

# H M A

**HIDDEN MARKETING ASSETS**

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**INTERVIEW SERIES**

**How I Sold Millions of Books**

*Michael Senoff Interviews Melvin Powers  
Publishing Expert*

 Michael Senoff's  
**HardToFind** Seminars.com

Dear Student,

I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://HardToFindSeminars.com).

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable audio business interviews.

I knew that I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions, and inside information to help you operate more efficiently

I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

It is my mission, to assist those that are very busy with their careers

And to really make my site different from every other audio content site on the web, I have decided to give you access to this information in a downloadable format.

Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

*Michael Senoff*

Founder & CEO: [www.hardtofindseminars.com](http://www.hardtofindseminars.com)

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Any perceived slights of specific people or organizations is unintentional.

# Melvin Powers Interview

## How I Sold Millions Of Books

### An Interview With Legendary Book Publisher Melvin Powers

Melvin Powers discovered he had the “Midas touch” for book publishing when he was 16 years old. After he ordered a book on chess from a Popular Science magazine, he set up shop from his kitchen table and discovered a success formula for selling books by mail using small classified ads.

In this three part interview, you’ll hear Melvin’s incredible story along with his step-by-step formula for success.

Even though he’s sold more books than most people can imagine, Melvin says that books are the “calling card” for the seemingly endless amount of backend deals you can make from them.

Melvin shares how he makes serious money selling back end seminars, audio products, CDs, DVDs, consulting and much more from his book sales. He also shares the marketing secrets and licensing deals that have made him an icon in the direct mail, distribution, and book publishing field.

#### Here's Some Of What You'll Learn From This Interview

- How much of a mark up you’ll need in order to make a worthwhile profit from your book sales.
- How to make deals with magazines so that you’re not paying their regular advertising rates.
- How Melvin successfully tests his books, advertising, headlines and direct mail.
- Learn about an offer Melvin made on his books that instantly increased his book sales.
- Learn what products you should sell after the sale of the book and how to make the real money from these products.
- What you should do if someone returns your book for a refund and how to turn that return into more sales.
- How to sell publishing rights to your books to other countries.

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- Learn how Melvin has adapted to the high cost of printing and postage.

Melvin Powers is a legend because he seems to instinctively know where the market is headed and how to adapt to it. And in this audio, you'll hear how he does it. You'll hear how he keeps his eye on the big picture and never lets fear get in his way.

So even if you're not interested in making a living from books, you may still want to listen to this audio interview. Even an expert can learn a lot from this marketing genius.

Michael: So, if someone says, "Can I be successful publishing my own book?"

Melvin: The answer is absolutely yes, you can. Absolutely, positively yes. If someone else is making it, you can make it.

### *Music*

*Hi, it's Michael Senoff with Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](https://www.hardtofindseminars.com). In this interview, you're going to hear from a mail order icon. His name is Melvin Powers. He discovered he had the Midas touch for book publishing when he was only 16 years old. After Melvin ordered a book on chess from a Popular Science magazine, he decided to try selling books to earn some extra money. So, he enlisted his family, set up shop in his living room, and discovered an instant success formula for selling books by mail using small classified ads. He has sold millions of dollars of books, and in this interview, you'll hear Melvin's incredible story along with his step-by-step formula for success. Even though he's sold more books than most people can imagine, Melvin says that books are really the calling card for seemingly endless amounts of backend deals that you can make from them. Melvin shares how he makes money selling and up selling from his books. He also shares the marketing secrets that have made him an icon in the book publishing field.*

*Here's just some of what you'll get from this interview – how much of a mark up you'll need in order to make a worthwhile profit from your book sales, how to make deals with magazines so you're not paying their high advertising rates, how to write ads that sell and what line Melvin added that instantly increased his sales, what to sell on the back end to make the real money, what kind of guarantee Melvin offers and what you should always do if someone returns merchandise for a refund, how Melvin has adapted to the high cost of printing and postage.*

*Melvin Powers is a living legend because he seems to instinctively know where the market is headed and how to adapt to it, and in this audio series, you'll hear*

*how he does it. You'll hear how he tests and retests his products, and what he does with the results. You'll hear how he negotiates licensing deals and keeps his eye on the big picture. So, even if you're not interested in making a living from books, you may still want to listen to this audio interview series. Even an expert can learn a lot from this marketing genius.*

*Part one of this interview is my interview with Melvin. Parts two and three is Melvin answering questions from my [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://HardToFindSeminars.com) students. Now, let's get going and I hope you enjoy this interview as much as I did putting it together for you.*

Michael: Are you still an information junky?

Melvin: I still am. I'm at it every single day and I love it.

Michael: That is great. Well, I really appreciate you taking some time to share.

Melvin: I'm happy to do it.

Michael: Start from the beginning. Why don't you just give me a run down on how did this all come about? Where did you get your very start in the book business, or maybe it was the information products business or the mail order business?

Melvin: It was the book business. I got started when I was sixteen years old.

Michael: Where are you from originally?

Melvin: I'm from Boston, Massachusetts.

Michael: What brought you to Southern California?

Melvin: The beautiful weather. I said to myself, "I'm going to move to California one day and start my mail order business." I'll tell you how I got into the mail order business.

I used to play a lot of chess when I was sixteen years old. I was into playing chess and saw a classified ad in a magazine. It was Popular Science. It said, "Do you want to win at chess?" Of course, all chess players want to win at chess and I sent away for it. With that book, came some circulars about other books. So, I said to myself, "Gee that's interesting." I read the chess book, and one of the circulars with that chess book was *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill.

I sent away for that book and some others. and when I got that book I started reading it. I was getting more literature from this company. I said, "Gee, this would be a nice hobby for me. I think I'd like to do the same thing."

Michael: What was your very first product or book that you acquired to sell?

Melvin: I wrote to the publishers of these other books. It was about the same books that I'm publishing now such as how to win at chess, how to win at poker, bridge bidding made easy, calligraphy made easy, how to tell jokes, how to win at the races. It was all of these how-to books. So, I started carrying those books and I was doing just fine. I was doing great with the orders, and I was running classified ads like the other company, and it was going great.

Michael: How great was it going for a sixteen-year-old kid?

Melvin: I was making \$1,000 a month after I got going. I had the family helping me. I was doing it all from my kitchen table, and one of the rooms in my house turned into my store room.

Michael: You started in Boston, right?

Melvin: Right, I started in Boston.

Michael: So, you were still living home with your parents?

Melvin: I was still living at home, still going to school.

Michael: You're still in high school.

Melvin: I'm still in high school.

Michael: Were your parents supportive?

Melvin: Yes, they thought it was great. It was just a fun thing to do shaking out money out of the envelopes.

Michael: Was a lot of it cash or were people writing checks?

Melvin: A lot of it was cash. It was like hitting the lottery every day and then before I came out to California, I had stopped the business. It was interfering with my schoolwork because I was spending my spare time and some of the family's spare time.

It was a good business, but I wanted to continue my education. So, I stopped, but when I came out to Los Angeles I had the formula and I knew how to do it. There was no question in my mind. I just had to pick up where I left off before. So, I started to run ads in numerous popular consumer magazines where they had a classified section, I was running classified ads on various subjects such as 21, poker, bridge, bowling, golf, horse racing, health, chess, checkers, hobbies, and self-help? The tag line read send for free information.

I send them circulars and the sales went just fine from day one.

Michael: Can I ask you this? Was that part of the formula, a two step, a classified ad that didn't try and sell the book but just asked if you want more free information? What would they do? Would they call a number and leave their information?

Melvin: They would write for it. I wasn't using a phone for the requests. They would mail it in an envelope or on a postal card and write, "Send more information. Every ad was keyed so we knew where it ran.

Michael: Tell me a couple of secrets of the classified ads that worked for your formula and is your formula still working today? Could it work today for anyone who wants to get into the mail order business?

Melvin: Yes, it's still working. In fact, I'll tell you something interesting about the classified ads. I wrote a book called, *Making Money with Classified Ads*. No one had ever written a book about making money with classified ads. Isn't that interesting?

Michael: That is interesting.

Melvin: There were hundreds of classified ads running, and one day I got the idea. I don't know where it came from. Being creative, ideas coming to you, and I wrote the book which everyone loves, *Making Money with Classified Ads*. It's been a big hit. When I was writing songs, songs and lyrics would come to me in my sleep.

Michael: How big of a hit? For instance, how many of those books have you sold since you started publishing?

Melvin: About 250 thousand.

Michael: What does that book sell for?

Melvin: Twenty dollars.

Michael: I assume it can't cost too much to print.

Melvin: It's about a four or five dollars. For folks that want to get into the book publishing business, if you publish a book, you must have at least four or five to one mark up. If a book costs you five dollars, you're going to sell it for twenty dollars.

Michael: So, that's how you started with classified ads.

Melvin: With the two-step ad, and then from the two-step ad, where a magazine didn't have a classified ad section, I started running display ads.

One time, I had a catalogue of 224 pages on all types of subjects. It was like a 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" book. I had all these categories in there and that was a big winner.

To begin with, I was selling other publishers' books, and then I started to publish similar books myself. I was running the one-inch display ads and that proved very successful because they're sending for free details. Naturally, I saved all the names and sent mailings to these people.

Michael: Were you meticulously testing back in those days before computers?

Melvin: Yes, I was keeping very careful records. We recorded how many inquiries we got and the amount of orders. Everything was keyed.

I would know exactly if the ad was making it. If the ad didn't make it, then I would stop it in that particular publication or change the ad.

Then, from the one inch ads, I went to a sixth of a magazine page. That becomes a one column five inch ad.

Michael: Is it true the larger the ad is, the more inquiries you'll get?

Melvin: Yes and then I started to run some ad copy because it was too much expense for just inquiries. I decided to go to full page ads.

I published a book called *The Secret of Bowling Strikes*. I ran the ad for about ten years in various bowling magazines and bowling publications. Don't forget, one book was selling other books. The back

end of the bowling book was a record and cassette that sold for ten dollars. It was a big hit.

Then, I published *The Secret Perfect Putting*. It was a book that sold originally for two dollars. The back end of it was a ten dollar record and cassette. I sold a ton of those. I got lots of free publicity about the book and recording.

I then wrote to the magazines advertising managers telling them I'd like a PI deal for some of my books.

Michael: Explain to the listeners what a PI deal is.

Melvin: Well, for every order that I got, I would send the magazine fifty percent. So, if I got an order for \$10, I'd send the magazine five dollars, twenty dollars – ten dollars. The ads would be keyed.

Have you ever seen a blank page in a magazine? They fill it up with something. If they don't have anything, they'll put in a publicity page for some organization. I also bought distressed pages at a very reduced rate when the publication had a page they didn't sell.

That went on for years, and we ran lots of PI deals. In my book, *How to Get Rich in Mail Order* I show the 8 ½" x 11" ads that I was running with loads of magazines. They were happy about it.

So, that was working, and when they didn't want to do it, I would run the ads. I ran in Entrepreneur magazine every month for two years. It paid off every single time.

Michael: Was that a PI?

Melvin: No, I was paying for that. Then, they raised the price too much, and it wouldn't pay off. So, I asked if they wanted a PI deal. They said no. Not everyone is going to say yes.

I ran in golf magazines. I published a book called *The Secret of Perfect Putting*. I had PI deals all over. You notice all these secret of perfect putting, the secret of bowling strikes. People want to know what the secret is.

I have a book that sells very well by U.S. Andersen called *Three Magic Words*, and also *The Secret of Secrets*.

Michael: That headline absolutely works, The Secret of...

Melvin: Yes, one of my headlines was, "Have you ever bowled a strike, and said I got it?" It was a big hit. Another "Have you ever taken a practice golf swing at a dandelion?" Everybody who plays golf says their swing is perfect when hitting the dandelion until they get on a golf course.

Michael: Let's say that I was the advertising manager. How would you approach me for a PI deal?

Melvin: I would run an ad that was paying off. Don't let them test the ads. You test the ads and make sure that it's working.

When you have an ad that's working such as "Would you like to have a photographic memory?" When I knew that it was working then I'd sent it to the magazines, and it would work for them as well. All ads peter out after a while, so you have to offer them something else.

When I'd call, they'd know who I was. Then, I could say, "Well, I'm running a PI deal with this magazine or that magazine," so they knew that it was a bona fide ad.

Michael: When you initially approached them, did you do it by phone or by letter?

Melvin: I did it both ways. I called up the magazines. I'd tell them who I was and what I'd been doing.

Michael: You pay them what percent on the PI?

Melvin: I paid fifty percent. So, I gave them half. Say the product cost me five dollars and it sells for \$20.00. I was making twenty-five percent of whatever it sold for. So, it was working for me. It was working for the magazine. So, that's why I did that.

Then, I was running full page newspaper ads all over. I ran ads for years in lots of tabloids, but after a while, the tabloids didn't pay off. So, you rarely see a full page ad in a tabloid anymore.

Michael: It's just too expensive.

Melvin: What happened with the magazines is that the circulation got less, and the ads cost more money. So, you couldn't come out. Then, instead of that, I did direct mail. You sometimes can't buy a mailing list less than 3,000 names. Okay, send out five hundred of them and see what happens.

