



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**GERALD:** Welcome to the Self Employment Podcast with Gerald Vinci Episode 6.

**ANNOUNCER:** Welcome to [stepstoselfemployment.com](http://stepstoselfemployment.com) your online business resource helping future business owners and entrepreneurs build a solid foundation towards financial success and independence. Now your host, owner of a successful marketing and web design firm, writer, blogger, and entrepreneur, Gerald D. Vinci.

**GERALD:** Hey everyone welcome back to another episode of the self-employment podcast. Thanks again for joining us. It's, literally, been less than two days since I recorded episode 5 with Michelle Christensen. If you guys haven't listened to that interviewee yet, definitely, go back and check it out.

Michelle is full of great advice and specializes in working with one person businesses. She has a lot of relevant information that most of you can put to good use. You can access the show notes at [stepstoselfemployment.com/episode05](http://stepstoselfemployment.com/episode05). Yeah, so kind of crazy, when I started this podcast I thought maybe I'd get one recording done a month or two if I was lucky.

Here lately I've managed to pick up the pace. I know the escalator time line is short lived though, as most of you know, I'm the owner of a marketing a web design firm servicing around 100 active customers. I, definitely, have to tend to the crop, sort of speak. As much as I want to be podcasting and blogging everyday it's just not possible right now.

I am taking steps to make that happen. It's my goal to, eventually, make STSE my primary focus and let my marketing firm run itself with minimal interaction. I'm not sure yet if that's possible, entirely, but I'm starting to lay the ground work to at least give it a shot. Part of that comes down to hiring the right people.

Let's face it, if you ever plan to do anything with your career while owning and running a full time business you have got to accept the fact that you'll, probably, have to hire an employee or maybe some contractors to help share the load. I don't want to get into these points too deeply. I'm going to save them for another podcast or two.

My previous guest, Michele, made some suggestions that I should do a show or a blog post around hiring the right types of people for each job role. As well as another show focused on how I can possibly manage 100 customers with only a few employees. Those are, definitely, great



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

topics to discuss for anyone looking to continually grow their business.

I also think those can be a real eye opener for some of you running a business that's not as profitable or successful as you had hoped it would be so look out in the next few episodes I'll, definitely, dedicate a podcast to each of those topics.

I'm going to go out on a limb and commit to it, in fact. I'll dedicate episode 8 to hiring the right employee for the job. In this episode I'll talk about identifying different skill sets within each of your team members and I'll tell you about how oddly enough my first full-fledged employee was, actually, a project manager. Some people seem surprised by that choice so I'll discuss that in great detail as well.

Then in episode 9 I'll focus more on how I've increased sales for my business at least 25% every year while increasing my customer base to run 100 active clients and managing to keep my sanity while the business continues this expansion trend.

This episode will, definitely, be something any marketing or design business owner or aspiring owner should tune in and listen to as so much of what I have to say will relate to my experiences in this , particular, industry.

It's really funny, I was worried I wouldn't have anything to talk about since I just finished my last podcast but, I guess, I was wrong. Something about this show just makes me feel like there's an endless pool of things to discuss and cover.

Honestly, I feel like I haven't even begun. The first episode I did introduces the podcast and tells you more about me and my goals, plans for the site, etc. Then the next six podcasts are all dedicated to interviews with my writers.

I'm not even getting into specific topics until the eighth episode. I think after these first six interviews I'll, probably, space them out a bit more so you guys get some more content about specific topics that are affecting your business.

Also, after I finish interviewing the writers on the show, I'm, probably, going to change up the interview format so that I'm bringing on business owners to address certain topics.

For example, if the issue we want to discuss is hiring virtual assistants. Maybe I'll have Chris



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

Ducker of [virtualstafffinder.com](http://virtualstafffinder.com), on the show, or someone else in that, particular, niche to help discuss the importance or value in hiring a virtual assistant. The interview will be relevant to their business but I won't just be talking about their specific business and how they got started like I am now with these interviewers.

