

Business For Superheroes Podcast Transcription: Episode One Hundred And Eighty Seven: Conversations With Your Ideal Reader



In an industry stuffed with marketing bullshit, empty promises and shiny-suited liars, one woman's had enough. She knows what it's like to have the wrong clients, no money and no time for fun, but she also knows how to fix it, and, on the Business For Superheroes Show, she promises to tell the down and dirty truth about business, sales and running away with the circus! Here's your host: Vicky Fraser...

Vicky: Hello, and welcome to the "Business for Superheroes" show, I'm Vicky Fraser, and this is my husband, Joe.

Joe: You want help?

Vicky: Well, we kinda haven't swapped over yet, but I thought if we merged them for a little while before we rebrand.

Joe: Just confuse the listener.

Vicky: Yeah.

Joe: Cool.

Vicky: Yeah, which is fairly standard practice, really. I'm Vicky Fraser and this is my husband, Joe.

Joe: Hello.

Vicky: Hello. Joe is feeling very self conscious today because he feels like he looks a mess. Basically, he should have had a shave and a haircut by now.

Joe: Yeah, I haven't really got up. It's early in the morning, we're supposed to be renovating a house, but here we are doing a podcast.

Vicky: It's absolutely not early in the morning. But, the weather is grim outside which is why we're drinking tea, cheers. Chin, chin. Yes, tea, tea.

Joe: Tea.

Vicky: Which is the fuel many businesses, including mine, were built on. So, we also have Whiskey here today. If you're watching this you can see Whiskey there. She's one of the most beautiful cats in the world. If not the most beautiful cat in the world.

Joe: Whiskey is tolerating being on my knee because she has just come in from outside where it is throwing it down with rain and cold. So, she is now sitting on my knee just using me as a towel, basically.

Vicky: Yeah, she made some poor life choices and now she's regretting them. Right then, so this week we are talking about, we're talking about more strategies to help you beat the blank page of doom and writers block.

Joe: Right, 'cause this is one of the things that people say well, you know, I can't, I can't possibly write a book, couldn't possibly do it.

Vicky: No, or write anything, in fact.

Joe: Can't write an article, can't write this, can't write that. I just look at a blank piece of paper and that's that.

Vicky: Yes, and I was thinking this morning, what is that kind of writer's block like? And I was thinking about it as, I used to suffer quite badly from insomnia. Have you ever had insomnia?

Joe: Yeah, when I was at university. That was mostly through drinking too much and staying up too late and yeah.

Vicky: So yeah, so I was thinking about this because I think sometimes it's a little bit similar. So, if you've ever really struggled to sleep and not kind of just, oh, I can't, I'm finding it difficult to get to sleep, but that twitchy panicky staring into the void teetering on the edge of madness insomnia. And the

longer it goes on the worse it is. There's a reason sleep deprivation is used as a form of torture.

Joe: 'Cause it's really horrific.

Vicky: 'Cause it's torturous. It's really awful. And so, do you know how sometimes it just feels like sleep is just there and you've almost managed to fall asleep and then you grab for it desperately and then it kind of slides away again. And it's like you're trying to hard to fall asleep and so it just, it kind of disappears. And that is sometimes what the blank page of doom feels like to me. There are different reasons for struggling to write. It's not always the same reason behind it. This is why I really really object to the phrase writer's block. Because, A, it's not really a real thing and we'll do a podcast about that, you know, that idea itself at some point. But also, it oversimplifies it and it just says oh, you know, you're just stuck writing. It doesn't really get into what the reasons behind it are. It's just a big, I think, a big excuse for kind of letting yourself off the hook. And also for, not even letting yourself off the hook, but it's like it's this big thing that society says, "Oh, it's okay, all writers struggle from it." So, it's like I'm just gonna sit here and wallow in my writer's block-ness.

Joe: Lack of achievement.