Michael: Is that a good test, do you think, five hundred will tell you?

Melvin: It was for me. If you are uncomfortable, send out a thousand.

Michael: So, you went to mail order because you were having a hard time making some full page ads pay off. All mail order principles apply to every type of advertising including marketing on the Internet.

Melvin: I was always in mail order experimenting with different forms of advertising

Michael: Right, but you were going to direct mail.

Melvin: It's all mail order. Ask magazines if they will run what is known as a split run.

In other words, say a magazine has a circulation of 100,000. They'll run 50,000 using one ad and 50,000 using some other ad. Test the ad copy. Test the headline, test the price, but only test one element at a time.

Michael: What have you found the magic price to be on your books?

Melvin: They started out at two dollars, and now it's \$15 and \$20. I have a two volume set of books that sells for \$30 with a lot of success.

Michael: Do you do all your own copywriting?

Melvin: Well, I tried to get copywriters, but couldn't get what I wanted because many really didn't have the feel that I wanted. I knew just about everybody in mail order business. So, I'd sent them the ad, and said, "What do you think of this?" They were happy to offer suggestions, and I was happy to do it for them.

But, regardless of the price that I paid, I couldn't get the winning elements because you really have to be a student of mail order to know what's going on. So, I paid high fees for it, and didn't get the results.

Michael: You paid high fees to copywriters who said they could write a winning ad.

Melvin: Correct.

Michael: But, what you're saying is your understanding of the marketplace is more important than any talent a copywriter has.

Melvin: Well, I'm not saying every copywriter. I'm sure there are lots of good copywriters. Every ad that a copywriter writes isn't a hit. I don't want your listeners to think the every ad that I wrote was a hit.

Michael: Why? I'm sure you had a lot of failures too.

Melvin: Of course and sometimes, you can't figure it out. I'd send it to other mail order entrepreneurs because I knew lots of people in the mail order business. I said, "Do you have any suggestions?"

Michael: Did you know Eugene Schwartz?

Melvin: Yes, I knew him. He lived in New York.

Michael: You knew of him through the mail order business.

Melvin: Through the mail order business. I knew everybody in California better. I knew Joseph Cossman very well.

Michael: When it came to copywriting, did you study any mentors of copywriting to hone your skills, or did you just pick it up?

Melvin: No, I read the books on advertising and mail order. There weren't too many books on mail order advertising, but I read all the books that I possibly could and that's how I learned the mail order business.

Michael: Which ones really stood out to you, really impacted you and influenced you writing wise?

Melvin: There's a book that I finally published. It's called *How to Write a Good Advertisement*. It is a crash course in copywriting by Victor Schwab. That's a book that I really love and before I sit down to write copy, I would read that book.

One of the great copywriters in Los Angeles was Joe Karbo, and in fact, I once did a seminar with him. It was at the Orange Coast College and the place was just jammed.

Michael: How many people did he have there? Do you remember?

Melvin: It was filled up, hundreds of people came, and we had to turn away some. Writing ad copy is trial and error. If you see some ads that are

repeating, you know there are elements in there that are working. In fact, Joe Karbo used this line that I borrowed from him. It said, "I will not cash your check for 30 days."

I said to Joe one day, "Can I use that line?" He said, "Be my guest," and I did and that increased the response that I got because the buyers weren't requesting their checks. That's because the book was good. In fact, for some of my offers I went to one year money-back guarantee because hardly anyone ever returned it.

Michael: So, you'd recommend if I'm going to be selling a book and I'm going to wonder what should my guarantee be, you would recommend me going for a one year guarantee.

Melvin: That's what I use for some of my offers. If someone did, I'd ask why. If someone returned the book because they didn't like it, it's a learning experience to find out why. I'd send back the check and place a phone call and say, "I'd like to talk to you. Can you tell me why you returned the book?" I used that feedback because that's very important.

If some of my ads weren't making it, I'd send it to the people that I knew like Joseph Cossman and Joe Karbo asking for their help. I'd send it to people that I knew in the mail order business and say, "This ad isn't working." Sometimes, you can't find the answer. Okay, so, you go on to the next one.

Michael: What would you consider essential to building trust with your customers?

Melvin: Well, offer a money-back guarantee and offer good value because all the value is there and the information is there, and you're not sending them something that isn't working. Over the many, many years, I get virtually no returns.

Michael: You're in Chatsworth, California?

Melvin: Chatsworth, California.

Michael: How long have you been in that location where you're at now?

Melvin: Four years.

Michael: What mentors have you had throughout your life that's really influenced you?

Melvin: I've read all the mail order books. I also took seminars and attended conventions.

Michael: Any one favorite?

Melvin: I would say *How to Write a Good Advertisement* is a great book, but you learn something from all the books.

Michael: How about Claude Hopkins stuff?

Melvin: I read everybody. He wrote a great book called *Scientific Advertising*. I went to the library, got out all the books. It wasn't only one particular author that did it, but being in the field and getting to know everybody. I found out that way and with some of the mail order people here. We used to meet on occasion to talk about mail order. We all knew each other very well.

Michael: Did you every put on seminars like him?

Melvin: Are you kidding? I was doing seminars for years. I did it for years until I got tired of doing it.

Michael: You traveled all over the country.

Melvin: Not all over the country, but I was here in the Los Angeles. For a time I was in New York and then I was in Florida. When I went on my vacations I sometimes did a seminar. I'm from Boston, so I did a seminar in Boston, Las Vegas, New York and Florida.

Michael: Were they one day seminars?

Melvin: One and two day seminars.

Michael: Did you charge a good price for them?

Melvin: I charged a hundred or two hundred dollars for the seminar. Are you aware that I had a TV show?

Michael: No, tell me about that. When did that start?

Melvin: I don't remember exactly when, but maybe about ten years ago or more. I had a TV show, and it was called The Mail Order Millionaire.

Michael: Was it an infomercial?

Melvin: It was an infomercial.

Michael: Oh, so you had an infomercial going selling your course?

Melvin: Yes, I had an infomercial going on my course. It started out as a \$300 package, then \$200 and \$100. I ran that for several years until the orders diminished.

Michael: That was all yours.

Melvin: Yes and it was great.

Michael: The orders died out?

Melvin: Yes, they died out. That's natural and I was also selling products on TV. Then, I got back to the book business which was my first love.

Michael: Do you think in this time of the information age and the time of digitized and digital products that mail order will still flourish?

Melvin: Oh yes. There's a lot of competition, but it means that it's working. Apply good mail techniques.

Michael: What do you think it is that people really like about having a book rather than maybe a digital product?

Melvin: Well, I like books personally. I like to sit in my easy chair and read a book. I've probably read every single book that there is on mail order and Internet marketing and I enjoy that. I enjoy looking at the ads and learning techniques of successful entrepreneurs.

Michael: Do you think there'll ever be time where e-books and digital books will replace books?

Melvin: I don't think so.

Michael: Let's say I want to come out with my own book. What recommendations would you have for the size of the book or the format of the book or the cover? Should I go with hard cover, soft cover? Have you tested size of books and what appeals to most people?

Melvin: I'm doing most of my books in two sizes 5 ½" x 8 ½" and 8 ½" x 11".

Michael: Is that called trade paperback?

Melvin: Yes.

Michael: What's the advantage in those sizes? Why do you choose that size?

Melvin: Because in the larger size book, I can show full-page ads very easily. The smaller size is universally accepted.

Michael: Right, so because it's bigger, you can get a little more money for it.

Melvin: Yes, you can get more money for it.

Michael: How do you handle your printing? Where is all your printing done?

Melvin: In Los Angeles.

Michael: Have you been using the same printer for many years, or do you have a couple?

Melvin: I've been using the same printer for many years and the same person has my account. In fact, his name is Roger Butzin. I can give his phone number.

Michael: What is his phone number?

Melvin: His area code is 714 and the phone number is 985-4595. Roger is a great guy and he'll be of help to you.

Michael: Of all the categories of your books which niche is your favorite?

Melvin: It's the self-help inspirational. That's my main interest.

Michael: Where do you think the biggest market demand is? If I wanted to come out with a book and I could choose any market I wanted, or let's say you were going to start over. What market would you go into? What subject matter?

Melvin: I would go into something that I was personally interested in. I'm going to give you the answer to that. I've always been interested in the self-help inspirational books. So, that's my main category, and I have books that sell all over the world in the self-help inspirational field. It's called the recovery field.

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Melvin: I have books called *The Knight in Rusty Armor*, *The Princess Who Believed in Fairy Tales*, and *The Dragon Slayer with a Heavy Heart*. These are all adult fables that sell well all over the world in various languages.

Michael: What do you call that category?

Melvin: Recovery, self-help inspirational.

Once you begin to specialize in any area, it will all go for you. I've published a lot of bridge books, business reference books and chess books. I've done it all, but it mainly follows my own interests in life. So, I assume what's going to move, what's going to sell. I'm into marketing, hobbies, magic, sports, horses, winning guides. I've published books on humor that have gone well. I've also published books on marriage, sex, parenthood, and just for women.

Michael: There's got to be some titles that just out perform all the others that may have surprised you over the years, and sometimes you can't figure out why, but are there any specific titles that just have really surprised you at the success they've had?

Melvin: Well, I can't think of one off hand, but these titles do very well. *The Princess who Believed in Fairy Tales*, women like that book. I published a book called *The Dragon Slayer with a Heavy Heart*, which is a 12-step book, which is doing extremely well. Everyone wants to know why the dragon slayer had a heavy heart.

Michael: How do you test for titles before you come out with a book?

Melvin: Well, I do my market research. I go around to the people in my office and outside the office. I say, "Here are a half a dozen titles, which one do you like the best?" I did a book called *The Secret of Overcoming Verbal Abuse*, by a very famous psychologist, Dr Albert Ellis and writer Marcia Powers.

Michael: Let me get into that. So, you said you published that book. Did you approach them and say, "I'm Melvin Powers of Wilshire Book Company. I would like to publish a book with a certain title." Or, did the authors already have that manuscript? Was that already written?

Melvin: No, I already published ten of Dr. Ellis' books and some by Marcia Powers.

Michael: How do you approach and set up a deal like that? Tell me about that specific story. You published ten of his books. How did that start?

Melvin: It started with one book, and then I did the next book.

Michael: Was it his book?

Melvin: This book was written with Marcia Powers, my wife, and she's a writer/author and Dr. Albert Ellis is a very famous psychologist. He was out here one day on a lecture trip, and in fact, he was teaching for the Learning Tree, and we went to sell his books there. We took him to the airport, and my wife had an idea about a book, *The Secret of Overcoming Verbal Abuse*, and we asked him if he'd like to be the co-author. He said yes he would like to do that and they wrote the book together.

Michael: Can you tell me about the story of *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill? Did you acquire the paperback version of that book?

Melvin: That book is in public domain.

Michael: So, that was a public domain book.

Melvin: That was a book that was in public domain.

Michael: So, you didn't have to acquire any kind of rights.

Melvin: I didn't have to ask anybody.

Michael: I see, and how successful was that book for you over the years?

Melvin: Seven million copies.

Michael: Seven million copies of that book?

Melvin: Over the years, yes.

Michael: Do you know when Napoleon Hill was marketing it how many had he sold? Do you know?

Melvin: I don't know that answer.

Michael: Can you remember when you decided to pull that out of public domain and publish that and add that to your collection? What sparked that?

Melvin: I knew the book was an old book. I knew it was in public domain and I published it and it's been a very big hit ever since. You call or write to the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and they'll do a search for you, and tell you if a book is in public domain or not. A lot of my books are in public domain.

Michael: Did you ever meet Napoleon Hill?

Melvin: I met him one time when I went to his lecture. He was lecturing in Los Angeles and I attended the lecture and met with him after the lecture. We had a delightful conversation and he was terrific.

Michael: Do you have a gut feeling about what books to publish? If you do would you just go on that feeling?

Melvin: My books are basically in the same areas that I started in mainly the self-help inspirational categories. In other words, change your voice, change your life, charisma, how to get that special magic, and positive thinking books. I published a book called *How to Attract Good Luck*. I had the gut feeling that book was going to be a good seller.

Michael: Is that a big title?

Melvin: No it has not been a big seller. I sold a lot of the book, but it's not been a big title.

Michael: So, the books on luck, are they generally not that big of a seller?

Melvin: I have sold a lot of copies of the book, but I didn't have too much luck with it. It's not one of my best sellers. Here's a book, *The Magic of Getting What You Want*, that's by Dr. David Schwartz who wrote a book called *The Magic of Thinking Big*. Do you know that book?

Michael: Yes, I've heard of that.

Melvin: Well, I sold a million copies of that book.

Michael: David Schwartz wrote that?

Melvin: David Schwartz wrote that book.

Michael: So, did you license that from him? How did that work?

Melvin: I licensed that from the original publisher.

Michael: So, he wasn't the publisher?

Melvin: No, he was not the publisher. I published an original book of his called *The Magic of Thinking Success*. That title does very well and we have sold foreign language rights.

Michael: So, give me a specific example. What I'm trying to find out is we have listeners who maybe are too lazy to write their own book or don't want to do that. They want to find an expert and license their work. So, using that example of Dr. David Schwartz, you licensed it from the original publisher. Had the book died down at that time, and then you approached them?

