

This is an edited transcript of the March 11, 2015 SmallBusinessTalent.com podcast interview titled – [5 Fascinating Ways to Monetize Your Content: An Interview with Paulette Ensign](#).

Announcer: Are you a hard-working, self-employed professional striving for small business success? There is help. Welcome to the SmallBusinessTalent.com podcast featuring candid conversations about successful self-employment.

Stephen Lahey: Welcome to the SmallBusinessTalent.com podcast. I'm Stephen Lahey, and I'll be your host.

My guest on the podcast, [Paulette Ensign](#), had no idea she would sell well over *a million* copies of her 16-page tips booklet, *110 Ideas for Organizing Your Business Life*, when she wrote it in 1991. Paulette has been successfully monetizing her content and that of her clients for decades now. In the process, she has learned to use radio and TV shows, commercial teleseminars, in-flight audio programming, public speaking, and more to leverage her promotional efforts and generate sales.

As founder and chief visionary of [TipsBooklets.com](#), she has more than 30 years of experience working with solo entrepreneurs, small business owners, corporations, and professional associations in numerous industries worldwide. If you're like most solo professionals, you've probably been creating content and social media posts with the hope of generating more leads and sales. Today Paulette is here to share an approach to monetizing your content that's quite different than the typical content marketing advice we've all heard. So get ready to hear some ideas you probably never considered.

Thanks for making the time to be here, Paulette.

Paulette Ensign: Hey, Steve. Thanks a bunch. I'm delighted to join you today.

Stephen Lahey: You have a deep background in developing and marketing how-to information products, tips booklets as you call them, and you've sold a lot of them. But before we get your advice on how we can monetize our own knowledge and expertise, can you first tell us a little bit about your own path as a business owner. I think it's rather interesting.

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Paulette Ensign: I'd be happy to share that. I'm now in my third career. My second career was I was a professional organizer, going into people's homes and businesses, helping them organize their paper, time, and space. When the economy, back in the early 90s, was zigging and zagging, the sales cycle got really long on the consulting and workshop work I was doing as an organizer and I had formed these habits called eating and paying the rent. I wasn't keen on breaking either of those habits. It just didn't appeal to me on any level. So I was at that point an organizer for about eight years and I had a body of experience and point of view that matched beautifully. And then someone showed me a booklet—it was on another topic—and I thought, hmm, that's really interesting—I could do one of these booklets for my organizing business. That was the beginning of my journey.

Just to frame this so that our listeners are aware of what my starting point was—prior to that first business, my first job was as a teacher. I taught string instruments in public elementary schools. I have two degrees in music education. That's the only paper I've got. So, when I started my first business I do not have a business background. Regardless of that, fast forward to today and I've personally sold—personally sold—well over a million copies of one tips booklet in several languages and formats without spending a penny on advertising.

So I am living testimony to the fact that you don't need to have a business background as much as you need to have an openness, an awareness, a willingness to pick up things around you and run with it, find what works, find what doesn't work, and then just keep going.

Stephen Lahey: That's really the essence of entrepreneurship. And I know by now you've been an entrepreneur for decades. But to circle back, you coined the phrase "Tips Booklet". What is a tips booklet exactly?

Paulette Ensign: I did, and thank you for mentioning that. A tips booklet is a small publication, with a powerful impact. Tips, by my definition, are how-to's. For solo entrepreneurs, consultants, coaches, small business owners, you are telling people how to do things all the time, whether you're conscious of it or not, just to be helpful. I've captured those kinds of how-to's and put them into a publication and have leveraged that content many times in the past almost three decades at this point. A tips booklet in hard copy form is 4 inches

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by 9 inches, and it fits in a standard number 10 envelope, and it is how-to tips on how to do something to improve your life or your business.

Stephen Lahey: Here's a scenario. Let's say we're either not information marketers yet, or at most we may have one information product, or perhaps we only have free content like blog posts or a free lead magnet we've created on our website. How do we change the conversation that's going on in a prospective client's head when they see that one type of content from yes, I want it, or no, I don't, to which version is for me?

Paulette Ensign: That was the earliest lesson that I learned in my journey when I created by tips booklet. I needed to have people go to choice rather than do you want to buy this one type of content or not. And I didn't know this for a long time, so I probably lost a lot of sales early on. Whenever you find yourself writing top 10 lists, or 7 ways to do blank, or just blog posts that are telling somebody how to do something, you've got content there that you can turn into multiple information products. Today, I want to share several possibilities for creating products. In fact, my goal here is to share with our listeners five ways to get paid for your content that you probably never even considered.

