

THE
**MAIN STREET
AUTHOR**
PODCAST

and Special Guest



Ben Glass, Esq.

WITH **MIKE CAPUZZI**

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Thank you in advance.

Mike Capuzzi

Mike Capuzzi

Well, hello everybody. This is Mike Capuzzi and welcome to episode one of The Main Street Author Podcast. I'm excited to be able to bring this new podcast to you, and as I was planning this very first episode and thinking about who could I bring on with episode number one for episode number one, there was one person who came immediately to mind, and you're going to soon find out why, but this gentleman I had the good fortune of meeting him, geez, 12 or 13 years ago, and he's an extraordinary person. He's an extraordinary business owner, and as you're about to see, he's an extraordinary Main Street author. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome Ben Glass. Ben, welcome!

Ben Glass

You are so kind, and it was 12 years ago when we first met in a mastermind group and we have become good friends. I'm honored to be first up on your podcast.

Mike Capuzzi

Yeah and again it's all truthful I mean, geez, you were one of the first people to help me with CopyDoodles and that went back years ago, and you've just been, as you said, a great friend. Obviously, it's been amazing to watch your growth, not only in your law practice but in your other businesses, and all the good things you have going on. I just think folks that are listening are going to learn a lot from you today. So, Ben let's jump in. You are a multiple-business owner, can you just give everyone an overview of your businesses?

Ben Glass

Sure, so I'm an attorney. And I'm the CEO of a law firm, Ben Glass Law. We've been out on our own for about 25 or 26 years, now. I started, you know, as many lawyers do, working for a firm, got the entrepreneurial seizure, started that and it's been a long journey. Then about 14 years ago, Mike, I took what I was doing to market and differentiate Ben Glass Law and began teaching other solo and small firm lawyers. It's interesting across the United States and now around the world, actually, how to build businesses in large part based upon being a book author, what we're going to talk about here, so they can compete with the 800-ton gorillas who seem to have unlimited marketing budgets around every bus and billboard and things like that. So that's where you are, they keep me busy, they're both good solid businesses and the best part, Michael, is, you know, I employ about 16 or 17 people, a lot of them young entrepreneurs.

Mike Capuzzi

Very good and you have quite a team and I've met some of your team members, as a matter of fact I have a call later this week with one of them, and they're sharp people and obviously they've been instrumental in the growth of both of your businesses, so it's very cool.

Ben Glass

Yeah, yeah.

Mike Capuzzi

All right. So, let's jump in and I could remember way back when, and I don't even know if I remember the first one, but I do recall seeing some of your books that you were creating for your law practice. Tell me how many have you written for your law practice, and when was the first one, when did you craft that first one?

Ben Glass

Well the first one was probably 20 years ago, after I first ran into yours and my mutual friend Dan Kennedy, and started listening to his stuff and, before this call, I went to our closet and I have 10 of the books that we're currently using across our law practice. I've written a couple other more substantial, you know, published books for the lawyer industry, for the legal industry, but in our practice, we currently have 10 that we can choose from.

Mike Capuzzi

Very good. So those 10, can you give me a quick overview, just so folks can get an idea? Now obviously they're specific to your law practice, but just give me a couple titles and such.

Ben Glass

So, I'm personal injury attorney, so very competitive, right? So, the very first book I wrote was a book we named "Five Deadly Sins," it's probably in about its 10th iteration now, but it's the ultimate guide to accident cases in Virginia. We then wrote a book which is pretty famous called "The Truth About Lawyer Advertising," which was really aimed to help the consumer differentiate, right? They get thrust into our world, they see all these lawyer ads, back then, Yellow Pages, TV, radio and so it was a consumer book that really is a little bit controversial because it takes a run at most lawyer advertising. We then created a book that's very popular called "*The Accident Victim's Guide to Settling Your Case Without Hiring a Lawyer*" and a lot of people would say well, why would you do that? There are certain cases that are really too small for us, we can help you get your case settled and of course out of that book comes cases, because people do find that it's often times too complicated. For example, I have written a book on how to fire your lawyer, and a book on how to buy car insurance and you say, "Well, why would you do that? I don't sell car insurance." It's one of those trust pieces, where in my world, it's better for all of us, if you have good healthy car insurance, and so this book gets me in front of people in front of groups to speak about something that the car insurance agent salespeople don't really know about. So that's several of them. We can talk about how we've used testimonials and turned them into books. I've got a second practice area handling long-term disability insurance claims and we have a couple of books on that as well.