Melvin: They saw that I was doing so well with various books.

Michael: Did they come to you?

Melvin: No. I went to them originally, but when I sold a million copies of the book they said they should be publishing the book. Naturally!

Michael: So, really people knew that you could move books. It wasn't like you had to beg for licensing deals.

Melvin: Here's a book that no one knew was a hit *Psycho-Cybernetics* by Dr. Maxwell Maltz.

Michael: Okay, tell me the whole story about that. How did that start? Was that selling before you acquired it?

Melvin: The book came out in hard cover and it wasn't selling. The company that originally published it was going to drop the book. Part of my research was going to bookstores to see if I could find some gems. I picked up that book because of the unusual title. I said to myself, "This book is a gem. Why isn't there a soft cover edition?" I asked the manager how the book was selling. He said, "It's not selling."

The book was not selling. It got lost in the shuffle with loads of other books. I called the publisher and said, "I'm Melvin Powers. I'd like to publish your book *Psycho-Cybernetics*." They said, "Great." I got it for next to nothing.

Michael: How do you arrange a deal? What does that look like? You approach the publisher. You say, "I'm interested in publishing your book."

Melvin: You agree on an advance.

Michael: It varies from book to book.

Melvin: Yes, against royalties. The royalty is usually from five to ten percent against the selling price of the book. When you use up the advance royalty you start to pay additional royalties once a year.

Michael: So, is it five or ten percent of the gross sales?

Melvin: Yes, if the book sells for ten dollars, you'd be paying either 50 cents one dollar royalty according to the terms.

Michael: Did you have to meet a performance like with an agreement?

Melvin: No.

Michael: Who retained the copyright on that?

Melvin: Dr. Maxwell Maltz.

Michael: So, he retained the copyright, and you were just a reseller of it.

Melvin: I was a reseller of it.

Michael: You did it in paperback.

Melvin: I did it in paperback and I knew it was a hit before I even published the book. I also visited him in New York. Dr. Maxwell Maltz was a plastic surgeon. He said to me, "Melvin, I'm tired of doing plastic surgery. I'd like to lecture throughout the country on my book, *Psycho-Cybernetics*." I said to him, "Dr. Maltz, I can do that for you."

Michael: You were already selling the book at that time.

Melvin: Right, I had the book and it was going great. I said, "I can get you as many lectures as you want," and I did. I had him going around the country. He was giving lectures but was also selling the book. He just loved lecturing on the *Psycho-Cybernetics*. We also formed free study groups around country to encourage people to use the principles in their lives.

Michael: How many of those books did you sell?

Melvin: Over the years, five million.

Michael: Five million!

Melvin: Over five million copies of the book. When books go, they go. You can ask me about a book called *A Guide to Rational Living* by Drs. Albert Ellis and Robert Harper. I've sold over 1,500,000 copies of that book over the years.

Michael: What's been your number one seller out of everything?

Melvin: *Think and Grow Rich*.

Michael: How many of those have you done?

Melvin: Over seven million, the second one would be *Psycho-Cybernetics*.

Michael: Are you a workaholic?

Melvin: No. I was giving seminars on mail order. I taught at every community college in the Los Angeles area. I was also giving seminars in *Psycho-Cybernetics* and on self-publishing. I was a guest speaker many times at UCLA and USC. It was never work for me. It was a pleasure giving the lectures and disseminating information to help people.

Michael: I've got a five year old and an eight year old. I don't think my oldest is going to be interested in working with me but I think my five year old will be. He likes to make money.

Melvin: Everybody has to find out his own niche.

Michael: That's right. Everyone's different. You find out what your kids like and you just encourage them. What did your parents do?

Melvin: My dad was a clothing manufacturer and he wanted my oldest brother and yours truly to go into his business. I said to him one day, "Dad, it's not for me."

Michael: It's not for me.

Melvin: I said, "I love the book publishing business and I love the mail order business." He said, "Be my guest." So, I came up to California to start the business.

Melvin: One of my big books was *How to Write a Hit Song and Sell It*. Do you know the names Tommy Boyce and Bobby Hart? They wrote loads of hit songs for the Monkees.

Michael: I remember reading it in your mail order book.

Melvin: They wrote the hit songs *Come a Little Bit Closer* and *Take the Last Train to Clarksville*.

Michael: Yeah, I know that.

Melvin: I love that business. I gave up my publishing business for six months to go into the songwriting field.

Michael: Didn't you write a song about something about a broken woman?

Melvin: A slightly used woman. It got on the charts.

Michael: That was really exciting to you for what reasons, the music business?

Melvin: I love songs, and I just love music, country/western music. I love Spanish and Italian music. I have a piano in my office as well as a guitar. I was taking music arranging lessons at one time. I loved it. I also produced an album of music based on a song I wrote called Willie Burgundy and sold it to MGM records. I got a nice bit of change for that. It was fun.

Michael: Do you come into the office still five days a week?

Melvin: I come in almost every day.

Michael: What would be better than working a business that you love?

Melvin: Well, it's not work.

Michael: What would you do if you retired?

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Melvin: I don't know what I'd do. I don't want to retire, maybe teach a course at one of the local colleges, but I'm enjoying what I'm doing, enjoying my free time, work isn't work and everyday is a challenge. Most of all I'm happy to hear how my books have changed people's lives.

Michael: Tell me how you hear. Do you get letters? Do you get emails?

Melvin: I get phone calls. I get letters. I get emails telling me that my books have changed their lives. I've put a lot of people in the mail order business. They ask me questions. I give them the answers.

Michael: Tell me about your *How to Get Rich in Mail Order*. How many of those books have you sold?

Melvin: 500,000 over the years. They were sold through full-page magazine ads and newspapers. I saved all the names and ran seminars. I ran one and two day seminars teaching those people who sent in for the book. That was a big back end.

Michael: Could you make that ad work today in newspapers?

Melvin: The rates are too high.

Michael: How too high are they?

Melvin: I'm not up to date on the rates, but it's much too high. They don't have the circulation that they used to have. The main thing is I'm not interested in doing it now. When those ads ran, I used to run them every other week in some of the Los Angeles newspapers. You must ask when a person wants to publish his book, "What's on the back end of this?"

When there's a book idea, you can sell audio tapes, video tapes, CDs, DVDs, newsletters, consultations, and courses. There are all kinds of things on the back end of a book if a person wants to publish his own book if he's interested in doing that. Once you bring out the book, you have to be on the sales end of that book. You should be contacting wholesalers and book stores. You have to be working it if you're going to get a goldmine out of a book. You can't just bring out the book and say, "Well, this is going to sell." It may and it may not. The thing is you have to spend time at it. That's an every week project.

If you're enthusiastic about your book, give some seminars on it. You can teach at the various community colleges. They're always looking for courses. Give a free lecture at one of your local bookstores.

Michael: In the back of your books what would you try to sell?

Melvin: I have full-page ads in some of my books that I sell. It's an easy sale. If you are offering a service, people are happy to pay for it. We had so much consultation business that I had to farm it out at times. I couldn't handle all the calls. You have to love what you're doing. I believe, in

the book publishing business. I love books and you asked me about digital products. I'd rather have the book. I like to have a book as I like reading in my den at home. I like underlining passages and ideas. I'm on the computer most days, so I don't like to do it at night.

Michael: How many books do you print at one time?

Melvin: My minimum run is 3,000

Michael: Three thousand?

Melvin: Yes, 5,000 when the books are selling well.

Michael: Do you inventory them or does the printer hold them?

Melvin: I inventory them.

Michael: Are you doing any kind of direct mail where you're renting mailing lists?

Melvin: No, I'm not doing that now because as you know, the postage has gone up and the printing prices have gone up. In fact, most of my advertising is on my website. I'm referring people to my website all the time.

I use PayPal, and I use some credit cards as well. In fact, I don't have to publish any circulars or catalogs because now it's all digital. I put my website address ([www.mpowers.com](http://www.mpowers.com)) in all the books.

Michael: Do you have a website person in house handling all that?

Melvin: Not in house.

Michael: How often are you updating the site?

Melvin: Every time there's a change. It's updated all the time.

Michael: Are you still looking for new books to publish for your site?

Melvin: I am. I'm always looking for new books. I'm always looking for special books that I think are going to make it in the marketing place. We're still looking for manuscripts. We're still advertising for manuscripts.

Michael: So, a manuscript is basically a book someone wants to publish.

Melvin: Right, but it's in manuscript form.

Michael: Do you actually read them yourself?

Melvin: I have readers.

Michael: So, you have readers review them and look for winners.

Melvin: Right, I have three readers and they send the report to our senior editor. They're all freelance.

Michael: They're freelance, so they're not in house either.

Melvin: No, they're not.

Michael: So, what do you tell a reader to look for? How does he know when he's got a potential winner?

Melvin: Does he think the book is going to make it in the marketplace? It can be on any subject at all. It doesn't have to be on a subject that we have done, but we happen to be very interested adult fables right now. Here's a great book that I published, *Ten Days to a Great New Life*. That's a great title, isn't it?

Michael: Yes.

Melvin: It didn't make it, but it's a great book.

Michael: I assume it's a great title.

Melvin: *Think Like a Winner* does very well. *Three Magic Words* does extremely well. I publish a book with Dr. Mark Cooper called *Change Your Voice, Change Your Life*.

Michael: With Dr. Cooper, give me an example, what kind of deal did you arrange with him? He wrote the book and you're publishing it and selling it, right?

Melvin: Correct.

Michael: So, he gets a royalty on it.

Melvin: The average royalty is from five to ten percent. I pay royalties once a year.

Michael: Once a year, okay.

Melvin: This is what the author has to get out of a book. I should tell you about Albert Winnikoff who wrote a book *How to Make \$100,000 a Year in Sales* and also wrote *How to Get Rich in Real Estate*. He made a fortune in the real estate business partially because people got to know him because of his book. The book is the calling card for something on the back end. When I published my book *How to Get Rich in Mail Order* I wasn't a mail order consultant.

On the cover, I gave myself a title of Mail Order Consultant. I got calls almost every day. People wanted to consult with me. I just couldn't handle all the business so, I started an advertising agency.

Michael: Let's say you publish someone's book and he's the expert. Does he get any of the names of the buyers or do you maintain all those?

Melvin: If he asked for them, I would give it to him.

Michael: But, generally, you keep the names.

.Melvin: I keep the names.

Michael: Okay, so let's say you approach the author and say, "We've got a lot of names of people that have bought your book. Why don't you come out with an audio program or a seminar?" How do you work it? Do you sell it and pay him another royalty? There is no standard way. You would agree on terms and what the publisher and author would be doing to promote the products.

Melvin: If he's going to do some of the selling, I would split it with him. I would also pay a royalty.

Michael: So, have you done that where you had a great success with a book and you approached the author and said, "Let's get something else to the people who have bought the book, and you worked out a joint venture?"

Melvin: I have done that in the past.

Michael: So, what kinds of plans do you have for your business, anything new or exciting?

Melvin: Well, it's exciting to me, the books on recovery, such as *The Dragon Slayer With a Heavy Heart*.

Michael: So, this is recovery. People who are recovering from alcoholism, gambling or drug addiction.

Melvin: I sell these books all over the world, and they are in a dozen foreign languages, which is great because now we are getting royalties. I contact publishers in foreign languages. There's a book called *The International Literary Marketplace*. You look in there and it gives you all the publishers in all the countries throughout the world and what type of books they publish. You write to them and/or send a copy of your book saying, "Are you interested in publishing this book?" That's a way of getting the books published in various languages.

Foreign publishers also hear about the books and write you. So, there's no one way of doing it, but you can get books published in various languages.

Michael: Do you have any back end with your recovery type books?

Melvin: Just about other books.

Michael: Is this an up and coming market, these recovery type books?

Melvin: That's been in for a very long time. In fact, when I published – I still publish *Psycho-Cybernetics*, I had free meetings for people interested in improving themselves with the book through the teaching of *Psycho-Cybernetics*. In fact, I had a secretary who did nothing but put people together with one person with another from his state or city, say Los Angeles or any place. We would get the names of people interested in joining the *Psycho-Cybernetics* group, and we'd put these people together. It was all free. They didn't have to pay for the meetings. People would send us donations. We'd always send it back because Dr. Maltz and I were offering something of great value that we were very happy to be doing.

Michael: You must have acquired lots of names over the years. Are those names still any good?

Melvin: I had them for a period of time. You've got to get fresh names.

Michael: Did you ever rent your mailing list?

Melvin: Yes.

Michael: Was there good income from that?

Melvin: There was a very good income because the names cost you nothing to rent out. I want to give your listeners some encouragement about something. Do you know the song You Light Up My Life? Debbie Boone sang it and made it a big hit.

Michael: Can you sing that for us real quick?

Melvin: Now, that's going to cost you money. A songwriter named Joe Brooks wrote it and for two years he couldn't get anyone to record it. Debbie Boone heard it, recorded it, and it became a big hit. You have to be motivated.

In other words, when a person wants to publish his own book or get into the publishing field, what's his motivation? I get great delight I would say almost every month when someone tells me their life has been changed because of the books that I have written and published.

That's one of my motivations for doing it. Work isn't work. I would say to people who want to go into any business don't give up. Do your homework. It's always a creative process that finally works.