So, I'll start with three ways here, and that is take those top 10 lists or those articles on "7 ways to", or whatever they are, and create a booklet of about 2,500 words. Probably 52 tips is a good way to do it so you've got a tip a week that will ripple out into other formats. Which leads me then to, well, we've got a booklet. So, it's a yes or no do you want to buy this booklet? However, even with that one booklet or information product, you've two products already because you have it available as a PDF download that can be sold and/or licensed and you've got it as the printed version. So right there you've got two products.

You can also record that in a more conversational way so that people have the ability to listen and learn in a moment when that may not be their primary learning style, however, it may really suit their lifestyle where they are commuting, or maybe they are doing this thing, I think it's called jogging—my body was not ever built to move that way so I just observe it and hear about it—or where their life is just that it's easier for them to listen even though that's not their main learning style. And even with that you've got two

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different formats. You've got the downloadable MP3 and you've got a hard copy CD.

So now we've got four products. Two of them are hard copy, two of them are downloadable. And by the way, those 52 tips you had, you could put each one of them on a card deck, or, you could drip a tip download a week to your email list. All of those things are saleable products and that came from articles that you wrote, it came from information that you've been sharing with people free or during your presentations, during teleclasses or webinars that in many ways you've been giving away forever and all of a sudden you can capture that content and put it into three different products, each of which have two formats. So, boom, now you've got six products and you have the conversation which one of these is our starting point instead of do you want to buy my booklet or not.

Steve, one other thing I want to jump in and say preemptive almost, sometimes people say to me, well, isn't there a problem with taking that same information and presenting it in different formats? Aren't people going to feel that you're sort of ripping them off? In fact, my answer to that, and I think most of us can resonate with this, is I don't know too many people who learn things the very first time they hear them, so that repetition is really crucial. And when you can present it in different learning styles and different lifestyle related formats, that means you are really serving people in a way that is most helpful to them and they in kind serve you by exchanging money for what you're offering them.

- Stephen Lahey: Another thing that I've heard you talk about, and it's interesting, is essentially selling information products in in bulk. The idea would be that you have either a tips booklet or various types of information products that you can license or sell in bulk.
- Paulette Ensign: Yes.
- Stephen Lahey: And you've done that before. Tell us a little bit about your story, how you did that, and how our listeners might think about that.
- Paulette Ensign: Sure. And I'm happy to do that because that is an unusual approach that most people I know have not thought about. The typical approach whenever anybody is publishing anything in the way of an information product is just to sell one copy to one person at a time. Quite honestly, that doesn't make you the big bucks and

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it also doesn't really serve the market at large either. You're not serving as many people as you might be able to otherwise.

I've got a great story about how I changed this situation in my own business. As soon as I share this with our listeners I think it will make sense, and you've seen models of this that you just may not have had a reason to pay attention to as it relates to your business.

My first year selling my tips booklet, I sold single copies, one at a time. In fact, I sold 50,000 copies of it that way. Highly labor intense – no question about it. One copy at a time by sending a copy of the booklet to different magazine editors and inviting them to excerpt from my booklet into articles that they wrote provided they would put how the reader could get their own full booklet, and I sold 50,000 copies one at a time. Again, this was very labor intense. Until one day, toward the end of that first year, somebody sent me a \$1000 check and it didn't line up with anything. I was happy to get it, no question, however I needed to call the person and find out what they thought they were buying.

And by the way, I mentioned that I was involved as a professional organizer. In fact, I was national president of the association at that point, and my only reason for mentioning that now is that I had access, direct access to all the major manufacturers of office supplies, storage items, and things like that. My logic said my target market was those entities and that was really who I should approach, and I was getting nowhere fast. There was a whole bunch of things I didn't know. I didn't know about campaigns. I didn't know about fiscal years. I didn't know about needing to have more than one product to offer.

Anyway, back to this \$1000 check. I called the guy and I said tell me what you're thinking you're buying here. And he said to me, well, I bought one copy of your booklet through seeing it in a publicity excerpt, I liked it so well that I thought that would make a really great holiday greeting to my client and prospect list, so I'm actually interested in buying a lot more than just one copy. In the process of our talking, when he realized that what I just very quickly almost on the spot pulled out of my head the price per copy was so much lower than what he thought he was going to buy that he said I think I'd like to buy 2500 copies, I'd like you to have our company name and, at that point it was so long ago, phone number on the cover of the booklet. And by the way, Paulette, is it okay if

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we leave your contact information in there too? I said, well yes, I think that would be okay with me that you're paying me to market me to 2500 places I couldn't get to otherwise. That's a beautiful thing.

