations.

**Ted:** Exactly, and before I sold my former companies, I was in that same boat. I couldn’t be out teaching and lecturing and going to seminars and things because I was just so busy with my own activities. And now I’m trying to keep – well, I’m devoting myself to keeping a good portion of my time open for teaching and seminars. And devoting myself because I feel that direct marketing activities have been so good to me and I have so much information to share with others, that I want to do everything I can to transmit that information to lots of people. And using today’s modern mass communication methods with books, tapes and videos, it makes it possible to do that. So, I’m having a great time doing these things not only here in the United States but also in Europe.

**Bob:** Great. You know, because we are a little limited for time here, there’s one thing you told me when we talked the other day that you promised to reveal and I think it’s so hot that I want to take the opportunity to make sure that it goes out on this interview. What I’m talking about is the recent discovery you told me about pricing and what numbers to use with pricing. Can you describe that a little bit?

**Ted:** Oh sure, I’d be happy to. Yes, I’ve always been intrigued, I do a lot of market test pricing for all of my products. And I let the market help determine what the final price of the product ought to be. But I’ve recently come across, and I’ve experimented with a lot of prices at different price points, like \$19.95, \$29.95, \$49.95, \$79.95 and so forth. And the price at which you sell a product obviously is critical, because it not only determines front-end sales, but determines response percentage. It determines the number of people that are on your mailing list and a lot of very important factors that you need to be in control of as a direct marketer.

But I’ve come across -I was on the speakers’ podium recently with a gentleman who handled the Wall Street Journal promotions for a lot of years. Now the Wall Street Journal has been a heavy user of my mailing lists for a long time, and we of theirs, because it’s a business-to-business executive entrepreneurial audience. And they were sharing with me the fact that in their tests they found that the ending digits seven, the number seven, with all things being equal, increased their response rates substantially.

So, I began testing a lot of my products with a seven because I was ending most of mine in nines and only a couple of times before had done it in sevens. Now I’ve had numerous tests using the ending digit in seven. And the seven ending digit has increased, has added unit sales and volume sales to my products. From using – you’ll see more and more, those of you that are on my mailing lists will be seeing more and more of our products with an ending digit seven. And I recommend that people consider that.

I was intrigued for instance to find that the most successful, bar none, magazine offer of all time was about eighteen years ago or so. The Life Magazine offer at \$7.77, I think it was something like 27 issues.

**Bob:** That’s amazing, so they worked sevens into both the dollars and cents portions.

**Ted:** Yes...

**Bob:** I wonder if they did it knowingly at that time or if it...

**Ted:** I think they did it intentionally because Life Magazine, like the Wall Street Journal, who is just very test conscious, is a very test conscious company more so than others. I find that direct marketers usually do tests but some are much more test oriented than others. And I consider myself to be, in my own companies, quite test oriented because I’ve seen vast differences from testing. And not only of price points but we’re all the time testing. For instance, teaser copy variations in the mail and in the beginning of a letter – and making vast differences with those kind of tests. And some marketers are not as aggressive on their testing as I feel they could be.

So, anyway, that price information, there’s in effect – at my last seminar, one of the gentlemen, I’m not a biblical scholar, a gentleman that was there is a biblical scholar. And he was saying that the numbers two – one of my offers for a book was at \$27.00 -and he says the numbers two and seven have a very great biblical significance. Isn’t that something?

**Bob:** Hmm, that’s interesting.

**Ted:** For centuries, men have been intrigued with numbers and there may be a greater significance with numbers than any of us are fully aware of. So, whatever that’s worth, it’s good to share here.

**Bob:** Well, I think it’s worth a lot because again, this isn’t just some off-the-wall finding. The Wall Street Journal has tested this for many years and put, what I would imagine, is in the high six figures into testing these things.

**Ted:** Yes, many millions of dollars, many millions of dollars into testing and testing the difference in pricing, the different price points.

**Bob:** Well, I can tell you this. After you revealed this research to me the other day, I immediately went out and changed our outgoing sales letter for our copywriting book to \$137 from \$139.

**Ted:** I think that’s a great idea. I think it’s a more profitable price and I think you’ll sell a lot more units for the two-dollar differential.

I was also sharing with you a story about one of my clients, American Speaker, who has a wonderful manual for public speakers. They were selling their book at \$99 and I convinced them to change to change the price to \$97. And they’re doing extremely well with it. The author attributes part of the success, a good part of it, to the price point.

**Bob:** That’s phenomenal. I mean, to me that in itself is going to be well worth the price of this interview to anybody who...

**Ted:** This tape should be a minimum of \$1,007!

**Bob:** (laughs) I agree! And I think my emphasis would be on “minimum” because of the value that you’re giving to it. Let me see here, we’ve got about twenty minutes left.

**Ted:** Good.

**Bob:** What I’d like to talk about now, you’ve touched on it already, is how important a title or headline is. Can you go over what are some of the other most crucial points in creating powerful headlines and book titles are?