The thing that I tell everybody is if someone else has made it in any business, you can make it too. There aren't any secrets. Isn't that right?

Michael: That's right. So, if someone asks, "Can I make a million dollars publishing my own book?"

Melvin: Perhaps you can. Go to book conventions. See what people are doing. So, if someone else is making it, you can make it. Have goals for yourself. Don't think it's going to be done overnight.

No one that I know in the mail order field make it overnight. It took time to do it. In any field, it usually takes time. You have successes. You have failures. You have ads that don't work. You have mailings that don't work. You have some that do work, but if you take the long road, you're fine. Go to seminars, go to the library, read the books. They're free, and see what other people are doing, and then get acquainted with some of the winners if you can.

Most people are happy to share some of the winning elements that made them winners.

Michael: How important is the cover of a book, not only the title, but the colors, the cover art and other elements?

Melvin: Very important.

Michael: What are some key elements that you want in your book cover?

Melvin: Create the cover so that people can read it easily and have a subtitle if you can. Sometimes I don't have a subtitle. I'm looking at my book *How to Self-Publish Your Book*, the subtitle is *An Expert's Step-by-Step Guide to Marketing your Book Successfully*. On the book *How to Write a Good Advertisement*, the subtitle is *A Short Course in Copywriting*.

Michael: Do you have a special person that does the art for your covers?

Melvin: Yes, I have one person that does my work, and he does all my covers. I tell him what I want, and he gives me six sketches of covers that he thinks may make it and then we agree on combining various elements.

Michael: Did you ever have any of your books like on a New York Times bestseller list?

Melvin: I thought you would never ask me. *Psycho-Cybernetics* got on the bestseller list.

Michael: *Psycho-Cybernetics* did?

Melvin: *Psycho-Cybernetics* was on it. *Think and Grow Rich* was on it and *The Magic of Thinking Big*.

Michael: What can that do for your sales, when you get on that best sellers list?

Melvin: It boosts your sales.

Michael: Can it catapult them?

Melvin: Sure.

Michael: Would you say that bestseller lists were partly responsible for it?

Melvin: Yes.

Michael: How do you get on a bestseller? How did they even know?

Melvin: Because the bookstores report to the New York Times.

Michael: So, you're selling to bookstores, too.

Melvin: Of course.

Michael: I don't know why I was thinking you were just selling to the end user through your circulars.

Melvin: I am, but there are some excellent book wholesalers. There's Ingram and Baker & Taylor.

Michael: So, you're doing volume sales to book sellers.

Melvin: Correct.

Michael: With a large book seller like that, what kind of money can you make on a book when they're buying in volume? How do the margins work on that?

Melvin: The wholesalers get 50% off, the bookstores get 40% off.

Michael: So, let's say the book retails for ten dollars. The wholesalers pay five dollars.

Melvin: The bookstores pay six dollars and it costs you maybe two dollars.

Michael: Without your big distributors have most of your sales been through these large wholesalers?

Melvin: Now they are.

Michael: Are any of your books on Amazon?

Melvin: We sell them hundreds of books every month and they are a great account for us.

Michael: I see.

Melvin: I met with my assigned Amazon's buyer just recently because there was a book convention in Los Angeles. He thanked me for publishing all the excellent Wilshire Book Company books they were selling.

Michael: So, with your *Think and Grow Rich* and *Psycho-Cybernetics*, you made them huge successes through your direct mail and then the wholesalers came to you. Right?

Melvin: Correct, to begin with, for a very long time, I was only doing mail order, and then the bookstores started to want my books. I sold to them and then I found out who were the best wholesalers.

Michael: One's chances of taking a title with no proven track record and getting it to be a winning book is very slim.

Melvin: I would say "Yes" but I knew that *Psycho-Cybernetics* was going to make it because of my experience in selling motivational books. I sold thousands of books to multi-level, insurance, and real estate companies.

Michael: Didn't you make that big already through mail order?

Melvin: When the book started to sell so much, I called on the local bookstores but it wasn't my main thrust. I then contacted book distributors to cover the bookstores throughout the country. The book took off.

Michael: Were you writing long copy for full page ads?

Melvin: Oh, yes. That was my job to write this long copy and make that book sell. Then, I started the free *Psycho-Cybernetics* courses when I was teaching at the community colleges. I was also teaching at church and synagogue groups. It was free to attend these meetings. Someone would want to leave money and I'd say, "No, thank you. This is my contribution. I want to do this. I want to help people who are interested in self-improvement."

Michael: Did you ever sell Joe Cossman's book?

Melvin: Sure, I still sell it. It's called *How I Made a Million Dollars in Mail Order*.

Michael: You do. Have you sold a lot of those over the years?

Melvin: Over the years, I have sold loads of the book. I advise your listeners to read it. I highly recommend it. It's one of the best mail order and unique marketing books.

Michael: If I'm not mistaken, I've seen some old Eugene Schwartz ads where he was promoting Cossman's mail order book. I could be wrong. I'll double check.

Melvin: You're probably right. Eugene Schwartz was a very talented copy writer who just had a knack for writing outstanding ad copy. He didn't have to read a book.

Michael: I've listened to his lecture. He claimed he worked harder than anybody. There was a speech he did for Phillips Publishing and I did a recreation. I hired an actor and I had the original. I had him listen to Eugene Schwartz's voice. I had an actor recreate his entire speech and we added a couple of things. This goes over his entire method. I should send you that.

Melvin: I'd love to hear it.

Michael: You'll like it. I hired an actor out of San Diego, and we recreated the whole presentation. It's about an hour and a half.

Melvin: You know how some songwriters have talent. I used to write with Tommy Boyce of Boyce and Hart. They wrote songs for The Monkees and Tommy became my songwriting partner. In fact, I published a book of his called *How to Write a Hit Song and Sell It*. Here's how I published his book.

Tommy Boyce called me one day at the office and said, "I have an idea for a book. It's called *How to Write a Hit Song*." I said, "But, that's not the end of the title." He said, "It isn't? What's the end?" I said, "*How to Write a Hit Song and Sell It*." I became his songwriting partner because he had stopped writing with Bobby Hart. We outlined the book when he was in my office.

In fact, I stopped coming regularly to my office for six months. I came in one day a week. I had a great secretary and she ran the office.

Michael: What would you do everyday, work on writing songs?

Melvin: Yes, we'd work on the songs. We got a publisher. We went into the studio, recorded some of our songs. I remember every song that we wrote. People think because someone is a songwriter, every song becomes a hit. I don't want you to think every book that I published sold a million copies.

Michael: Let me ask you this question. After I send out an email to my list and some of the students have questions for you, could we schedule another interview - like a part two?

Melvin: I'd be happy to do it.

Michael: I'd appreciate it.

Melvin: I'm happy to do it. You asked me what's enjoyable coming to my office. I enjoy getting the letters from people who started businesses, but weren't making a nickel. I'd give them directions to follow that worked.

Michael: That's what makes it all worthwhile, and I agree.

Melvin: It's a wonderful feeling to know that you've helped people. Readers of my books write me letters, "I read your book twenty years or more ago, and I made money following your instructions." That's the fun and the pleasure and the enjoyment of being in a helpful business.

I have a piano and Spanish guitar in my office. I play piano and/or guitar in my office almost every day. If someone comes in who plays either instrument, I'll say, "Sit down and play a song for me." They do, and it's fun.

Michael: Wonderful. With all the books you've sold, you're definitely a wealthy man even without all the money.

Melvin: I'll be happy to spend some time answering any questions that they have. It'll be a pleasure to do it.

Michael: I appreciate it and thanks for the time. You have a wonderful weekend. I'll be in touch.

Melvin: Michael, thank you for calling.

*This is the end of part one. Please continue to part two.*

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Michael: I'm so pleased to be talking to you again. I have lots of questions from my site visitors from [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://HardToFindSeminars.com). We have a lot to talk about.

Melvin: Good. I am going to give you information that you don't find elsewhere.

Michael: I know you are. That is why I am so appreciative of you taking the time.

Melvin: I am happy to do it. I am ready to roll. I am going to recommend that other people listen to all of your material because you really have a lot of great material that you can't find elsewhere. In fact, I am going to go

through it myself bit-by-bit when I have the time because it is informative and inspirational.

Michael: Yes. Thank you very much.

Melvin: It reminds me of things that I should be doing and I am not doing it.

Michael: So this is from a gentleman named Peter Gruff and he says, "Mr. Powers, what do you see as the greatest opportunity in mail order today?"

Melvin: The greatest opportunity is having the Internet and being able to sell your books around the world. It is absolutely, positively wonderful and if you explore that you will be wealthy.

Michael: What do you consider your greatest success in your mail order business?

Melvin: Being in the business for such a long time, having a great time everyday being in it, and having the pleasure of being in the book publishing business.

Michael: He also asks, "I understand Gary Halbert worked on at least one project with you years ago. Can you talk about what it was like to work with him and what project it was?" Do you remember?

Melvin: It was selling my book *How to Get Rich in Mail Order*. I knew him and I worked with him on the ad copy. Gary Halbert was a genius in writing. He had the knack for it. We worked on a couple of ads together. It was real fun to see how he wrote and what he wrote and talking about it. In fact, when I ran seminars in the Los Angeles area, I had him come and address my classes. The class just loved him. It was just great having him around.

Michael: Did he help you put together the space ads that you ran in Entrepreneur magazine?

Melvin: No, I did that myself. I ran my own ad agency. Once you get going, you can run your own advertising agency and take off 15% on the cost of the ad.

Michael: Did he put together ads that you tested in either newspaper?

- Melvin: We worked on a few ads together, but it wasn't ongoing. I did have him as a guest lecturer at some of my ongoing seminars that I use to run in the Los Angeles area for many years. He inspired people.
- Michael: Do you remember at that time? Did he have a set of tapes on direct marketing at that time that he was selling at the lectures or was he just speaking for free?
- Melvin: He was just speaking for free and enjoyed it.
- Michael: Did you have any other speakers during those lectures?
- Melvin: I lectured with Joe Karbo in San Diego. We did a lecture at one of the colleges. That was fun. There were a couple of hundred people there or more. It was just a great time when everybody knew his ad because the headline in his ad ran "The Lazy Man's Way to Riches". The people in the mail order business years ago use to get together every so often in an informal way to hear about successes and also ads that did not work. Any ad that Joe Karbo wrote or anybody else wrote was not always a winner. If it isn't a winner, you try to find out from people around you, "Can you tell me what could be improved in this ad?" You don't have to be bashful about it.
- Michael: You also did a lot of teaching and lectures through some of the community colleges. Did you have to promote that or did the community colleges sponsor those lectures with their students?
- Melvin: The community colleges sponsored those in their catalogs. I was in just about every community college in the Los Angeles area. I ran those seminars for years.
- Michael: So could anyone who has an expertise or claims themselves as an expert get in with the community colleges in their area and start getting exposure that way?
- Melvin: Absolutely. You can sell your books there or whatever you are doing, usually it is the book that they have. They will interview you before they write you up in their catalog. They will ask you to come in for an interview. They are very interested in having you.
- Michael: If I were to call a community college and look into that, whom would I ask for? Who handles all of that?
- Melvin: You just say who handles the new lecturers. It is great publicity for you and you get write-ups in thousands of catalogs.

Michael: How many people could they get?

Melvin: Donald Trump has spoken for them and lots of the big names. If you attract enough people, they will have the Los Angeles Convention Center for you. In fact that is where I gave one of my first lectures for Entrepreneur magazine. That gave me the idea for a book. Someone in their office called me and wanted to know if I would lecture on mail order at the Los Angeles Conventional Center. I did and had a couple hundred people show up for the hour lecture. When I was done, some of the people asked me if I had a book. I said, "No, I don't have a book." But that gave me the idea. It would have been an easy sale. That motivated me to write my book. Right after that I sat down and wrote the mail order book.

Michael: Once you wrote that book, did that give you instant credibility? Did that help your business once you became a published author on your topic of mail order?

Melvin: Well I have been in the mail order business for a long time. I wasn't really doing mail order consulting because I was busy with my own business. When I wrote the book, I had to give myself a title. I just couldn't say this is Melvin Powers, book publisher. So I put down *How to Get Rich in Mail Order* by Melvin Powers, Mail Order Consultant. You know what happened after that?

Michael: What happened?

Melvin: I got a lot of phone calls.

Michael: When you inserted mail order consultant?

Melvin: Exactly. I got so busy that I couldn't handle all of the people that wanted to see me. So I started my own advertising agency outside of my book publishing business.

Michael: I see. What was the financial arrangement with the colleges?

Melvin: You split the enrollment money. The course wasn't expensive. It was usually about \$25 or \$50 maximum. We would get 100 students signed up. Then I could also sell my book. It would mean thousands of dollars sometimes just to go and speak for a morning or speak all day. That was very profitable. The college was happy.

Michael: Would you have to split the gross sales of the book sales?

Melvin: No.

Michael: Okay, so you got to keep all of that.

Melvin: Yes, I got to keep all of that. The speakers get to keep that. It was not that I was or anyone was running the course just to sell a book, you needed to be giving good legitimate information. I also invited students to visit me at my office and warehouse to see how we worked. I also ran free business seminars inviting experts in various fields to lecture.