Mike Capuzzi

So essentially you forgot the other business you have, which is Ben Glass Publishing.

Ben Glass

Yeah, well the cool thing is, you know, so here's the whole idea: no matter where a prospect is on their moving parade of interest, they're just searching for information, maybe they're searching for a lawyer, maybe they have a lawyer and they don't like the lawyer; we want to have something that we can hand them that's different than a business card. And of course, Mike, I didn't create all 10 books overnight but I did start, I mean as soon as I heard about this idea, I literally walked in the woods and dictated the first book, "*The Ultimate Guide to Car Accident Cases: Five Deadly Sins That Can Wreck Your Injury Claim.*" And so, we started very simply, back in the day, I print them out and staple them together and put them in a little folder and there we had a book, now that look more like books. But the course of teaching point there is, you just start.

Mike Capuzzi

Right, which is obviously a critical step, and Ben just for clarification for everyone listening, and we're going to talk a little bit more about this shortly, but these are not two- and three-hundred-page tomes, these are essentially short helpful books, correct?

Ben Glass

Correct. One of my friends bragged to me once that he'd been invited by one of the great legal publishers to publish one of those big hefty books that was the best thing he ever did. It only took them for years and hundreds of hours to do. No, these are what you and I would call lead generation magnets, lead generation pieces, that are very informative. I work with a great graphic artist and set-up teams, so they look good. But no, these – I'm just glancing through them – these are 30 pages, another one is maybe 18 pages. They look good. And today we could produce, and we actually we do produce them, with very little input from me, which is good.

Mike Capuzzi

Just for clarification these are printed books.

Ben Glass

Yes.

Mike Capuzzi

I'm sure you might have digital versions, but you alluded to one key strategy which is the handing out process. So, these are printed books.

Ben Glass

Absolutely and there are a couple different formats. One of them is wire-bound, couple of them, you know if they sat up in your shelf, you could see the side binding, but they all look good, but they are printed because we send shock and awe packages. And again, we want to have something to give people, and a book is a lot harder, a book in any form, any physical form, is a lot harder to throw away than a business card, and it's a lot more likely to get passed along as well.

Mike Capuzzi

Absolutely, absolutely. So let's think back 20 years ago, and answer this question in the context of what you've known over the last 20 years, and it's really about becoming an author, or at least crafting that first book – you alluded to trust, but what was the number one reason, if you recall, that you wanted to do the work to finally get this first book out there, what was that first reason?

Ben Glass

I mean there really are two at the top of that list, let me just talk about them; one is when you write a book, you're perceived as the expert, you're perceived as the authority, and even though, Mike, you and I in the world that we run around in, the lot of our friends have written books to the average person out on the street who's looking for a lawyer, a dry cleaner, you know a CPA – to that average person, they see others who write books as authority, I mean. They don't let you write a book unless you're an expert, is the perception anyway. And the second thing was – and it had to do with marketing – again in a highly-competitive niche world, personal injury lawyers, we wanted to be able to develop marketing that marketed the book first. All the other lawyers were saying “call me, call me, call me, free consultation.” We were saying, “You don't need to call a lawyer, get our book! Our book's going to help you walk through this process.” Of course, it gets complicated after that because we have a lot of follow-up and stuff, but it allowed us to market differently. And that's huge in any Main Street business.

Mike Capuzzi

And, you know, that book-centric marketing strategy's a perfect segue to my next question for you, because it really is a different, more sophisticated level of differentiating, in your case, your law practice. Now, keeping in mind that we are talking about Main Street business owners, bricks-and-mortar or business owners who serve Main Street, talk about, you know a unique way you leverage your books to eventually attract clients.

Ben Glass

We alluded to one, it allows you to mark differently. So rather than running the ad or having a website landing page that talks about how good you are or how good your service is, we make the book offer. What does that do? It lowers the resistance, people are much more likely to

click to order a free book than they are to pick up the phone, actually, and call and make an appointment to get in. So that's a big part of it, it opens the top of the funnel. The other thing is, when a prospect does call the office – let's say they've been referred to you. Your team is trained. My team is trained to say, in part of that conversation, “Oh, hey did you know that Ben Glass actually wrote the book on car accident cases here in Virginia? Would it be okay if I send you a copy?”