Vicky: Lack of achievement, yeah. It's just one of those things that happens. It's not one of those things that happens and it doesn't have to and there are ways to beat it. So, I wanted to do this podcast about one specific cause of not being able to get your words down on paper. When I was thinking about insomnia, this is something that I think is gonna sound familiar to people. So, there's a couple of reasons for it. One of the reasons is that you've almost got an idea and it's almost down, like right on the edge of your brain, but you can't quite grab it. And every time you get a little bit closer to it, it slips away. Like that sleep when you're trying to desperately get to sleep. And you've almost got an idea, but it's just like, nah, I'm not gonna stick around, I'm just gonna slide around so you can't quite grab hold of it, like a bar of soap in the bath, you know? Or, the other reason, which is kind of related, is that you have too many ideas and they kind of all race across your brain and you can't grab any one of them because there's just too many of them. And I think both

of those are quite, to me they both sound and feel a little bit like that kind of insomnia.

Joe: Okay.

Vicky: And nothing is really solid and that's when I start to get really, really frustrated. It's like, gah-uhn, it's almost there, but I can't write it down. And that's when I start like throwing things at flies when they get in and, you know, gradually descend into teeth grinding madness. You don't see this 'cause you're at work.

Joe: Sometimes I come home to it.

Vicky: And so, yes, it's very bad. But, I learned long ago, that there's absolutely no point in sitting at my desk and trying to force it.

Joe: Right.

Vicky: Because the harder you try the more slippery it becomes and the more rage-filled or woe-filled or despair filled I become. And so, it's a sure sign I haven't finished thinking yet or perhaps, I haven't finished researching. So, I think a lot of businesses, definitely a lot of business owners, and quite a lot of writers, don't really understand how much thinking is part of writing. And this is, I think, a malady of the modern world. It's that presente-ism thing. As long as your sitting at your desk between nine and five, everything's great and you're being productive. And that's just so much bullshit, so much bullshit. And it's a massive, I think, cause of lack of productivity in the world. Unless we're actually doing something, like making marks on paper or recording a podcast or, you know, doing something. It's like you're told off at school for, I remember being told off at school for staring out of the window and daydreaming. And that is just an appalling thing to say to a child.

Joe: Did you have something to do though? Had they just set you a whole bunch of things to do?

Vicky: Well, usually it was when I was set an essay or something and my staring out of the window was my thinking time. And that is exactly what people think, you know, if I'm suppose to be writing a chapter of my book or

writing an article, you know, writing something for a client or doing whatever, if I'm staring out of the window I'm not just staring into space with goldfish going around, I'm thinking. Or if I go for a walk everything kind of churns away in the background. But, we are conditioned from those early school days and I really hope that kids today have more luck with that kind of bullshit than I did. But, we're conditioned to think that unless we're doing something, active all the time, busy, we're not being productive and that's nonsense. So, it's really important that you give yourself time to think things over and you don't like plunk yourself down at that the desk from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. if that's your writing time and think well, it's my writing time so this is where I have to be. Go for a walk, if that's where your ideas happen, go for a walk. Take a notebook with you just in case. But, churn things over. So, you might not have finished thinking yet, so make sure you're thinking. But also, you might not have finished researching yet. So, I think, one of the big things that stops people from writing whether it's an article or sales page or a book or whatever is you just haven't gathered enough research yet and so that's super important as well. And what I wanted to do today was give you a technique for beating that blank page and coming up with the idea. If you're struggling to sketch out your idea and come up with the idea for your book and get the outline down I want to give you something today that will basically solve that problem for you. And also will be a fantastic way of providing the absolute best testimonials you could possibly want from your customers. So, I feel like this is where we need a little bit of interruption music for between possibility.

Joe: We really need to get ourselves a xylophone or something, don't we?

Vicky: We do. Well, I'm learning to play the guitar, aren't I? I had my first lesson in three months yesterday. I'm doing scales at the moment and major and minor chords, except for two minor chords because they are hand-manglers. So, I will compose a little bit of music on my guitar. Why are you laughing?

Joe: No, it'll be great.