Michael: So at all of these community college lectures, people paid for the courses.

Melvin: None were usually for free, but what is interesting is that I offered to do some free seminars in the inner city of Los Angeles because I was interested helping people that weren't make it in life and needed a helping hand. I said I would run the seminars free of charge and even supply my book free of charge. I will come and lecture and we will see what we can do. No one signed up for the course. I was very disappointed.

Michael: What lessons did you learn there?

Melvin: I guess it sounded too good to be true. We said that we are offering a free course in mail order to teach how to achieve your financial goals in life and how to get into the mail order business and make money by someone who is doing it and willing to help you. We didn't get any students enrolled.

Michael: Here is a question from Rosemary Phillips, "Mr. Powers, I manufacture a niche product that I have always believed would make the perfect infomercial. How can I get my product reviewed to determine whether television marketing would be the right way for me to sell my products?"

Melvin: Try to submit your product to the shows that are on TV right now. In other words, when you see the ad on TV take down the name and address. Tell them that you have a product that you want to sell. Tell them what it is all about and give them your phone number and see if you get someone calling you back.

Michael: So these people are looking for products?

Melvin: That is the full-time job. The infomercial companies have conventions twice a year in Miami and Las Vegas. Everyone on TV is looking for product. In fact when I was on TV in the product business, I was traveling to trade shows around the country because I was looking for a product to sell. Everyone's door is always open.

Michael: Did you ever do a TV product that you did not have total control? It was your product, but you had to do a partnership with the promoter of the product on the television end? What percentage to you get?

Melvin: You get a small percentage of the selling price. You turn over the rights for the company to do the show. You can't get involved in that. No one is going to do that. They will give you a fair share. You sign a contract with them. There is always something being sold on TV. Infomercials are played over and over again like how to clean your carpet, how to use a vacuum cleaner or how to care for you skin. You want products that are going to remind every single one of vitamins, health products. Just look to see what is on TV. Take the name and address or call the 800 numbers that they always have and try to get the name and address of the company selling the product. Also there is always the name and address on the screen.

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Michael: Why is a consumable product the better product to sell on TV compared to a product that you sell one time?

Melvin: Because it is very expensive going on TV. Buying time is very expensive. Putting the show together is very expensive. Whether it is TV for an hour or a half-hour, it is a very expensive proposition. They want something that people are going to buy over and over again, such as vitamin products, health products and skin products. That is the reason because once you make the front sale, maybe you won't make any money on the first sale, but afterward there is always the back end and that is where people make the money. If you think you have something that is great, go for it. If you can't get any results doing that then call on some of the local TV stations and see if somebody will work with you doing a 2-minute spot. In other words, you have to work at it.

Michael: Did you ever sell anything in using 2-minute spots?

Melvin: I sold a product called Slick 50.

Michael: That is a famous product. Were you one of the first guys in on that?

Melvin: I was one of the first guys to ever run a TV show on it. It was a half-hour show for people saying that this is the greatest thing that was ever invented. I thought I was going to sell one bottle and sell it for \$39.95. When I found out that most people were buying two bottles I paid the shipping.

Michael: Was this through your 30-minute show or a 2-minute show?

Melvin: This was a 30-minute infomercial. That infomercial cost \$100,000 to produce. I also sold products to take out scratches out of cars and also to brighten up your car. My big deal on TV was my "Mail Order Millionaire" course. It started out as a 1-hour infomercial. That went extremely well. We started selling it at \$300. We were on a long time and dropped the price to \$200. We finally went to a \$100 price.

Michael: Did you ever cut it down to 30-minute or did it always run an hour?

Melvin: No, we first started out as an hour because the sales dropped after a while. We were saying how could we pick up the sales? Now for the first time we were dropping this price to \$200. Okay, so that got people into it. After we dropped the price of \$200 it went down to \$100. When the sales dried up I went off the air.

Michael: After they bought the courses were you back-end selling anything to the buyers?

Melvin: We started selling "*How to Write a Good Advertisement.*" We sold lots of motivational books. So yes, there was back end on it as well.

Michael: Were you running that nationally?

Melvin: Nationally, all over the country.

Michael: Wow. How many of those courses did you sell through the series of infomercials on the mail order?

Melvin: I don't remember the exact amount, but it was a great many.

Michael: So was that your greatest success on television?

Melvin: Yes, correct.

Michael: The Slick 50 infomercial, was that a 30-minute or an hour?

Melvin: A 30-minute show.

Michael: Do you know how many bottles of that stuff you sold?

Melvin: I don't know the exact amount.

Michael: Do you prefer the infomercials or your regular mail order?

Melvin: They are both interesting. If it's a new challenge it can be fun and exciting. At one time I was in the music business. I became a songwriter with Tommy Boyce. We had some hit songs and songs on the charts. One was "*Who Wants Slightly Used Woman*" with Connie Cato on Capitol Records. I was also on the charts with the song "*Mr. Songwriter*" sung by Sunday Sharpe on United Artists Records. I also produced an album of music and sold it to MGM Records.

Michael: You partnered with Tommy? What were some of the songs that he was famous for?

Melvin: He was famous for lots of songs, but two of his most famous ones are "*Take the Last Train to Clarksville*" and "*Come a Little Bit Closer.*" Do you remember those songs?

Michael: Yeah.

Melvin: He did a whole slew of them.

Michael: What is the prize when you are able to write a hit song? How do you make money from that?

Melvin: Royalties.

Michael: What are the standard royalties on a song like that?

Melvin: It's a small royalty that can add up to big money.

Michael: I see.

Melvin: It all adds up. I was not in it for the money. I was in it because I wanted a new challenge. I was in it because it was fun and exciting. In fact when I thought of the song title "*Who Wants a Slightly Used Woman*", I knew for certain that I had a hit and yet I hadn't written one word.

Michael: Do you remember when that idea came to you?

Melvin: Yes. I was visiting with a friend and this girl friend of hers came in and said to the friend I was visiting, "Today my divorce became final." She was telling us a story about what happened. She had a little girl and her life was going to be different now. It was her story that I wrote. I knew that the song title was going to be "*Who Wants a Slightly Used Woman.*" I also knew the title was going to get women upset. I figured that would be good publicity.

Michael: Sing it.

Melvin: (Singing) "Today my divorce became final. Seven years of my life has slipped away. Would you believe it happened on my little girl's birthday. How can I tell her that her daddy won't be coming home to stay?" That was the first couple of lines. I had that in my mind when I was listening to the story. I knew that it was a hit.

Michael: That is emotional. That will get anyone to choke up.

Melvin: Yeah.

Michael: Emotional sells doesn't it? Whether it's a good song or a good sales letter?

Melvin: Right. I did it for six months. I was in it for the pure pleasure and the enjoyment of a new challenge.

Michael: You got that idea based on something that was actually true.

Melvin: Oh yes. It was a true story.

Michael: Here is a question from a guy out of Atlanta. His name is Matt Lowry. I interviewed him on my site. When he was 19, he started a cleaning business. He was cleaning offices out of his car. He built up a multi-million dollar cleaning business. He is still in it. He is a trainer for the cleaning business. He asked, "Mr. Powers, do you believe in off-line, classified advertising with a powerful headline in call to action with a website address could work in a traditional two-step marketing plan?"

Melvin: Absolutely, positively. I would absolutely try it and go for it. What you want to do is try it, run it and see the increase you get and improve it all the time. Yes, that is the way you do it. Run one of your ads in women's magazines.

Michael: Then direct the reader to your website. No phone number or would you add a phone number?

Melvin: I would do both.

Michael: You would. Have you ever tested something like that where you give someone a choice to either call or go to a website and look at the results?

Melvin: I have them go to our website.

Michael: No phone number?

Melvin: Do both.

Michael: Picking up a phone is easy.

Melvin: Right.

Michael: Going to your computer and typing in a website is a little more difficult.

Melvin: But it works. Everything works and if it doesn't work then you have to work at it.

Michael: Here is a question from Paul Stevens. I also interviewed him on my site. He is a learning expert. He teaches people how to improve their study skills. I will tell you Mr. Powers that this is very interesting. Out of all my recordings, I look at the statistics of which recordings are downloaded and listened to most and this recording that I did with him that is not necessarily the recording but the subject. The subject market is one of my number one most listened to recordings. It is about how to improve your study skills.

Melvin: That is interesting. I'll have that book out next week.

Michael: There you go. I'll have him contact you. The man is absolutely there. Maybe it is because there are so many college kids online and they are proficient with the computer. I don't know, but the numbers don't lie. His question is, "Mr. Powers everyone that goes into business for themselves develops a list of their favorite free and paid resources. Can you give us an inside look at a resource or two that you would use to get a new venture off the ground? The resources that you wouldn't give up without a fight?"

Melvin: I get what is known as DM News. It is a magazine that comes out every week. It is all about direct marketing. It is free and it is called DM News. Go to "Google" and get the address. The other magazine that I get once a month and this is also free is called Internet Retailer. Get the address by going to "Google."

Michael: What is that?

Melvin: It is a magazine about what is happening with the Internet business. I read that every single month.

Michael: Okay, what else?

Melvin: For the book business, I get Publishers Weekly and I read that every week. I read what is the number one selling book, what is the number two book, what is going and what isn't going. That is just a great way to find out what is going on in the business; the action nowadays is on the Internet. That is where the main action is, at least for what I am doing and I hear for most people. I would get and purchase all the books I can get on Internet marketing. I purchase just about every new book that comes out on the Internet market because I want to get some ideas of what is happening. What did this person is doing that I should be doing. Those are the things that I use. In fact before we got on the air, I was telling Michael that what he is offering and this is not a paid commercial that his material is absolutely brilliant. I am going to go through it and listen to all of those tapes because it is getting information that reminds you what you should be doing. They have some great names there. They have lots of the leaders in the field. You should be listening to those recordings and buying whatever you can.

Michael: Thank you Mr. Powers. I appreciate that. Here is another question from Paul Stevens, "Mr. Powers, you have seen the self-help boom, the start of your own business boom, then the Internet entrepreneur boom, now hard times are back. Are you expecting to see a boom in the info products on fighting the recession, high-prices and high-energy costs or do you think that people will not respond to economic scares with preparation? Paul Stevens.

Melvin: I think that all of those things are going to be good, but I wouldn't do a book on the stock market right now. Today it was down 200 points. The last couple of days it was up 500 points. That is scary. You can't do a book nowadays on how to make money in the real estate business because no one is going to say yes. Real estate prices are down, but they will finally come up again. It is the wrong time for that.

I have been, as you just said and the gentleman asked, I have been in the self-help inspirational market my whole life. I read most of the best sellers in the self-help, inspirational market. I get audios and pass everything along so other people can enjoy it and get the benefit from it.

Michael: Here is a question from Allen Kirk from Allen Kirk & Associates Party, Ltd. Mr. Powers, what advice would you give to parents wanting to teach their children to be financially responsible and accountable for their future?

Melvin: Make them know that people have to work for money. Have them get jobs so they can get the feeling of earning a dollar. If they do, they will be okay and you will instill the joy and benefit of working and not just having a lot of money and buying expensive things. That is not my enjoyment. I have other things to do with my money. I like to help people. It is seeing your father or your mother achieve success in life and spreading the joy and wisdom of what they have learned. I told my children whatever you save I will put a like amount in the bank. That worked out fine. They are very good workers.

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Michael: This is from West Connor of [medicinecoach.com](http://medicinecoach.com). He says, "Mr. Powers, I have been currently contemplating my publishing options for my book. With self-publishing, I can make more money from each book sold, but will have distribution issues in bookstores. With traditional publishing, the payout is less, but the distribution is better. Can you explain the advantages and disadvantages of each?"

Melvin: It depends what you want to do. What is the purpose of writing that book? I would like to hear what is the back end? Publishing a book is just the first step in a plan as to what you want to do with it. In other words, do you want to do consultations? Do you want to put out a newsletter? If it were an investment book, then you would naturally have a newsletter that you would sell them. Do you want to put out DVDs, CDs, video tapes? Do you want to teach courses? In other words, I would tell people to take control of the book. I am not saying that if you have an offer with a major publisher, not to take it, but usually they don't follow through with what they say that they are going to do. I like the idea of taking control of your own life. When you self-publish a book, what you should do first before you even write the book is to write a four-page sales letter trying to get yourself excited with what this book is going to do for the reader. In fact before I wrote the

book *How to Get Rich in Mail Order*, I wrote a four-page sales letter to test the response of the ad that I was going to use. When the ad was successful then I knew I could go on from there. I bought 3,000 copies of someone else's mail order book and only put the name of the book in the coupon. When the ad went well with direct mail I knew that I had a winner. Since I wrote the winning ad all I had to do was write the book.

Michael: So you bought 3,000 copies of a book called *How to Get Rich in Mail Order*?

Melvin: No, I sold a book with some other mail order title, but I told readers in the ad how to get rich in mail order. I had the winning circular. If you don't want to write the book, you can write a 64-page report, a manual, on the same subject and write ad copy to test if you can sell it through direct mail.