I'll focus more on the subject we're discussing. This will help address specific problems all of you are facing out there. I'll do my best to let you know in advance what those topics are so maybe you can write in with your questions ahead of time. That brings up a good sign though. If anyone out there has a show suggestion, problem, or challenge you need help with please send me a message directly at [gerald@stepstoselfemployment.com](mailto:gerald@stepstoselfemployment.com).

I will, personally, read it and respond to as many of your emails as I possibility can. Also, if I decide to write a blog post or record a podcast episode based on your email I'll reach out to you, personally, and give you a shout out at the top of the episode if your want or if you want to stay anonymous that's cool too. You can also fill out the form on [stepstoselfemployment.com/contact](http://stepstoselfemployment.com/contact) to reach me with show suggestions as well.

Well, I'm trying to wrap everything I need to say here so we can get into today's interview. If you haven't checked out any of our other podcast episodes I encourage you to do so as I post these, chronologically. I've been recapping my effort with the STSE podcast, and website, as well as talking about anything going on in my personal life that might be of interest to all of you.

I want you to be able to start this journey right along with me. While I've been self-employed for over a decade now, starting a blog and podcast are both, completely, new territory for me. I want you to be able to share in my journey from the start. I know it's weird that no matter how soon you start visiting the STSE website all of these first episodes will be dated in the past.

I just wanted to document the starting phases of something I know is going to be a great success. I think most people doubt themselves or their cause and, at least, with failure but with STSE I can see, exactly, why this will be successful. Number one it's free for all of you so, so long as there are people out there aspiring to start their own business, I think, we'll always be able to build our community.

Second, less than a week from the time I reached out to peers, friends, and family about doing the blog and podcast. I had 12 people volunteer to be monthly contributing writers on the side. Why,



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

first and foremost because I asked. You'd be surprised how affective asking for help can be.

Most people do not take the time to ask for help and just assume they're on their own. Actually, my guest for today has quite a few thoughts about how not reaching out to others can really isolate you and create problems for your business.

Definitely, reach out to people but asking for help is only part of the reason they stepped up. The other reason is they saw the value in what I'm doing. There are not many other websites out there delivering this type of content with the level of trans parenting honesty that I am. Every business owner, I don't care if you've been running your business for 20 years, or two days, or maybe haven't even started the business yet, you will all connect with everything STSE delivers because it's real.

Our motivation to help and give back to others is genuine. While, of course, the site helps promote our businesses, I think, if you spend anytime on the site or listening to this podcast it's, abundantly, clear the focus is providing useful and relevant and information for you. Do I or will I make money through the website? Of course! I don't know many business owners or entrepreneurs who dedicate huge chunks of their time to causes that do not improve their bottom line.

Even philanthropists give back because they love to do so but, also, because it creates a good reputation for them within the community which, of course, will benefit their business long-term, as well. I think the more you give back the more you get, it's that simple.

Before I get into today's interview, I have one request. Please head over to [stepstoselfemployment.com](http://stepstoselfemployment.com) and subscribe to our mailing list. I'll send you a weekly newsletter that will let you know what's going on for both the STSE podcast and website in the upcoming week. You can check out my ever expanding library of informative articles written for you by our panel of business owners and entrepreneurs. I also have a resources section of the site that will provide you with helpful tools and ideas for managing or growing your business.

As I mentioned before, it's all free. Nothing ventured, nothing gained right? Check out [stepstoselfemployment.com](http://stepstoselfemployment.com) as we're in the fledgling stages of making it a powerful resource for you. I ask all of you to come help us build it together into an online business community that will, truly, help you and others like you on your path to success.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

So let's get to it. Another great guest for you today Melondy Waldrop Neal, who is, truly, an inspiration for any aspiring business owner, coach, author, or community leader. Melondy and I have known each other for about a year. She's, actually, a client of my marketing firm, Vinci Designs. We've worked on several projects together helping her to build up her personal brand. Since that time, she and I have talked more on a personal level about our careers, and business, and self-employment on many occasions.