So, whether or not they're actually booking an appointment, they'll get the book, anyway, it reinforces a good idea to book the appointment, or if they're quote, you know, just “shopping and calling around,” I'm the only one in my market area, who's like, two days later, there's a box showing up at their house, and in that box, is – again, depending on why they called – is at least one of our books. So, it lowers the resistance to get the leads, but it allows your team to brag about you in a very ethical, comfortable way. “Did you know Ben is the one who wrote the book on car accident cases here in Virginia?”

Mike Capuzzi

Yeah, and that's for everyone listening, that's a writer-downer, there that is a writer-downer, that little phrase that Ben has trained his staff on using, is a really unique differentiator. And like you said earlier, Ben, how many other law practices that you're competing with can say that, or even are saying that? Let me just go off topic just for a second because I want – again 20 years, you are a highly respected business-owner gentlemen, so again, Ben Glass is enough accolades, but you're just a great all-around person. So, I want your authentic answer to this question, Ben. We both know you just came back from a big marketing conference, we both know there's a lot of people out there touting “be an author, be an author,” you know, all that stuff, so aside from that, from the trenches, can you cut through the BS and just really tell me how effective and how smart is it for someone who's maybe thinking about doing what you've done, to really be an author? To cut through the BS, all the marketing hype, you know, bestseller this, you know, whatever, really – just if someone was thinking about this and they haven't gotten started, what would you tell them?

Ben Glass

Yeah, so a couple things, so number one if it didn't work, we wouldn't keep doing it. So that's – and in 20 years, of course, I've tried a lot of different things, many of them work because we're pretty good at creating marketing pieces, but if it didn't work, we wouldn't do it. The other thing is, so yeah, there's a lot of people out there that hype a bestseller status; that's not what we're talking about here, right, because so few brick-and-mortar businesses actually produce a book, and we'll talk about how easy that actually is here in a minute. Again, you're showing up, you're showing up differently. So, you don't have to create a book that's going to be on the front table at Barnes & Noble. Very expensive, very laborious time. I mean I've written substantial books that take 15 months to get to press, using traditional publishers. And there's a place for that. What we're talking about is the ability to create, books, short books. Again, once you do one, what's really cool, Michael, is you start to think about that prospect, right, that prospect to your business and all the different things that prospect may be thinking about, and you can now write, as I have, books that kind of address different things, right, different

books for different ways that prospect is now coming to, that's what's cool. But, look, one other thing – 20 years ago, it was kind of hard. It was kind of hard to find somebody to actually understand this, like I'm explaining I want to write a book. Well, okay. But no one had really heard of what you and I are talking about. And so that's why mine started out in the printer with a, you know, staple and a little cover around it that I did. I mean I did the whole darn thing. Today, you know, especially guys like you have made this easy. And the neat thing about it is, you know, back in the day if we started you had to tons of books. That's what we're talking about here.

Mike Capuzzi

Yeah, I recall, first of all, it wasn't even 20 years ago. It was 10 years ago. The first book actually, it was my second book, and we literally, because we needed it quickly, and it was being printed in North Jersey, of all places, and I live outside Philly, we rented a truck to go up and get what was a hundred, two hundred boxes of books, to bring back so we could distribute them quickly. With on-demand printing and what the Internet has done, the opportunity of really establishing a publishing platform for any business owner has gotten a lot easier. And again, Ben you alluded something that I'd like to kind of go off topic for a second – there may be someone listening to this, thinking, “Okay. I hear Ben, you know, he's a lawyer. He's, you know, he's got at least ten books under his belt for his law practice. But I just don't see, I don't know if I'm enough of an expert, I don't know if I have enough to talk about.” You know, can you debunk any of that sort of head trash that a lot of people seem to have when it comes to, quote, “writing a book”?

Ben Glass

Yeah. So just think about the last time you were making a decision to make, say, a substantial purchase for your house. Let's say you were going to, you know, change out all the windows in your house, or, you know, it can be a fairly expensive proposition. Most of the folks selling windows are giving you sort of glossy marketing pieces, bullet points, they're all saying all the great stuff about them, and, you know, telling you about great pricing and stuff like that. Now so if you're the guy or gal selling the windows, and you were to write a simple book that puts yourself in the seat of the prospect, that says something like, “*Everything You Need to Know About Making the Right Decision for You and Your Family about Investing in New Windows.*” In this book, I just made that title up on the on the fly.