So at that moment what I realized was—and it was more than \$1000 total, but it was still four digits rather than a \$5 payment and reaching places I never could have gone otherwise. So that was the pivot point that now I pretty much only teach people about ways that they can sell fully completed, delivered copies, printed copies, of their hard copy versions of whatever they've got, the booklet, the audio, card deck or calendar, or anything else they do with their content, where a company or an association or an educational institution or the military or government can use your products to promote their products and services, and it's a different mindset. It's a different head completely where they have a budget for this kind of thing and they understand they need to spend money to make money. So delivering in bulk fully produced copies customized is one way.

The other way you mentioned, licensing, well I don't compress those two things. I take them as separate. Licensing is renting your content in exchange for payment. We know that there's a very typical model of downloading a PDF as a gift when someone signs up for a newsletter or many, many other ways, gift with purchase is also very typical. In those ways when you are wanting to offer your downloads for sale to a large quantity buyer at any of those places that I just rattled off of companies or associations or anyplace like that, you will grant them the right in writing for specific uses that you're allowing them to have of your content for a particular period of time and only in certain ways in exchange for payment. Again, by having choices of different formats, you can provide one of those VP of marketing or VP of sales or someone inside a company or an association, membership department in an association, a fully developed plan to support them for an entire calendar year of their promotional campaign because you've got choices.

Now we've got three different products that I mentioned earlier, each of which has two formats, and two different ways to sell it. So my guess is that most folks listening to us today, those are five ways to get paid for your content that you probably just never had reason to think about. How about that, Steve?

Stephen Lahey: That's interesting. And I'll say one other thing because I happen to know some back story and I think this story would be very helpful for people to hear. You were doing business at one point with a catalog company. And some might be saying, well, what's in it for them, a catalog company? Talk about what's in it for them and the kind of results they got based on the fact that you had added your content to what this company was mailing to people anyway.

Paulette Ensign: I'm so glad you mentioned that. There was a very well-known consumer mail order catalog company back in its day before the founders sold it to somebody else. Now it looks completely different. But anyway, I knew some people at that place because they were involved with us in the organizing field. I licensed them; I granted them the use of my content in exchange for payment. In fact, it was not for the purpose of reselling my booklet, and that's a key distinction here in our conversation today. It was gift with purchase. So they positioned it that they would give away a copy of my booklet with any purchase in one issue of their catalog. I granted them the right, by the way, for them to do the printing because they were a catalog company. They could buy print cheaper than I could sell it to them. So we agreed to the rights for them to print 250,000 copies of my booklet. They would give it away with any purchase in that one issue, one edition of their catalog. They managed to do very good tracking of their metrics and were very gracious and generous in letting me know that they experienced a 13% sales increase that they tracked specifically back to that offer.

Now, a lot of folks that I know kind of blanch and start hyperventilating when I talk in six digit numbers like 250,000 copies of the booklet. Well, Steve, for them, for that catalog company that was a test because that year they were delivering 17 million catalogs. So the five digit amount of money they paid me was a drop in the bucket for the return on their investment.

Stephen Lahey: Interesting, and we could just keep drilling down into this scenario. I know we don't have a lot of time left, but, I'll say this – that approach massively extends your reach.

Paulette Ensign: It does.

Stephen Lahey: And everything you've been talking about to some degree is about extending your reach to help more people, right?

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- Paulette Ensign: Yes. Absolutely.
- Stephen Lahey: Well, it's great stuff, Paulette. I mean, I think that most people have never thought of all those ways to get paid for their content and their knowledge. And if they have, they were probably pretty unclear about how to do it. I know that people would probably like to get more details, and I know that you have very interesting information and content on your site for anyone who wants to get help in getting paid for their content. So how can they find you online and how can they connect with you?
- Paulette Ensign: Sure, I'm happy to do that. And by the way, we've got services and products for every level of interest and budget. So whether you are a do-it-yourselfer or whether you want it done for you or whether you want some combination in between, we've got products and services to support that. You'll find that information at my site at TipsBooklets.com. Also, happy to talk with you. I live in the Pacific Time zone, about a mile from the Pacific Ocean, so if you want to call, or just email me, you'll find that information at the bottom of every page at TipsBooklets.com.
- Stephen Lahey: And there are no icicles in front of your window in San Diego as there are in front of mine in Upstate New York, I'm guessing.
- Paulette Ensign: None at all.
- Stephen Lahey: So, if you want to vicariously experience the San Diego weather, you can call Paulette. Well, thank you again for joining me on the podcast, Paulette.
- Paulette Ensign: Thank you, Steve. Loved it.
- Stephen Lahey: And to our listeners, thank you so much for spending some time with us today. If you like what you heard, visit SmallBusinessTalent.com now and subscribe to this podcast by email. When you do, you'll be alerted whenever I post fresh podcast content, of course, but you'll also receive special resources for email subscribers only, including my free LinkedIn social selling guide, which I know you'll love. Thanks again for listening today and best wishes for your success.
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