I think there's a great mutual admiration and respect for what each of us is doing in our own space. We often bounce relevant ideas back and forth. Melondy is a military veteran having served with the United States Air Force Reserves and has used that time to cultivate her communication and leadership skills.

Since 2001 her list of accomplishments are long but I'd like to mention a few. After publishing her first book, *Vanilla Syrup the Flavors of Life*, Melondy, fell in love with the idea of helping other independent authors reach their goals of getting published. She really connected with that cause having, recently, gone through it herself and turned her passion into a successful business, Level Seven Publishing. This company's focus is, primarily, on helping people tell their stories and help make their dreams of publishing a book come true.

In 2013, Melondy, released her second book, *The Bamboo Effect, Unleash Your Potential for Seemingly Overnight Growth*, which by its own right, has, literally, become an overnight success all its own. She's also, recently, launched Level Seven consultants and is planning on launching, Level Seven Training Institute, which will focus on crisis management and communication training.

Melondy seems to always be growing and expanding her skill set to find new ways of helping others communicate and reach their goals in an inspiring effective and memorable way. She also hosts a master mind group for individuals and local business owners and is completing her MA in strategic communications. I think it's safe to say, Melondy, has plenty to offer the STSE community as a leader, business owner, and author.

Let's enjoy a great interview on the self-employment podcast with one of the most driven, inspiring, and gentle souls I've met in all my years of self-employment, Melondy Neal. Hi Melondy and welcome to the self-employment podcast.

**MELONDY:** Hey Gerald, how are you today?



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**GERALD:** I'm doing well. First and foremost, I just want to say thank you so much for taking time out of your day for doing this interview and, especially, for contributing your time as a writer on the site.

**MELONDY:** Thank you so much. I've enjoyed the time that we've been working together.

**GERALD:** Yeah, me too. You heard the intro to the show. Would you say I, accurately, portrayed you and your business?

**MELONDY:** You did an excellent job. As usual, it's always, a little bit exciting, and yet a little odd to hear so many things that you're not sure if it even sounds like you but, yeah, you did a great job. Thank you.

**GERALD:** Good, good. I think, we've got plenty of ground to cover today so I'm going to jump right into it and get started. Can you tell us who you are, more about your business, and why you chose this idea?

**MELONDY:** I, actually, am a native of Lewisville, Arkansas and I have to say that because I came from a city of a population about 1600 people. What I'm doing is a really large thing whenever I go home people are amazed. I, kind of, had a humble beginning of just wanting to always excel in the area of writing. I love to write since I was really young.

When I was in high school I started writing poems and pushed them to the background. It wasn't until I get to college where one of my instructor told me that my writing skills were, fairly, good and suggested that I do something with it one day. It took me about ten years after college before I published my first book.

When I published my first book I really loved the idea of just getting my story out there. I became very passionate about hoping others to do the same thing. That's how I've developed into, Level Seven Publishing.

**GERALD:** How do you go about turning that dream, not only into publishing the book, but then making the publishing business a marketable and profitable business?

**MELONDY:** Well, the first thing you have to do, I think, that most business owner understand that they have to pay the bills. The driving force is when you realize that you have a passion but



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

you have to balance it. I took that passion and I started looking for ways that I could continue helping people but also make a living for myself. I wanted to be able to take care of my children and provide for my family. It just took step by step, day by day process to get to that point of making it lucrative to some degree.

**GERALD:** Right. I mentioned several new businesses and venture in the intro. Would you describe, Level Seven Publishing, as your core business and then everything else feeds into it?

**MELONDY:** Level Seven Publishing is the basis of my company and it's everything. I think they will always be in the forefront because of the passion I have for publishing. The other companies have evolved as a result of my degree in Strategic Communications.