Vicky: It'll be better than last week. Should we do last weeks? Do-dee-di-do.

Joe: Part two.

Vicky: Do-dee-di-do.

Joe: Part two.

Vicky: I feel like we're losing listeners by the second. Right, so.

Joe: Carry on.

Vicky: The lost art of listening. Whether you are writing a book or a webpage or an article or whatever the hell you are writing, talk to your clients or rather listen to your clients. Take them out for lunch, I don't know, whatever.

Joe: So this is part of your thinking process for your blank page?

Vicky: Yeah, part of my thinking and researching process. So, I go and ask my ideal clients and customers what I want to understand, exactly how I can help them, I go and ask them a series of questions. Now, I got six of these questions from Sean D'Souza. Hi Sean.

Joe: Hi Sean.

Vicky: And I added the first one myself because I think it's the right place to start. So, when you are talking to your clients and customers ask the questions in the order that I'm about to give them to you. Because that's the order that they will build the story for you, okay? And sit and listen and let the conversation flow naturally. And do not skip the last question because it's where some of your best information will come from. So, the seven crucial questions you need to ask your ideal customer or your current best customers and clients. Okay, Joe, what's question number one?

Joe: What reason did you have for looking for my product or service? What were you struggling with before you found me?

Vicky: Okay, so that sets the scene. That gets right to the nitty-gritty of what they were really struggling to do. So, if you are, for example, a web designer you might ask your best customer, you might sit them down and ask them,

what were you struggling with before you found me? What was making you tear your hair out?

Joe: Bad web designers. Web designers who didn't understand sales. Web designers who just were excited at putting spangly things on the internet and not actually interested in doing what I wanted.

Vicky: Yeah. If you're a gardener you might say, you know, before you met me what was your big problem? What were you struggling with? Why did you start looking for a gardener? That's a really good question to ask because that will get right to the nitty-gritty of the problem that you can solve. And that, by the way, I'll come to the common thread in a moment, but that's the thing you really want to be listening out for at the beginning, for the big idea for your book 'cause that's the big problem that you're gonna be wanting to solve.

Joe: It tells you what their pain is.

Vicky: It tells you what their pain is, yeah.

Joe: It tells you what you are solving.

Vicky: Yes, it does. So, that's the first question. Question number two.

Joe: What was your main concern about working with me or buying my product? What worried you the most before you forked over the cash?

Vicky: So that's a really good question because that's going to pull out people's objections to basically buying your product. Sometimes, they will say, so for example for my book course, when I launched my book course, I was talking to Dom, for example, hi Dom.

Joe: Hi Dom.

Vicky: And he said, yeah, you know, it was quite a lot of money and I was a little bit concerned about it. Which is a really good thing for me to know because that's something that I can then address in my sales pitch, you know? Yes, it's quite a lot of money, but here is why it's gonna be worth it.

And then you can put testimonials from people like Dom saying like oh my god, it's paid for itself so many times over. So, that kind of thing, that's a really important thing. Other concerns might be, you're always gonna think oh, people are gonna be worried about the cost of it. You gotta show them that it's an investment not a cost. But, people are gonna have other concerns as well. So, I know for a fact, that some of my other book clients, coaching clients, people who are writing their own books, one of their main concerns is not gonna be the cash. It might be at the back of their mind, but the main concern might be what if nobody wants to read my book. You know, what's the point in me doing this even. So, you need to ask that question because what you think are people's main objections might not be actually. And it's really important for you to know that because that's stuff that you're gonna have to address in your book, you know, when you write your book. The whole point of this is to get inside people's heads and allow you to write something that will really genuinely help people. And also, if you're selling a product, you need to know so that you can overcome those objections. So, question number three.

Joe: Now that you've worked with me or bought my product, how have you found it, what happened?

Vicky: So here you're asking really if your product or service has solved the problem for them. And they're gonna tell you. And if you're getting one word answers then just probe a little bit. But, they're gonna tell you here, oh yeah, you know, well, I wrote my book. And now I'm on my fifth book, in Dom's case. So, that was the thing that they got from you and they might elaborate a bit, they might not. If they don't elaborate or even if they do you can then move on to question four. Which is?