**Ted:** I’d be happy to. The approach that I recommend using for any product, be it a book, newsletter, hardware product or any other kind of product, whatever it is that the individual’s marketing, is to take the production hat off. Because normally, the entrepreneur is both the producer and the marketer. You’re going to have to take the production hat off and put your marketing hat on and look at the product from a completely new standpoint.

And here’s the process that I use exactly. Whether I’ve written the book, and as you know, I’ve written fourteen best sellers, but I’ve published fifty-three other books by other authors. Whether I’ve written it or not, I take my author’s hat off or my producer’s hat off and I sit down and look and go page by page through the book. I study each page and look for benefits from the reader’s standpoint. What can I find on page one that’s of great benefit for the reader? And I write it down using short compelling action words.

I write down my thoughts on 3 X 5 cards as I go through the book. Some pages I’ll have one or two 3X5 cards, some pages none, some pages four. And when I finish I may have four hundred cards. As I mentioned before, I work out every day, and I was helping this friend who has a product that deals (with exercising).

It’s an inflatable weight you take so you can exercise when you’re traveling. By putting water in this weight, you don’t have to carry a heavy weight around. And you put it on your arm or leg. It’s a wonderful product, it has unsolicited endorsements from people like Chris Evert and some of the top sports figures of the world. It’s really a fantastic product.

And when it’s a product like that, I find out all the benefits of the product from the user’s standpoint. In that instance, I use a little different study technique. I interview the individual and then find out all the things that every customer, everybody that’s ever liked the product has to say about the product. Why is it that people are buying the product? Because in this particular case, the individual sold thousands of units without spending a penny in advertising, just through publicity.

So I wanted to find out what it was that caused the people – what benefit were they getting from the product? And so using that technique and writing down these compelling benefits, I put them all on my 3X5 cards. Now on card 17 or perhaps benefit 17 that I write down about the exercise product, that may be my headline, and that may be my most powerful, compelling reason that an individual would have. Sometimes it just pops out at you, when you write down number 17, that’s it.

**Bob:** I see.

**Ted:** And that can be the most important benefit for your headline and for your whole copy theme. Now the headline, an individual should look at a headline or teaser copy on an envelope, or the title of a book, or the name of a product, like the marquee of a movie theater. This is the way I think of it, because it sets the tone for the whole offer. There is a famous old book, with the name “Obvious Adams,” that I’m sure you’re familiar with.

**Bob:** Sure, it’s a great book, I’ve got it right on my shelf here.

**Ted:** Do you?

**Bob:** Yes.

**Ted:** It's a great book and it deals with how – among other things, how this writer made a fortune finding the obvious benefits. Because most often, the producer of the product doesn't – is not aware of the most obvious, most compelling benefit. And this 3 X 5 card technique is, in my view, the very best way of isolating what ought to be but isn't until you identify it – the most obvious benefit.

Now, the other benefits, the other four hundred, what you then do is you have good material for the rest of your copy. I use a lot of bullets in my copy as you know. And I advocate that people do that. And very often those bullets, and the second most compelling reason ought to be bullet one, third most compelling reason, bullet two and so forth.

Don't wait like some copywriters or marketers do to have this fantastic benefit buried down in bullet number 74 in your copy. Put your very best bullets as far forward as possible, because people aren't going to read number 73 maybe, unless they're so intrigued with all the benefits that they're going to get from the products right early on.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Ted:** So, that's my process.

**Bob:** You know, I have one comment on that process. I follow a similar process but I've always written mine on large pieces of paper. But I see the real benefit to using the 3 X 5 cards, like you say, because you've got each idea on one card. Then you can arrange them and prioritize them as you need them. Me, I'm drawing numbers and arrows all over the place, and I've got this road map that's almost impossible to follow by the time I'm done.

**Ted:** 3X5 cards may also help you because you can shuffle them, put them in a box and shuffle them. Then make some judgments as to what's the most important, next most important, next most important. And you've got your ad or sales letter ninety percent written.

**Bob:** Sure.

**Ted:** Because people only buy – all of us buy, basically on a benefits standpoint – for the benefits of the product. Now, I also write down during the same process the features of the product. And with the benefits I always ask the, “so what” question. Benefits have to be put in such a way they answer the question, “so what?” Whereas features are specifications about the product, such as: the book is one hundred and four pages. It's eight and a half by eleven, and so on. Those are

important, too, because they add credibility to your author. They portray that you know what you’re doing, that the product itself has certain dimensions and specifications.

But that isn’t why people buy. All of us buy because of our emotional hot buttons. And then we justify the purchases through logic. So, you have to appeal from a benefits manner with the emotions that someone has.

Do we have time to get into the other, the hidden benefits?