Now I am going on the Internet to test ad copy. You could do an e-book and get some response on the first three chapters. Let them read the whole book and at the end of it ask, "Did you enjoy reading this book? What were the strong points? What were the weak points? What would you suggest that I do with the next edition of this? I would appreciate your comments very much."

That would give you a great deal of information. You could adjust the content very easily. What you are doing in all of these ads is you are selling the sizzle and not the steak.

Michael: This is a question Paul Dion, "Mr. Powers, how do I identify a list of hungry buyers in a niche that I can reach easily and inexpensively?"

Melvin: I don't know how inexpensively, but there is a library book called *Standard Data Mailing Lists*. This gives you information on all the lists that are available. Most libraries have it. Just say that such and such a niche has 10,000 or 100,000 names and the cost is \$90 to \$100 for 1,000. You rent 1,000 and send a mailing to see what happens. You can test various prices. You can test various headlines. Then see if you get one order or a hundred orders or no orders.

Michael: He also wants to know, is there a way that you can determine from SRDS whether the people on this list have purchased things before?

Melvin: They have all purchased things before and they will tell you exactly what they purchased. How many orders were sold on certain items. It gives you a lot of information.

Michael: Now when you would rent your mailing lists, when you were doing direct mail, would you ask from the list broker or list owner who else has mailed to that list and how frequent?

Melvin: Yes, you can ask that and that will give you some great information. If you can get that information, that will give you a lot of good information.

Michael: I have heard rumors that there are the list brokers and mailing list sellers who are less than honest. Are there any techniques when you rented names that would lessen your chance of mailing to like names out of a telephone book or mailing to bad lists?

Melvin: Go with a big company.

Michael: SRDS is just a compilation of different lists. So rent a list from a reputable company.

Melvin: Correct. Also do inserts because this way you can put a circular in with all of those orders.

Michael: When you did your mail order, did you do it in house or did you farm it all out?

Melvin: We didn't do the mailing out of our own offices. We had a mailing company. The other thing that you could do is you could take a space ad, you could take a full page ad in a magazine. Magazines frequently have remaindered pages. When they are not filled up, they will sell you the space at a great discount. So you can run there with your ad and find out how it is working

Michael: I have a bunch of questions from a gentleman named David Cracker from [inventconnect.com](http://inventconnect.com) out of Australia. The first one is, "Mr. Powers, how long did it take you to be successful and what measures did you use to show that your efforts were working?"

Melvin: it didn't take me too long. It is a question of what you want. I had several goals. One was to make \$100,000 per year. Next goal was I wanted to do a million dollars' worth of business and I achieved those goals. Then the same thing with the goals for the music business. I wanted to get on the charts and my goal was that I wasn't going to stop till I got some songs on the chart. When I achieved those goals, I was invited to Nashville to receive a plaque for the songs. I also wanted to

produce an album of music and sell it. I did. So those were goals that I had. The best were getting on the charts.

With Barnes and Noble, I one time had three titles on their top ten bestseller list.

Michael: Take me back to the day and the time when you heard the news that *Psycho-Cybernetics* got on the New York Times bestseller list. Do you remember that?

Melvin: I remember seeing it on the bestseller list. I am not sure how I heard it. We were selling a ton of books, so I had the feeling that we were going to be on it pretty soon. It was a great feeling. I tell you a wonderful feeling that I had one time. What are the chances of getting a four-page spread in the Reader's Digest about a charity that you are involved in.?

Michael: Tell me that story.

Melvin: The chances of getting it in are zero. I was very involved with a humanitarian Johnny Carpenter and his special horse ranch. It was called the Johnny Carpenter's Heaven on Earth Ranch for Handicapped Children. I sent his story to the Reader's Digest and got a four-page write-up about Johnny Carpenter's Ranch that produced a lot of donations and got worldwide publicity.

Michael: So did you write to the editor of the Reader's Digest?

Melvin: Yes. I sent them a story about Johnny Carpenter. I sent them photographs and previous articles that we had received.

Michael: What were some of the things that you did that increased your chances for getting that four-page spread. You have listeners out there that maybe have causes that they are supporting or products or services.

Melvin: I told them the story of Johnny Carpenter and sent photographs. This was for real. That was a great feeling.

I personally got a write-up in the Los Angeles Times. I called the Los Angeles Times and asked for the business editor. I said this is Melvin Powers. I'm the publisher of the Wilshire Book Company and my hobby is teaching mail order and book publishing seminars in just about every community college in the Los Angeles area. I have been doing this for years and have lots of success stories. I thought that it might make an interesting article. They sent a reporter and

photographer out to my office and ran my story on the front page of the Sunday business section. As a result some of my classes got a waiting list. One phone call and that was it.

Michael: You made one phone call and asked. It was that simple.

Melvin: Yes, it was as simple as you calling me and saying would I do this interview. I didn't have to think about it.

Michael: When you got *Psycho-Cybernetics* on the national bestseller list, what did that do for sales?

Melvin: It increased. I wrote an interesting 10-page foreword about selling 1,000,000 copies of the book.

Michael: How did you handle your budget for your company? Were you detailed about that?

Melvin: I was. I got the best prices I could for my printing. I have had the same printer for many years.

Michael: Yeah, we talked about that in our other interview. You even gave his name and number. So any of the listeners on the first interview I did with Melvin, we have the name and the phone number of Melvin's printer.

Melvin: Yes.

Michael: How did you stay so focused, he wants to know? Do you have any kind of management strategy for your business as it was growing?

Melvin: Not really. I just did it week-by-week and year-by-year.

Michael: Is there anything that simply did not work that you felt was a great idea? Can you give us a couple of examples, I guess some of your failures that you were just so excited about and thought it would work, that didn't work out?

Melvin: I published a book called *Exuberance* by Dr. Paul Kurtz. It is still in print, but I don't publish it anymore. He does. I was exuberant about the book because I thought I was reading about my own philosophy of life.

Michael: Oh really?

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Melvin: I was exuberant about the book. I spent a lot of money on PR. Sold a couple of editions and that was the end of it.

Michael: Yeah. When you say that you spend a lot of money on PR, do you use PR services to help promote your books and products?

Melvin: Yeah. I use a publicist name Irwin Zucker.

Michael: What is his first name?

Melvin: Irwin. He is in Hollywood and I use him all of the time. He has been my PR man for many years.

Michael: So you had a PR guy for years helping you promote.

Melvin: Right.

Michael: What are some of the great things that he did for you, some of the great accomplishments?

Melvin: Well, he does his job getting me on TV, getting me on the radio, getting me articles, newspapers, magazines. Incidentally, I just looked up his phone number if you want it?

Michael: Sure, go ahead.

Melvin: 323-461-3921. He has been at it for a long time, so he can do a good job.

Michael: I guess publicity agents charge different prices, but generally they charge you per month.

Melvin: They like to have a three-month contract. You can call up the publicity people and see with whom you feel comfortable.

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*This is the beginning of part 3 of the three part Melvin Powers.*

Melvin: I don't want to go to someone who will tell me this book is great and I will sell a million copies. I don't want to hear that.

Michael: You want someone to be realistic.

Melvin: I want him to be realistic. I want him to say, "Gee, I am not sure about this book, but we will do our best."

Michael: I am sure over the years, you have had three for four months where maybe there wasn't much action, but when you average it all out it has been an investment that you have recouped.

Melvin: Oh yes, because you don't know which one TV show. I use to do a lot of TV shows and radio shows. You get people interested in your material. If you are not getting results, that is also good information and not every book is going to go. What the listeners have to know is that you can't depend on the other fellow. You can get his help, but you have to follow up with your teaching at the schools if that is it. Try to get on to some local TV and radio shows. You have to keep going to the bookstores. What is wrong with going to a local bookstore such as Barnes and Noble? Say I am the author of such a book. I would like to give a half-hour lecture on it some evening or an hour lecture to sell the book. They will put up your name if they like what you are doing. They will put up your picture. They will put the announcement in their newsletter. Now there is something that is absolutely free and you may get to do that. Even if only a couple of people show up then at least you have done it, you have the experience of lecturing and answering questions. Not every lecture is going to be a hit. Once you get into it, it is going to be a hit, but not every radio show and TV show made it.

Michael: Here is a question from Amy L. and she says, "Melvin, I read the paperback book *Psycho-Cybernetics* many years ago and it is a great self-help book. How did you tell that this would be a profitable book to publish in paperback? What thing do you look for in a book that makes you think that it would sell as a paperback? Do you think the Amazon's Kendall will affect book sales and formats?"

Melvin: Well, the Amazon book reader will help sales. I like to read a book that I can read at home. I am looking at a computer most of the day, so I would rather have the book itself. Now the question of judgment is that my area of expertise is the self-help, inspirational area. It has always been that, so when I picked up that book it was published by someone else originally and had a hardcover. The material was excellent. It wasn't selling. It was going out of print. When I picked that up I said to myself, "Gee, this is a winner."

Michael: Can you tell me more about that?

Melvin: I called up the company and they were thrilled to have me take over the book because they were letting it go out of print. They paid Dr. Maltz a lot of upfront money. I went to see Dr. Maltz in New York City. I wanted to meet him because I knew that this was going to be a best seller. I just knew it. It is like listening to music. Can't you tell in around 20 seconds whether you like a song or dislike a song?

Michael: Yes. Good analogy.

Melvin: So it was a feeling that I had for it. I wanted to meet the author. I purposely went back to New York to meet him and spent an afternoon with him and evening just to see what he wanted to do. He was a plastic surgeon and he wanted to get out of the plastic surgery routine. He had made his money and he was tired of his practice. He wanted to lecture all over the country to businesses, schools, and prisons, help people with his book. I said, "Dr. Maltz, I can get you all the speaking engagements that you want. I did and we got him on Dr. Robert Schuler's television show at the Crystal Cathedral in Orange County. He has had him on twice in fact. He was a big hit. He was a happy man. He wasn't happy because of the money. He was happy giving out the information that would help people.

In fact, I got the idea to have free *Psycho-Cybernetic* study groups and I had a secretary at one time doing nothing but getting people together who read the book. Then we had it in our advertising. If you want to meet with people interested in the *Psycho-Cybernetics* free study group, send us in your name or call us and give us your name and address. We will put you in touch with other people throughout the state. We did that. That was something that we enjoyed very much. People would send us money and I instructed my secretary to send it back with a thank-you letter. We wanted to offer help for people that would be absolutely, positively free. That was a great time for Dr. Maltz and me. We felt good what we were doing.

Michael: Did you use your PR agent to book him?

Melvin: I booked him to begin with and then we got someone to handle his speaking engagements because he was getting loads of them.

Michael: I know that I have heard of the title. I don't really know what the book is about, but just in a short summary. What makes that book so unique? What is it just basically?

Melvin: Self-image psychology. Think of yourself as doing something. Look at a goal for yourself and then say, "I am going to achieve this goal. I am

going to learn how to do it. I am going read the books at the library. I am going to do everything possible. Success doesn't come overnight. It comes one step at a time. Visualize yourself reaching that particular goal. Visualize yourself regardless of what has happened in the past. People do change and they become successful, but it is one step at a time. There is no such thing as getting rich overnight. I don't believe it. You have to take the proper steps such as going to trade shows. If you want to get into marketing in a particular area then go to that trade show. They have them all over the country. They have them in Vegas all the time. They have them in the Los Angeles Convention Center. Call up the Convention Center and get a list of all the shows coming into town. Call up the Anaheim Convention Center, the San Diego Convention Center because all big cities have these convention centers. Get on the mailing list and you will see what is happening. Get the trade magazines for that particular area where you want to go into business.

Michael: What was it about Dr. Maltz being a plastic surgeon that made him interested in writing his book? Was there a connection? Where was the connection made on this self-help and the plastic surgeon?

Melvin: He was amazed what happened to people and their personality when they had a nose job (rhinoplasty). They became good looking. The whole personality completely changed. That personality was there, but maybe didn't show up until they were getting compliments and felt they looked good. He was so startled. He had a lifetime of seeing that happen and he wanted to be able to put that in writing so people could change that really didn't need plastic surgery to feel better about themselves. I am not saying don't have it. If you want to have it, then have it. That amazed him. It changed the personality of people because they began to think differently of themselves. That is like people listening to this recording right now. You can achieve your goals if you take it step-by-step. That is the message. Go to trade shows, get trade magazines. If there is a group in your area then go to the meetings. In the Internet business, we share ideas. It is a great learning process.

Michael: Here is a question from Dwight Woods. He runs a martial arts school. I think he teaches the discipline that Bruce Lee used. I forgot what it was called. He says, "Mr. Powers, if you think about it self-help is an oxymoronic term because if you are going outside yourself for help then it can't really be self-help. I am looking to position my martial arts school as a self-help institution. What do you think is the most important thing for someone who is breaking into the self-help market

needs to understand about human behavior in order to be really successful in the market?"