I've always enjoyed communications and the field of communications. So, that's part of it but because I'm able to tie the two together we do a lot of publishing workshops. We do a great deal of publishing. We do a mastermind group, for example, for new writers.

**GERALD:** Right.

**MELONDY:** By combining those two, by doing that and doing the consulting. I consult with writers all the time. I consult with new authors on how to present themselves in public. There's always a combination of the two but, Level Seven, is, definitely, going to be, I guess, in the forefront of everything.

**GERALD:** Right. Would you consider yourself a starter and not a finisher or even like a dabbler. Basically, some people they keep throwing things against the wall until something sticks. Then others continue to build a brand around one core focus or theme?

**MELONDY:** I think that's what separates me from being a business owner, persay, and being an entrepreneur. I do think entrepreneurs do have the desire and ability to remain creative.

**GERALD:** Right.

**MELONDY:** I don't think I dabble. I think that I put one thing in place and work on it but at the same time I really am always working on the other project. I don't mind having more than one thing that I'm working on but I want to see each one of them come to completion.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**GERALD:** Yeah, I was going to say that. You published two books so you, definitely, know you can finish things.

**MELONDY:** Yes, I like to finish things. I'm really wanting to get it done, when I think of, Level Seven Institute, I really have a vision and a plan and a direction for that as well as I do for, Level Seven Training Institute, and, Level Seven Publishing. They're different but I do want to see them go all the way to completion.

**GERALD:** Right, right. You mentioned, well, I mentioned for you in the intro about the, Crisis Management and Communication Training. What's involved with that?

**MELONDY:** Crisis Management is, basically, about effectively communicating and doing it in a strategic manner. A great example would be the snow storm that just hit Florida. We, rarely, think about crisis' like that but there's a lot that goes into getting communication, effectively, out into the people in the community, which by the way I do think that Florida did an excellent job.

It's networking, it's using the internet, it's using twitter accounts, it's using Facebook, it's using all those multimedia ways of communicating to get the message out there. It's being very strategic. That's what strategic communication is about. It's not just about communicating but communicating effectively and being strategic in the way you go about it doing that.

**GERALD:** Right, I'm sure that the fact that we deal with hurricanes on an annual basis too, probably, helps with us being prepared for crisis like that. I was wondering how that was wondering how that would be. I've been in Florida now for, I guess, about ten years and that's the first time I've ever seen something like that happen.

**MELONDY:** I think the fact that it's never happened, actually, played in the advantage for Florida comparing to Atlanta. For example, I think, because we knew a snow storm was going to create some difficulties and a shock that we acted that way. We responded ahead of time

**GERALD:** True.

**MELONDY:** I think that really played to the advantage. That was a great example of crisis communication, which is why, I have an interview with the City Council Member, Lumon May, in a week to discuss what happened and how they handled there strategy for communicating so effectively.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**GERALD:** How did you wind up focusing on this specific area?

**MELONDY:** Well, initially, when I began college my career started in communications. I was going to major in communications but I, mostly, wanted to do television and broadcasting. I spent a year and a half in television and broadcasting before I changed my major. Here it is years later, I still have a passion for it. I liked the way it connected and it was going to continue what I was doing already.

**GERALD:** Right. How do you go about marketing this specific training service? I was just trying to envision crisis management, and communication, and how important that is. How would you go about finding businesses or customers who need that?

**MELONDY:** Right now what we're doing, we're, mostly, focusing on a multi promotional mix, more or less. At this point, it's direct marketing. We're just knocking on the doors of people and businesses and saying, 'do you have a crisis plan? What are you using in case of an event?' That sounds very a slow way of getting started but that been the way we got our clients? Once you start getting one then you get referral to other clients so just a little bit at a time.

**GERALD:** Right. My next question is, usually, is how you got started in the industry but you answered that already. So, it all started with self-publishing your book and then you began your passion with, Level Seven Publishing. Did you find that the idea resinated with you more so after you published your own book or was that something that you had planned to pursue either way?