So, for me – and I still do this – these books are basically the talks that I would give to a prospect who's sitting in my office. And no matter who you are, whatever business you're running, you know, or you should know for sure, but you know, the three, four, five things that run through your prospect's mind, things they have questions about, things that would be a barrier to the sale, right? And a book gives you, again, it's a low-key opportunity to have that conversation in print, right, to have that discussion, and they don't feel as pressured as they would be on a one-on-one meeting. So, a lot of them won't even make a one-on-one meeting because they're afraid you're going to, you know, sell them and trick him into signing a contract or something. A book is just a way to get in under the radar.

So, a well-designed book, really, Mike can do little more and answer the questions that, you know, are going through the prospect's head. And with that, one little caution is, you want to write about the customer. You don't want to necessarily write about how great you are, right, the book itself establishes you as wiseman or woman at the top of the mountain. Most general advertising talks about how great I am, right, the biz owner. These books, when properly done, are about the consumer, and they enter the conversation that's already going on in the consumer's mind. You and I sometimes call these long-form sales letters, but they are, again, I can't emphasize that part enough, that you don't have to do as much heavy lifting in establishing. You're a bona fide because the book does that itself.

Mike Capuzzi

Right, yeah, I mean in this day and age, even with the advent of Kindle and eBooks and all that good stuff, and obviously they're all good, you know, still, the printed books have perceived value. We're used to paying for books, Amazon wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the fact that people pay for books. So, just the very fact that you know, you have a printed book versus a printed brochure, is a key differentiator. And Ben you said a couple things which teed me up nicely for this next question, about the architecture and the design. As you well know, I have coined and come up with my own, you know, trademark phrase of a "shook" which stands for a short helpful book, and between guys like you and I who are real students of direct-response marketing, these shooks are direct-response books, they're direct-response short helpful books. Again, you did this 20 years ago, it's not necessarily like I reinvented the wheel. I do have my own Capuzzi flavor, but just like there's McDonald's and Burger King and all these different places that make hamburgers, there's different types of hamburgers. So, a shook is a different type of book for Main Street business owners. What are your thoughts about the concept of a shook? And why do you think a short helpful book would be the right type of book, at least to start with, for a Main Street business owner?

Ben Glass

Well, so you would not brag because you're very modest, but if you listen to this podcast and think I'm going to go do a book and I'm going to just do it myself and I'm going to upload it on Amazon, it's going to print it, that person is, unless they're a real marketing expert, is going to miss out on the expertise, the value that you are going to add to the book because you are a great direct-response marketer. You didn't ask me to say that, but I do want to make that point because there'll be people listening to this that go – because I've had I teach lawyers, okay – and they go and they create something on Amazon, and it doesn't look good, it's not formatted right, and I think that you can do damage, actually, to your brand.

Mike Capuzzi

Absolutely.

Ben Glass

So you know again, these are great choices in large part because nobody else is doing them. Let me say one other thing too, Michael, because people will also make a mistake, “Well, I’m just going to make a PDF version of this.” No. It’s easy to throw away PDF because all I have to do is click “delete”, right? So, the physical book, as we’ve talked about on the call, gets in under the radar, it presents you as a non-threatening person; for many of these businesses people are going to make you know, a substantial decision, the buyer is going to make a substantial decision. But even I’ve seen these used actually in dry cleaners, in local graphic artists, and designers. Of course, we’ve seen it across the professional practices’ world. And I’ve seen, you know, really expensive ones and hardback, and I’m like, you don’t really need to do that to get the effect.

Again, what do we want to do? We want to have something that people can ask for that answers the questions they have and allows your team to brag about you in an easy-to-do way and allows you also to capture the name of a prospect who might not be ready to come in for a consultation, or might not be ready to get on the phone with you to be sold. So, there’s tons of reasons for doing this. What you have done with your shooks is make it make that process really easy, right, and so your customer, the next author, in the **Mike Capuzzi** world, doesn’t have to worry about design, doesn’t have to worry about *“is this a good marketing piece?”* Because you’re the guy, I mean you’ve been you and I have both been doing this for a long time, and we can see good marketing, and we can see things that need to be fixed.