Joe: What specific feature did you like most about working with me or my product? Why?

Vicky: That's really good because if you just say to people what did you like about it, which the first question is a bit more general, how have you found and what happened? The second question gets really specific because people, unless you make them think about the details, they often don't pull them out.

Joe: Yeah, they just go oh, it was great, it was great.

Vicky: Yeah, but if you say to them what specific feature did you like most they'll actually think about that and they'll be like you know what, it was the fact that you held my hand all the way through the process. Or, actually,

Joe: You made it feel possible.

Vicky: You gave me the confidence to even get started. That kind of thing. So, you don't know what specific feature people are gonna like. And you will probably be surprised. I'm often surprised by what people say to me when I ask them that question. So that is really really important. Because that's gonna give you a lot of clues as to what problem you're really solving for people. So, what was question number five?

Joe: What are three other benefits of working with someone like me or buying a product like this? What did they do for you?

Vicky: So that was a good question because that gets them to elaborate a little bit more. So, they've already told you the main thing, now you're asking for three other things because it's never just one thing that people get out of working with you. So again, it makes people think really specifically about what they got from that product or what they got from working with you. And what really they liked about it and what they found valuable and that's really useful.

Joe: Yeah, if you're a mechanic and you're thinking well, I'm a pretty good value mechanic for the local area. But, somebody might say something like well, you know what, you spoke to me like I was a human being and you didn't treat me like an idiot. Or it might be, you made it really easy and you brought a courtesy car round and took my car away. Or, it could be all kinds of little features and things that you do that's, you know, you just do because that's who you are and that's how you behave. But, to them, it distinguishes you from other people, other products.

Vicky: By the way, if you're a mechanic and you would like to make an absolute shitload of money make yourself really female friendly. Make your reception area nice and clean. It doesn't have to be pink and frilly. And in

fact, it shouldn't be, but it shouldn't be covered in oil and men's magazines. Talk to women like they know what they're talking about 'cause quite a lot of us do actually know what we're talking about. And just make us feel welcome in your place 'cause quite a lot of garages are quite blokey and it's bit daunting.

Joe: Darlin!

Vicky: Yeah, it's a bit daunting to walk in. Don't have girly mags, you know, girly calendars plastered all over your walls. At least not where your customers can see them because again, it's really off-putting. We don't like to be objectified, you know. And we will pay more for that kind of thing because that's the kind of benefit that we'll be like, you know, I just felt really comfortable there. 'Cause I've been to garages before with my motorbike where the guy has talked to you about my motorbike, do you remember that? And I was just like wow, you're a dick. So we went elsewhere. And you know, yeah, he lost that customer and we went elsewhere to somewhere that did make me feel comfortable and treated me like an actual person.

Joe: 15 years of motorcycle maintenance he did not get.

Vicky: Yes, so that was awesome. But that, I mean, that's a little bit flippant, but genuinely, if you're a mechanic listening to this and you run a garage and you wanna make a lot more money specialize in women. I'm not even kidding. If you wanna make a lot of money specialize in LGBTQ plus people. Make them feel super fucking comfortable and they will tell everybody, so yeah. Okay, question number six.

- [Joe] Would you recommend me to anyone else? Why?

Vicky: That's a really important question and it's one that we don't feel entirely comfortable asking because it feels like a little bit blowing our own trumpets. The other questions are all kind of less personal, I think, to us as business owners. But, you need to ask that question because you'll get some really cool answers. Again, you'll probably get some slightly different answers from the answers you got previously. Because if you're asking somebody, oh, you know, would you recommend me to anyone else quite often they say oh, I already have and this is why. But, you'll just get a little bit more information

out of people because when they think oh, why would I recommend you to someone else, it'll be something slightly different from what they've told you before.

Joe: Yeah, 'cause I think you'll get on with my grandma.