**Bob:** I’d love to hear about the hidden benefits.

**Ted:** I’ll briefly touch on that too.

**Bob:** That would be great, if you’d be kind enough to reveal that.

**Ted:** Yes, I’ll reveal that and intrigue and hopefully get some of your listeners to be thinking about this. Because this is a way that I’ve written some of my – and I’ll give you some quick examples, but...

Now, what I then do is stand back and ask myself this question. After I’ve gone through that process, then I stand back and I ask myself, “What if I were an omnipotent God and had unlimited powers and could create the most compelling benefit that anyone would ever want when they got this product or to buy this product, what would it be?” And all of a sudden now, I have created a whole new way of looking at the product.

And some of the most successful headlines that I’ve ever written had nothing whatsoever to do with any of the benefits of the product. For example, I can give you some examples that some of your listeners may have seen or even responded to over the years.

**Bob:** That would be great.

**Ted:** One of my headlines is called, “The Ultimate Tax Shelter,” which sold over three hundred thousand copies of my book on incorporating.

**Bob:** Really?

**Ted:** There’s nothing whatsoever in the book having to do with the ultimate tax shelter. But that is the reason however, that many, many people set up small businesses and corporations – to have a tax shelter of their own that they fully control and where they have legitimate tax deductible expenses. Things like operating out of their home, for example. And many of the living expenses that they now have are tax deductible. Many self-publishers, for instance, fifteen to eighty percent of their household expenses are tax deductible legally.

**Bob:** Right.

**Ted:** Because they have the ultimate tax shelter. So that’s an example of a headline where I used the technique of finding the hidden benefits. Other examples I can give you very quickly are – another one is “The Eighth Wonder Of The World.” In The Eighth Wonder Of The World, I describe in the ad for the product, that it deals with how compound interest is a way that you can create the maximum amount of wealth. And the best way to do that is through a corporation of your own and your own profit sharing plan where you could put aside money, tax-free. That’s another example of the hidden benefits. See, it has nothing to do with any of the – anything that’s on the 3 X 5 cards.

**Bob:** Right.

**Ted:** But it is a way of looking at the product that is entirely unique. Another example, and I sold three hundred and fifty thousand copies of a book at seventy dollars a copy, about twenty-two million dollars worth of products of a forms book.

I created a forms book some years ago and I was trying to figure out how I could create a marketing plan for the forms because forms books are not easy to sell. You know, millions of people create forms books, they’re in every stationary store, every legal stationers. The book is called “The Complete Book of Corporate Forms.”

This happens to be, of course I’m biased, but it happens to be the best forms book of it’s kind on the market. But nevertheless, it’s a forms book.

It shows people how to keep their corporations intact using the forms. But I thought through that same issue of the hidden benefits, and the headline that I wrote is, “All The Many Benefits Of Forming Your Own Corporation Could Be Wiped Out Overnight,” and it went on to describe how you could lose your personal assets through not keeping your corporate records properly. In other words, the book makes it easy for you to keep your corporation intact.

**Bob:** Boy, that’s great.

**Ted:** So, that’s another example of the hidden benefit. Now, to my knowledge, what I just revealed to you, no one in the world that I know of is using any technique like that. I certainly have never heard anyone talk about it or read about it in any book.

**Bob:** I never have either. That’s really powerful.

**Ted:** And it’s one of the most powerful things that you could possibly do and virtually all of your listeners have marvelous hidden benefits of their product. I’d venture to say that people listening to this interview, their products and services are being

bought for reasons that have nothing to do with their advertising right now. That people are buying the products and services because of hidden benefits.

You can isolate what that hidden benefit is and capitalize on it, write your headlines and write your copy, your business will explode. I mean by a hundred fold or a thousand fold.

**Bob:** Great. Well, Ted, we’re just about out of time and I really appreciate all the powerful information you’ve shared with people here today. And I have just one last question for you, are there any last wrap-up thoughts or pieces of wisdom that you may have for people?

**Ted:** Well, the only thing that quickly comes to mind is that success is no accident but that financial success is only part of it for me. I’ve spent a lot of years to come to the conclusion that life, that’s it’s much better to be financially successful than not to be. Because I’ve had periods of my life when I was not financially successful, but the real key to success is having a balanced life and to have...

I think that there are three parts to it, your financial success is one, two, is your health. If you let your health go, or don’t tend to your health, you’re making an enormous mistake. And the third is your personal and family relationships. And so, I’m a big believer that there isn’t enough money to replace your health or to replace the importance of a strong family personal relationship part of your life.

So, I think everyone should not let themselves get out of balance. Work real hard to stay in balance. And life is a lot more exciting and rewarding when you find out what your success really is. That’s how I would define it – it’s really the balanced life.

**Bob:** That’s a great thought. I really appreciate you sharing that and everything else you have during this interview. This is going to be an incredible resource. And again, I want to thank you very much for taking the time to do this.

**Ted:** It’s my pleasure, I love to talking to confident and capable direct marketers like you, and as I understand, a lot of people in your audience.