Mike Capuzzi

And I appreciate that and you’re right, I didn’t ask you to do that, but I do appreciate it. And it brings up a recent conversation I had, Ben, last week with the CEO of a fairly-large software company, who is talking to me about crafting his own shook for his software business, and it was an interesting conversation because this guy could stroke a check in a heartbeat, but he asked, well, he basically said that you know, “I think I could probably just do this on my own, you know, what value do you bring?” And obviously that opened the door for an interesting conversation because, again as you mentioned, and as we have seen, and as probably a lot of listeners have seen, A) a bad book is going to do more damage than no book, right?

So, if you’re going to produce a crappy book, don’t do anything because this is going to hurt you, but I think so many people miss opportunities when it comes to crafting a short helpful book. This is meant to get a person a prospect from point A to point B, it’s not meant to teach them about everything, obviously in your case, you do in your law practice, it’s just meant to get them get them to raise their hand and move them forward. But there’s key opportunities that have to be in the architecture that had to be in the choreography of the book to maximize its direct response ability. I know you are doing those in all of your short helpful books, but so many people miss that and it’s a shame because they go through the effort of the process and once it’s done, it’s sort of done.

Ben Glass

Yeah, so you just made a couple of great points there. So, one is, the purpose of advertising isn't necessarily to help the consumer, the prospect, move to the next step, whatever your process is, and the second thing is, what good is it if we write a 30-page book, if they never get past page two, right, it does get tossed because it's boring, and you and I know that basically every page is designed to make them continue to the next page. So, you know, again technology kind of makes this look sexy and easy. I've seen a lot of bad shooks because people will try to be cheap about the process. And you know, if you're going to invest a dollar an hour in your business, through the marketing, you might as well try to maximize that dollar or that hour. And then, you know, the other thing a guy like you will do is teach them how to track results and development. Yeah, you and I could take somebody, we could talk to them for like five days, right, because most business owners don't understand advertising, because they don't understand marketing at all.

Mike Capuzzi

I'll put you on the spot for a follow-up podcast interview, because there is this whole Ben Glass strategy of how you and your team use your books, you know, in person, online, so I'll put you on the spot, would you be willing to do a follow-up podcast interview on all the things that you're doing after the book is done?

Ben Glass

Oh sure. I mean, and just for the 30-second version, is most business owners think that if I didn't make the sale today, the prospect has moved on. And most lawyers think this this way in the personal injury world and we have disproven that, right, and so it is a topic for another day, but having follow-up that's interesting, that's about the consumer, is critical in any business, even a business where people are moving quickly to a decision, again most business owners, that's not a part of their sales and marketing process at all.

Mike Capuzzi

Right, right. One last quick question before we wrap up here and get more information from you, but on the ranks of all the stuff that you've created over the years for your law practice, and you do a lot of marketing, the asset, your books as a business and / marketing / personal branding asset, how high do they rank?

Ben Glass

So, I think there's three things that I would not do away with, right. So my website, my printed mailed newsletter, and my books, and you're right, Mike, because these are assets, meaning once they're created and produced, they live, like I said, but as our call started I went to our little toy chest, our closet, and I pulled out the 10 that we're currently using. I don't have to go and, you know, invent a new one tomorrow because our books are, in the 10 of them, cover again, the range of things that our consumer might have questions about. In fact, we've even

got, I'll just add this, we have two books that are totally testimonials and consumer reviews and one of them is titled "What Lawyers Say About Ben Glass" and the other is titled, "What They Say," and it's and that one is all consumer reviews. Lots of different ways, or lots of different subject matter, for a shook. I think once you do one, then put it into play, right, because nothing counts until you put it into play. Then it'll just naturally come to you, "Oh, here's another book that I could do and add to my equity," really is what we call it here.

Mike Capuzzi

Yeah, I love it Ben, and as I promised everybody what you just heard were lots of gems of wisdom and from an in-the-trenches, bricks-and-mortar Main Street business owner. So, Ben thank you very much. Can you tell folks how to learn about your law practice and how to learn about your other businesses?

Ben Glass

Yes, sir. So, thank you for asking. So, you can go to BenGlassLaw.com and you can see the other business where I teach lawyers is at GreatLegalMarketing.com. Again, we've got a number of, if there are any lawyers listening, got a number of books on Amazon about, you know, building your law practice. And, Mike, thanks for having me on the call today, on the podcast.

Mike Capuzzi

Well, Ben again, I appreciate it, I appreciate you being episode number one, and we'll have you again on a future episode, and continued success to your team and all that you guys are doing down there.

Ben Glass

Always good to talk to you my friend.