Vicky: Yeah, which tells you a lot, you know, it tells you a lot about the way you work and who you are. And final question, Joe.

Joe: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Vicky: Do not skip this question because what will happen is, the person that you're talking to will say no, I don't think so, I think that's covered it. And then there'll be a pause. Do not fill that pause with words. Just sit and wait. And they will go, but you know what? And then five minutes of absolute gold dust will come out of their mouths. And it will be, it's a little bit like and doctors, GPs will tell you this, that people will come in and they'll talk about their minor ailments and they'll be like ah, I'm a little bit worried about this, bit worried about this, and as they're on their way out the door they'll turn around and say, can I just ask you something? And that will be the real reason that they've come to the doctors. That will be the thing that they're really worried about and they didn't want to ask. And it will come out at the last minute. So, ask that final question. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Joe: You might get some recommendations. You might get some thoughts as to what would improve your product, your service. You might get all kinds of things outta that.

Vicky: Actually, yeah. This needs to be an eight question thing.

Joe: I was gonna say, there's no question saying is there any improvements I could make?

Vicky: Which is really odd because when I've been doing my testimonials for my new book business I've been asking another question which is, how can I make it better? You know, how can I improve my service? So, I would say that as well. And in fact, I would make that question number seven. And then

question number eight is that, anything else you would like to add? But yeah, ask if you can improve it. Sometimes people won't be able to think of anything. And sometimes they'll come up with something that will just take your product from great to amazing. Because people don't actually feel that comfortable offering unsolicited advice. But, if you say to them, tell me how I can make this better for you. They will absolutely answer you. So do that. And then I would just add one more question, specifically if you're writing a book. Just throw in there, would you be interested in a book that'd help you understand how to solve your biggest challenge? And if you've just had this massive conversation with people, nine times out of 10 they're gonna say you know what, yeah, I would. And then you might get some more useful information about how oh, I've looked for a book and I couldn't find anything that looked any good.

Joe: There's no advice on this, I've Googled it.

Vicky: Yeah, or you know, the books that I've found are really textbooky or really business-speaky and you know, that kind of thing. So, ask that question as well because the other reason that you do that is if they say they'd be interested in a book they're gonna be one of the first people who buy it when you write it. So, you know you're gonna get a certain number of people buying your book.

Joe: Which is nice.

Vicky: Which is nice, yeah. So, these questions tell your customers' or your ideal reader's story. They start at the beginning and they take them right to the end, which is the place where they want to be. Yeah, hmm.

Joe: Actually, I'm just tickling Whisk. She's purring.

Vicky: She is, can you hear her purring, guys? Probably hear it raining as well, kinda inside-outside room. Okay so, that reason we do this is your ideal clients are gonna tell you exactly what they find most valuable about you and your business. They will show you what their biggest struggle is and how you can help them fix it. And that is your big book idea. That's the thing that you can start writing about. So, if you're really super stuck on your blank page of doom go and talk to your ideal customers. Each person you speak to will

have a different story to tell but there will be common threads running through their tales. And the big problem that you're solving for them will almost certainly be the same for each person. They might have different motivations and they might have different emotions come out of that and it will affect them in different ways, but the core of their big problem will be the same for pretty much everybody. And then all of the stories that they tell you and their nuances and their journey will give you so much to write about in your book. So much so, the common thread that you find is your big book idea. So, find out what that is and write it down and then you can use it to create your outline. And suddenly, you don't have a blank page anymore. So yeah, listen to your ideal clients, basically.

Joe: What if you don't have an ideal client? What's the process of finding your ideal client? You're talking about existing clients.

Vicky: Yeah, talk to your best existing client. Doing an ideal client profile is an entirely different podcast. An ideal reader profile, but you can start that process by talking to your current best clients.

Joe: Best customers.