Melvin: I think you have to look at those people that have made it already in the self-help and the exercise market and do exactly what they are doing. People that have programs, the same type that you are thinking about writing, look at their ads on the Internet. If you go on the Internet you will find all their ads. See what they are doing. Read their literature. Get on their mailing list. Buy their books. Buy their course, but you don't want to use your own name, use some other name. Get on their mailing lists and see how often they mail you. See whether they are offering seminars in various cities. I would do the same thing if I had a product. That is a product that you have, but people are interested in health and health education, so I would follow the leaders. So if people have done successfully or not successfully in the area that you want, then start it and run your ad. See how many inquiries that you are getting maybe do an e-book on your program. Start in a small way giving out some free exercises whatever is important. Answer those questions that people have when they come in to see you to begin with. Answer those questions straight away and put out some information and maybe do an e-book. I would say that that would be a great way of doing it. Make it a step at a time. If it isn't working, try to find out why it isn't working.

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Michael: Here is a question from Tom Brusell. Mr. Powers there are at least two books and probably more that I would love to get the paperback rights to, therefore what is the step-by-step procedure to successfully getting the rights? How much should I be willing to pay?

Melvin: Maybe the publisher doesn't want it to be in paperback or maybe they are going to put it in paperback themselves. I have a lot of books that I would like to do in paperback, but I know I am not going to get it because the company will be putting out their own paperbacks. There isn't any set amount. The royalties are about 5% for paperback, for the hardcover it is 10%, 12½%, 15%, but you have to make the phone call, send a letter and find out if the rights are available. As far as the advance goes, every book has a different advance.

Michael: What are some other rights that you can acquire when it comes to a book? There are hardcover books, paperback rights. Are there any other rights that are standard within the industry?

Melvin: If you look on my website [www.mpowers.com](http://www.mpowers.com) , you will see I have sold a dozen of my books in the Spanish language. I have a great Spanish book publisher. I have sold my books translated in Italian, translated in Greece, translated in French, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese.

How you find out about these publishers is there is a book at the library called *International Literary Market Place*. That will give you the name of the publishers and what subjects they publish in various languages in countries around the world. You can send them an email. You can send them a picture of the cover of your book. You can send them a write-up and you can do it all by email. You can send them a PDF of your book. You say, "I see that you are publishing books on exercise and yoga. I have a new book on yoga that was just published. I would like to know if you would be interested in it. I can send you a reading copy." That is the way that you do it. Most books usually go for an advance of a couple of thousands dollars against royalties.

Michael: So you will sell the foreign rights by language, by country, or by the total international rights other than the USA?

Melvin: You sell them by each country. I may have several publishers in each country. You can sell it to a dozen publishers, but it can't be the same book. It has to be a different book. I want to tell you something that I did that gave me a great deal of joy in talking about foreign publishing. What would be the most difficult challenge to get a foreign publisher to publish one of my books, say *How to Get Rich in Mail Order*?

Michael: I don't know, Arabic?

Melvin: Arabic. Okay, maybe it is Arabic. I thought that the Chinese would be difficult. So I said to myself that this is a real challenge. It had nothing to do with the money. I was going to try to get my book published in the Chinese language. I did.

Michael: You did?

Melvin: I worked on this for about a year. I had someone say that they wanted to do it. They published it in the Chinese language and I had the pleasure of enjoying sharing it with people around the world.

Michael: Let's talk about that. Tell me the process. It took you a year, but you did it.

Melvin: I did it.

Michael: Let's talk about perseverance.

Melvin: Well if you believe in it, it is a challenge. You have to persevere in anything. I can go outside of the publishing area. I was in the Arabian horse business for about twelve years. I had a double-champion stallion. I was in that business with a friend of mine that had a ranch. We bought a stallion. We knew nothing about it. We persevered. We hired the trainer that we needed. We went to the horse shows. We bought a trailer. We bought a truck. We learned about the business and it wasn't because of the money. Money had nothing to do with it. We went in for the challenge of getting established and raising a double champion.

Michael: What was the name of the horse?

Melvin: Asdar, A-S-D-A-R. After 12 years, we lost interest a bit. I said to my partner, "How about buying some race horses?" He said, "Not for me."

Michael: You guys were done with the horse business?

Melvin: He said, "No, I am not going to go that route."

Michael: Just on the money side, when it won a championship, what kind of prize money was there?

Melvin: It wasn't prize money. It was the ribbons that we won.

Michael: I see. That's fun, though. Here is a question from Rod Aikens. Mr. Powers, how had direct marketing changed over recent years?

Melvin: I am doing very little direct marketing because the printing was going up so much. The postage is going up. It is hard to make it unless you are selling a high-priced item. If I were, I would still be in it, but selling my \$10, \$15 and \$20 books, it is very hard to come out.

Michael: What have you been passionate about the most? When has this come through in your emotional response? For example, how did you feel after you sold 5,000,000 copies sold of Dr. Maxwell Maltz's book? What did that prompt you to do next?

Melvin: I don't know if it prompted me to do anything next, but it's a high. I am high everyday. I come to the office and I am high.

Michael: That is without drugs.

Michael: Do you exercise?

Melvin: Yes, I go to the gym twice a week. I work out with a trainer.

Michael: You have your own personal trainer and you are still working out?

Melvin: Right, twice a week, Mondays and Wednesdays.

Michael: What does he have you do? What kind of stuff?

Melvin: Oh, the treadmill, weight lifting and lots of other things.

Michael: That is excellent. You are an inspiration to everyone listening. If you had the opportunity to start again with Dr. Maxwell Maltz's book launch, what would you do differently today?

Melvin: I wouldn't do it any differently than I did. I hired Irwin Zucker immediately as the PR man. I knew it was going to be a winner. I just knew it, just like an employee comes to work for you and you know in a day if he is going to make it. We talked about it at the time that it was going to make it. So I wouldn't do it any differently than I did it before because we had the formula and I had the enthusiasm for it and it sold.

We wanted to do some good things with that starting with the free self-help study groups. It was a wonderful feeling. It just couldn't have been better. It wouldn't have mattered how many I sold, even if we sold 1,000 and stopped there. I would have felt good about it because it helped a lot of people. That is the way I feel about probably most of the books that I have published. I feel good what I am doing and putting it out there in the world.

Michael: Very good. Here is a question from Tony Columbo from Columbus, Ohio. Melvin, you mentioned in the article on your website that you see a lack of work ethic in America today.

Melvin: Correct.

Michael: What do you attribute to that?

Melvin: We need to have our heroes that aren't necessarily movie stars. We have to admire the work ethic. If someone is digging ditches, there is a work ethic doing it. Teaching or no matter what you are doing, there is a work ethic to it. We have to concentrate on that, that all work is ethical. We all can't be doctors or lawyers and that it is good to be

doing any type of work and to be feel good about it. If you are not then try to change it to something that you think you would love to do.

Michael: Here is a question from Kenny Chow from Singapore. Mr. Powers, do you accept resellers for your books and information products?

Melvin: Yes, we have a reseller program. All of our books are available at a 50% discount and we will drop ship for you as well. All of our books are available on a drop-ship program. The only thing that we don't do is we don't drop ship out of the country. It is too much paperwork. The postage becomes too high. We do drop ship here in the United States.

We have had this program going since day one. We have lots of people in it and they are doing fine. I will say that if people stick with us they do fine. They find a niche and they do well. Yes, all of our books are available on a drop shipment basis at a 50% discount. Bookstores buy the books at 40% off. Wholesales buy the books at 50%.

Michael: Very good. Here is a question from Carol Merritt of [Carolemerritt.com](http://Carolemerritt.com). She is a coach and an author. She asks, "Mr. Powers, what is the greatest thing that you have learned from one of your books and which book was it please?"

Melvin: I wouldn't say that any one particular thing. It is just ongoing. We talk about the positive attitude. Look, you can change your life by changing your thinking. I once published a book called *Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life*. We have a book called *Change Your Voice, Change Your Life*. You can change your thinking and you can change your life. That is the thing that I have learned throughout the years. I have had this positive attitude since day one. I did not have to overcome an attitude that I was negative about myself or the world or anything else. I like to relax in the evening. I don't listen to the evening news. I go to bed at 10 o'clock every night. I turn on Seinfeld. I get an hour of Seinfeld, even though I know all of the shows. My wife and I know all of the words. We go to bed laughing.

Michael: Why not watch the news? Why don't you watch the news?

Melvin: I don't want to hear how many people got killed, how many people got shot, how bad business is, and the country is going down the drain. I hear it during the day. I don't want to hear it at night. Later I turn on Larry King every night and I listen to the news, but I don't want to hear it going to sleep at night.

Michael: Do you read the newspaper?

Melvin: I read it everyday.

Michael: Here is a question from Paul Goodwin from Chester, United Kingdom. Mr. Powers, are you able to recognize potential best sellers from niches or subject areas where you have no direct or detailed experience or knowledge and if so how do you do it?

Melvin: I haven't had to do that. I have started new areas in calligraphy. I published a group of calligraphy books. If you look at my books that I publish, these had to do with my hobbies. I do a whole series of books on bridge. Most of them are by a fellow named Edward B. Cantor. He is one of the leading bridge experts in the world. I took a course from him. I said to him, "Would you like to do a series of books on bridge? I am a book publisher and I will do them." The first book we did was *Bridge Bidding Made Easy*. I had a good feeling about the author.

I am a chess player, so I know about the chess books. We have one on cooking. I enjoy playing poker. I am in a poker game every month. I am in that game not because of the money. It is for the pleasure of the game. Here is a book that didn't make it and I thought it was going to make it. *How You Can Stop Smoking Permanently*. I don't smoke. I never had any of my employees smoking. You couldn't smoke in my, home, office or warehouse. Yet, that book has never made it. I spent a great deal of money promoting the book, but it didn't work.

Michael: That is interesting. Here is a question from Sam. Mr. Powers, how has the Internet affect mail order? Has it been for better or for worse?

Melvin: It is better. We don't have to spend the money on full-page ads. I use to run a lot of ads in magazines. We talked about that before. I did a lot of that, but the advertising rates have gone through the roof and the circulation has become less, so it is hard to make the space ads payout. We know about the Internet. People go to my Internet pages and there are the ads. They are all laid out beautifully and they go to the subject area that they like.

Michael: Let me ask you about the bridge books. You took some courses in bridge. You approached him to do a series of books. He said yes. How did you structure that deal? You basically said, "You are going to write a series of books." Did you assist him in helping him to write the book?

Melvin: I couldn't assist him.

Michael: Did he have any books written when you met him?

Melvin: No.

Michael: You approached him and then he started writing books himself?

Melvin: Right. He started writing books himself. He didn't ask me for any money up front. I didn't offer any money up front. What I did for him is I helped put him more on the map because we sold them to the bridge clubs. His books were in all of the bookstores all over the country. People pay bridge experts to play with them. He gets big fees by doing that. He got gigs going on cruises and teaching bridge for an hour a day or two hours a day, whatever it was. He had a great time doing this, got paid, and everybody knew him.

Michael: The tradeoff was that you got the rights to this series of books. He made a royalty on the sales. You were able to probably make him more famous than he already was.

Melvin: Right, that made him famous all over the world.

Michael: So you didn't have any kind of formal contract?

Melvin: No, we had a contract, but a simple contract.

Michael: Do you have lawyers draw up your contracts?

Melvin: You can get the contracts for free. They are on the Internet. Go to book publishing contracts.

Michael: Book publishing contracts?

Melvin: Go to Google and search for book publishing contracts and you will find them all for free.

Michael: When you make a good publishing deal with someone is there anything that a lot of people overlook. Is there anything important at all when you make a deal with somebody that our listeners should know about?

Melvin: Everything is important, but before I answer that question you should go to the website and read the contracts. For foreign contracts, you generally get paid for once a year. You must be paid by April first. If you are not being paid by April 1<sup>st</sup>, the contract can become null and void.

Michael: In publishing rights, are they world wide – I mean exclusive worldwide?

Melvin: Yes, there are all kinds of way that it can be structured.

Michael: What is the best way?

Melvin: You sign the worldwide rights to the book. So you have the right to sell in foreign languages.

Michael: You, with your hard work, you made his bridge books very successful and you built up something of value. You could sell the rights to other countries right?

Melvin: Correct.

Michael: There could be a lot of money in that.

Melvin: Well as long as you work it.

Michael: That is the fruits of your labor. You own the intellectual property of an expert. You build it up. You make it a success. Then you sell licensing rights. How could you sell that intellectual property and make money from it in other ways than just the sale of the books in the US?

Melvin: Movie rights, if you do a book on fiction, there are movie rights and even if you do a book on non-fiction there can be movie rights. So there are all kinds of rights. There are the CDs. Say it is a published book and you don't want to do a CD, you don't have the distribution, such as a company that specializes in doing that. You go to the bookstore and you look, "Who is putting out similar CDs?" You go to them and you structure a deal with them. For some of our books, we have CDs in foreign languages especially the Spanish books.

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Michael: Have you ever sold movie rights to anything?

Melvin: I was very close.

Michael: Whom did you try to sell the movie rights to?