Vicky: Yeah, 'cause we forget about that. 'Cause I think that's a big mistake that a lot of marketers who teach business owners how to find their ideal client avatar, they miss that. They're like oh, we must do this framework and we must do this and we must do that and it becomes this massive daunting task. 'Cause it's a really difficult thing to do, put together an ideal client profile. And what I find a lot of people, a lot of kind of gurus, forget to suggest is go talk to the client who pays you the most money. You're most valuable client, the one who's stuck with you for longest. Your most loyal client, go and talk to them.

Joe: And just, the very act of doing this, you know, talking to them, shows that you value them. It's a slightly different interaction to the one that you normally have which is where you service their car or you cut their hair or you do whatever it is that you do for them and they pay you. It's quite a thoughtful and interesting thing to do because I think it shows that customer that you want to improve. That you are interested, that you do value them. I think it's quite good for the customer as well.

Vicky: It is, it's good for everybody. And it builds relationships as well because you will find out more about them, not just for how you can improve your business, but as a person. And I find that quite often my best clients become my friends as well. They don't usually start out that way. You know, very occasionally, I'll start out kind of doing some work with a friend, but almost always my absolute best clients become friends or people that I will go and see socially. Because they are, you know, they're my kind of people. They're good interesting people. So, you'll enrich your own life by doing this. If you think as well, like Joe said, it's just another way to interact with them. But, people love nothing more than talking about themselves. And we all do, we all love talking about ourselves. We are our own biggest fans.

Joe: I think there's another question we should ask them.

Vicky: Oh, what?

Joe: I think there should be a question where you let them know that they're valued and lovely and that you appreciate them very much. And that today, you're buying them a coffee. But, I also think you should ask them the question is there anything else I could take off your hands?

Vicky: Yes, that is a very good question.

Joe: Is there anything else that bugs you in this area, what I work in?

Vicky: Yeah, that is a very good question because although you might not use it for this book it might be the idea for book number two. And certainly for immediately offering them another service or product that they might want. So, that has an immediate benefit as well as a book number two benefit. Nice, Joe, gold star. It's not all goldfish is it?

Joe: It's not all goldfish.

Vicky: Right then, we are gonna have to go out into the rain and start working on the inside of my new office because it's really grim out there.

Joe: So, I'm gonna do some electrics inside and Vicky's gonna dig a trench outside.

Vicky: No, I'm not. But, we will be back same time next week and we will be talking about, bare with me, we will be talking about how to outline your book. Another beating writer's block method and we're gonna be talking about how to outline your book. Which I think we've talked about before, but we're gonna talk about it again. In the meantime, please subscribe and go on to iTunes and rate us and give us a review.

Joe: Five stars.

Vicky: Five stars. And if you know anybody else who you think would be interested in this podcast please share us with them. If you've listened to every single episode, Hi Yinka,

Joe: Hi, Yinka.

Vicky: You will get, well, email me and tell me about it and send me your postal address. I will send you a silly little gift to say thank you so much. So, by the time Inka hears this episode, she will have had her silly little gift.

Joe: Will she?

Vicky: Yeah she will. I'm sending it tomorrow. And yeah, and we'll be back same time next week. Oh, finally finally, pre-order my book. It's available now to pre-order. It's a five pound discount if you pre-order it because I am, you know, that kind of person. And you can get it from Moxiebooks.co.uk/preorderthebook, all one word and the link will be in the show notes. So, I would love it if you pre-order a copy. There will also be some goodies available for people who are pre-ordering that won't be available for anybody else. Some little bits and pieces, some useful stuff to get you started. And you will also get an email series. Yep, an email series straight away that will help you build a writing habit. And everybody who buys a copy of my book will get free membership of the 1000 Authors Club. Which when I've got 1000 authors will go up to the 10,000 Authors Club. And you'll get a free monthly printed newsletter full of all kinds of useful

writing and publishing and book tips. Yeah, so that's worth doing I think. Yeah, for 15 pounds you get all of that shit, yeah.

Joe: Good stuff.

Vicky: Right, thanks Joe.

Joe: No worries.

Vicky: We'll be back same time next week.

Joe: Bye.

-Vicky: Bye.

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