- Melvin: We had someone interested, but I would rather not say. When the time comes and somebody has something they can call me, I will be happy to talk to them.
- Michael: That's about rights. Chris Miller from Richmond, Virginia from Netpreneur and Business Development consultant at [bubblecomment.com](http://bubblecomment.com). His question is, "Mr. Powers, how did you structure your purchasing right without letting the seller know that he would be missing out on something?"
- Melvin: They were happy. Why should I tell them?. They were a major company with a lot of employees. Why should I say that this is a great book and it is going to be a best seller? Why should I do that? I was low key about it. I didn't offer them loads of money. I offered very little money for the advance of the book. If I let them know I was really excited about it, there goes the price.
- Michael: How would you approach being low key where you don't give it away?
- Melvin: I'd say, "Michael, you wrote a fine book. People are making money on the Internet. I would like to publish your book and I think we can do a good job with it. You say, "What is the advance?" The advance isn't your main thing, whether I say it is \$5,000 or \$10,000 or \$1,000. You already are aware that paperback royalty is 5% and hard cover 10%. You want to know what that book can do for you either worldwide or at least here in the United States and can bring you in more business.

Those are the things that you want to look for. Can this publisher do a good job in getting you publicity, getting you on TV, hopefully and getting you on radio, getting you more publicity? Can he do that? Will he be able to do it? You cannot rely on the publisher because if the book isn't making it with most publishers, they are going to drop it. They are not going to go forward. You have to be ready to take control of your own life, your own destiny, your own book.

That is why we are talking about self-publishing and doing a good job with it, seeing what you can do with it. If you feel, well that is too much for you, okay then you send it out as we have talked about. Go for the best deal. Do multiple submissions. You don't have to wait for each publisher to give you an answer, yes or no. You have to take control of your own destiny. That is what I would tell them. Well if it is a great book, I am interested in it, but regardless if I am, you still have to take control of your destiny such as you are doing right now with this interview and your website. You are doing a great job.

- Michael: Are publishers buying the digital rights to new books?
- Melvin: You can sign a contract without assigning the digital rights or with the digital rights, but I let the major publishers handle that because they are used to it and they will make the money for you. They know what they are doing. If you come to sign a contract, I'm not saying that anyone is going to take advantage of you, but the publisher naturally wants as much rights as they can get, digital rights, movie rights and all kinds of rights. Hopefully, they'll make money for you.
- Michael: More questions from David Cracker. What or how do you differentiate your services and products from your competitors? Is there anything that really differentiates you from other publishers in the self-help field?
- Melvin: I don't look at publishers as competitors. I know most of those publishers. We are all in the same business. We are all happy to hear of each other's success. When I go to book and trade shows and I meet them, I say, how are you doing? Hey, I am glad to hear that your new book has sold blah-blah-blah copies. Oh, it must feel good.
- Michael: How does one come to work out profitability in pricing structure?
- Melvin: It has to be 4 or 5 times the cost of your book plus royalties. If the book is a \$10 book, the total cost should be with the royalties \$2.50. Then because I am selling it to the wholesaler for \$5, I am doubling my money. That should be the structure. If you can sell the book for \$20 and the book costs you only \$4, you are still making five times the cost.
- Michael: Okay, another question. Are your sales and marketing operations measured and tested? Do you monitor them daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually?
- Melvin: We do it monthly. We see if the sales we had this month were better than last month, better than last year. Are the sales going up? Are the sales going down? Every year we take inventory so we know what book is selling more than it did the year before. Are sales going down on the book? Is it going up? We do that, of course.
- Michael: Tell me about your day and the responsibilities that you have with your company. What does a day look like for you?
- Melvin: I look at the mail of course and see what orders we are getting.
- Michael: Are you still just as excited making money?

Melvin: Sure, I am not saying that I am getting excited about one book, but I will tell you what excited me today. A woman wrote me from prison saying that she is a recovering alcoholic and that she read a book that I published because there are so many women there, they loved the book. I sent her another copy. I not only sent her that, but I sent her another book *The Dragon Slayer with a Heavy Heart*. I sent her a book called *The Princess Who Believed in Fairy Tales*, which is a women's book. I sent her multiple copies of these books free with a letter saying, good luck to all of you. That was the most important thing that I did today. Usually I come in and I look at the mail. I look at the wholesale orders and I get on the Internet. I read the paper and I read trade publications that I get. Then I go to the Internet and answer emails or what research that I can do on the Internet. I am busy all day long. People call me to answer questions.

Michael: When did you first discover that you had the entrepreneurial flare?

Melvin: I have always had it. I became interested in mail order and became successful an early age selling "how to" books. It was working. It was working perfectly. I didn't have to think about it. I was selling books on astrology and selling books on gambling, hobbies, horse player's winning guides, humor, and hypnotism.

Michael: What do you say to people who think it is too late to get into the business in fear that they missed the boat?

Melvin: If you think you have missed the boat, then you have missed the boat. If you think that you haven't missed the boat, then you haven't missed the boat. It is never too late regardless of what has happened to you regardless of your age that you can make it. There are lots of success stories about people of all ages, all kinds of handicaps that finally make it. They make it because they are enthusiastic about what they want to sell or do or what advice they want to give. Whatever it happens to be, it is never too late. If you think that the boat has sailed, then it has sailed. If you think there is always an opportunity, then that is the truth of the matter. Wouldn't you say so Michael? If someone would read the suggested material, listen to the material on your website, wouldn't they have a good chance of making it?

Michael: They would if they took action.

Melvin: If they took action. If they listened to the material on your website and they took action and took notes because you have some great writers there. People should listen to your recording and read the Gene Schwartz book on *Breakthrough Advertising*.

Michael: Did you listen at all?

Melvin: I listened to the first part of it, but I didn't get around to listening to the last.

Michael: Oh, okay.

Melvin: But I will. If people listen to it, it can't be easier than that. You didn't ask me to say this, but I want to say it. You are offering great service, great advice for next to nothing or for nothing. It is a chance, Michael, of going to college and getting all of this great information on mail order and entrepreneurship. It's a wonderful opportunity. If the person is enthusiastic, I know they may not be enthusiastic because they have never done anything, but the opportunity is there. They have to take action and if they do it, then they are going to be successful. Do it step-by-step. If it isn't working, here is some of the best advice. Contact the Small Business Administration. Almost every city has a Small Business Administration and they will send someone out to you that is in SCORE, that is a service organization, Service Core of Retired Executives. They will help you for free. If you can't get someone in the city where you live, call up the 800 numbers that they have, the Small Business Administration. They will send someone out absolutely free to help you as long as you want. Look in your local phone book.

Michael: SCORE the retired professionals and they put on a lot of the seminars and trainings in the local areas.

Melvin: Are the seminars free?

Michael: No, they do charge for it actually.

Melvin: They do?

Michael: They may have some free, but I think for seminars and stuff, they do charge.

Melvin: Oh, okay. Here is the phone number. It is 800-634-0245 and it is a volunteer organization. They will give you the nearest chapter near you. The service core of retired executives, thirty years in business, no fee and one to one counseling.

Michael: Right, very good. Let me ask you this Melvin, the first interview we talked about, you were joking about the Amazon sales taking a little bit

of business away from you. How do you feel about the on-line markets like Amazon? Let's say that someone is looking for one of your titles.

Melvin: Go to Barnes and Noble or they can order directly from me.

Michael: Go to Barnes and Noble.

Melvin: Yeah. I feel great.

Michael: You have your books available on your website, but even though you are selling to them, they are selling it for less money. Is it mixed feelings?

Melvin: No it is not at all. I am happy to do it. I have people that have been my drop-shippers. We drop ship for them for many, many years. Even as much as 25 years, we have had people with us. If they are making money, I am happy. I am making money every time they sell a book. The fun part about it, as they tell me, they will say well Melvin, I bought my book from Amazon. I tell them I buy my own books from Amazon. I go to Amazon and I buy my books from them why not.

Michael: You were drop shipping for whom for 25 years?

Melvin: For some of my accounts. They have been with me for 25 years.

Michael: I see.

Melvin: I have lots of people 5, 10, 15 years. Lots of people drop shipping my books.

Michael: Do you think mail order principles are still applicable today?

Melvin: Well of course. It's always good. The Internet is another place to do mail order now. So everything in it works. Mail order itself is finding a unique product, developing your mail order expertise, make money with display ads, developing your unlimited potential for making money with mail order, how to copycat. Oh, one thing that your listeners should do is copycat successful mail order operations. What is wrong with doing that?

Michael: That is a good idea. Give me an example.

Melvin: Go to someone that is selling something that you want to sell. See what they are doing and you do the same thing, but do it better. Also look at their ads and copycat their technique, copycat their mail order

operations, buy one of the products. Do what I talk about in my mail order book, read some of my successful or not so successful ads. I don't put in here every ad I wrote. I give a strategy. Follow the Melvin Power's success strategy. Follow it and become a millionaire. I believe that. It has happened. Read books on advertising that are at the library. My book is *How to Write a Good Advertisement* by Victor Schwab and that is one I like, but read all the literature that you can possibly read about mail order and Internet marketing. Listen to the recordings.

Michael: Thank you. You know we didn't cover this in this interview. The first interview we talked a little bit about "*Think and Grow Rich*" because I was kind of rushing a bunch of questions in. How many copies of did you sell over the years?

Melvin: Seven million.

Michael: Was that your number one seller?

Melvin: Yes.

Michael: Did it get on the bestseller list?

Melvin: Yes, at one time it did. It is not on there now because there are a lot of people selling books.

Michael: Seven million sold. Let me ask you this? If you compared those sales and you broke them down into large bulk orders or wholesale sales and then retail sales and you broke it down, how would that look? Is the bulk of those 7,000,000 sales through your larger distributors ordering them?

Melvin: Distributors?

Michael: Yeah the distributors.

Melvin: Through the bookstores. I sold a couple million through multi-level companies.

Michael: Oh, you did?

Melvin: Oh yes. That was very big.

Michael: What multi-level companies?

Melvin: All of them.

Michael: I see.

Melvin: Multi-level isn't going as well as it use to, but I use to get orders for 25,000 copies of the book. I would print them and send the books to the companies right to their door. That is what pushed the sale. There were a couple of companies that bought tons of these books from me and all the rest of the multi-level companies, so that is where tons of my books went.

Michael: What about *Psycho-Cybernetics*? Did MLM companies order that one too?

Melvin: They ordered that, but not so much as.

Michael: That is interesting. Let me ask you this, you were telling me that you have a team. How many manuscripts are submitted to you guys every month or so?

Melvin: About a hundred.

Michael: A hundred? How do you set that up? Let's say that I am a publisher and I want to review good potential books, how do I find some script readers who could review this stuff. I certainly don't have the time to read through them.

Melvin: Put an ad in the newspaper or go to Google again and say wanted book reviewers.

Michael: Yeah and what do you pay them?

Melvin: It varies with each person. There is no set fee. It all depends upon the manuscript.

Michael: So you have your script readers review books and if they see something that really looks like it has potential, will they notify you and say what?

Melvin: They write a report to a senior editor that I have. They do it in writing and if we get three good ones or two good ones or one great one. We will look at it. She will look at it.

Michael: This senior editor will read the report and then maybe read through the script?

Melvin: She will read through it and see if she likes it.

Michael: Then she will contact you and say here's one that looks pretty good?

Melvin: Right and then I will read it and say yes or no.

Michael: How many scripts are you reading in a month, reviewing potential?

Melvin: Two or three a month.

Michael: Two or three a month?

Melvin: A little more than that.

Michael: I see. Was *The Dragon Slayer With a Heavy Heart* one that your script readers found?

Melvin: It actually was my script readers who wrote it.

Michael: One of your script readers wrote that?

Melvin: Yes.

Michael: Really? Is that book doing well?

Melvin: Very well. It is used with 12-step programs. Do you know what book is selling well with me? *Think Like a Winner*. Ever hear of that book?

Michael: No I have not.

Melvin: The author is Dr. Walter Staples.

Michael: Yeah "*Think Like a Winner*" is doing good?

Melvin: Very good.

Michael: Have you had that for a long, long time?

Melvin: For a long time. It is a \$15 book and it is a 6"x 9" book. That has the right elements in the title and the material is excellent.

Michael: Tell me the story. Remember when you told me you had *The Secret of Bowling Strikes* and it was running for 10 years in the bowling magazines.

Melvin: I ran it on a PI basis. That is that they ran the ad and I paid them per order.

Michael: All right. Then you said that you came out with a record.

Melvin: Right. The back end was a record based on the book that I sold for \$10.

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Michael: You told me that the record sold for like five times more than the book.

Melvin: Correct. It sold for much more.

Michael: So there were a lot of margins in the audio?

Melvin: Correct.

Michael: Did you ever do that with any of your other books?

Melvin: Yes, "*The Secret of Perfect Putting*".

Michael: How did that go with the record?

Melvin: I had the same deal with some golf magazines. I only did it occasionally, but the bowling book took the cake and that was the best one of all.

Michael: So someone who has printed books, by turning them and creating audio then just selling the audio version is a whole new profit center.

Melvin: Oh, some people like to read and get the information. I like reading and getting information. I like hearing the information. I hear it again and I get it the second time a little bit better, because I have heard it. I am one that purchases lots of inspirational CDs because I like to listen to them going back and forth from my office, so I enjoy the CDs.

Michael: This has been wonderful Melvin. Thank you so much.

Melvin: Thank you and thank you to all of your listeners for sending in those questions. I hope they got some good, practical information.

Michael: We did, thank you Melvin.

*I hope you have enjoyed this interview with Melvin Powers. If you have any questions, please contact me at [michael@michaelsenoff.com](mailto:michael@michaelsenoff.com)*