**MELONDY:** It really was a after I wrote my book. People started calling me. I started getting calls and getting messages from individuals who had read the book and they wanted to know how they could go about publishing their own book. It was an evolution, it was more of an evolution of going into the publishing business than me sitting down and deciding that one day I was going to have a publishing company.

**GERALD:** Did you have to do a lot of research before you published the book to figure out how to go about it or was it? Did you have somebody helping you?

**MELONDY:** I think that's where the creative entrepreneurial spirit comes to play. I did not. I, actually, my first office was, Books a Million. We would, actually, we would take our clients in, sit



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

down with them, in Books a Million. Go to the counter, pull out a book and say, 'which one would you like your book to be similar to?' It worked or about a year and a half or two years we, actually, worked out of, Books a Million.

**GERALD:** That's a really good idea, actually.

**MELONDY:** It was nice, we could offer them coffee, and drinks, and didn't have to pay for the cups.

**GERALD:** How did you finance your business when you first started out?

**MELONDY:** The old fashion out of my pocket. Basically, I would take extra money, when I receive an extra return or refund check of any type. I would always take that money and just put it right back into the company. I have been successful. I've had some private lenders who have followed my dream, and followed my company, and they have invested, made small investments, when I needed to take care of projects.

**GERALD:** Right. If someone in 2014 was thinking about starting a publishing business what would they need to think about in terms of cost? I guess, what I'm asking what would be some types of associated costs, specific, to start or running a publishing business?

**MELONDY:** Well, the greatest thing about the type publishing company we run we do a lot of outsourcing. It's not the old fashion, having to have a great printing ability capability. Most of our stuff is outsourced. You do have the opportunity and look at companies and shop around for the best printing costs. The large majority of printing is the cost. The cost of printing the books is the highest amount.

**GERALD:** Do you do the shopping around or is that something the client does? How does that work?

**MELONDY:** I, actually, do the shopping around myself. I have three companies right now that I have an ongoing relationship with, which keeps the price down. I am able to go in and know which company is going to be the best one for my client.

**GERALD:** Right.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**MELONDY:** The other part is, I think, that now as eBooks are being more and more popular the price of using an eBook, creating an eBook is really inexpensive because for the most part it doesn't cost anything. Again, the marketing is where the price is going to come in. You may create an eBook but you're going to have to take in consideration how are you going to market it? How are you going to get the word out that your book is out there?

**GERALD:** Exactly, well, yeah, the easier it is to make something that means there's more of them out there to compete with.

**MELONDY:** Exactly, it sounds easy when you think, 'I can do a free eBook' but there's a lot out there.

**GERALD:** Right, what would you say your top three skills or behaviors needed to be successful in self-employment?

**MELONDY:** Oh my gosh, I think, the first one is be tenacious. I tell people all the time if you want to work for yourself you have got to be, extremely, tenacious and willing to hold on when things are not easy.

**GERALD:** Right.

**MELONDY:** They're not going to be easy, initially. I think the other thing is I've learned the importance of being flexible. You can put plans in place but those plans, often, rely on other people in other situations. When you're self-employed it's not like you have a company that is going to make sure that everyone shows up on time.

You have to understand that you're dealing with everything on your own so you have to be flexible and know that, that, sometimes, plans, they just don't work out. You have to be able to adjust and do what needs to be done at that time. I guess the other thing that I always tell people to do is be willing to make mistakes.

**GERALD:** Definitely.

**MELONDY:** That's the hard part, I think, is that if you go into self-employment thinking that you're going to read a book or you're just going to take your plans and they're going to become successful overnight. Then you're in for a really hard ride. You're going to make mistakes along



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

the way. Begin to look at those mistakes as opportunities instead of failures.

**GERALD:** Right. You had said to me one time too, being self-employed is the same as on the job training, and that made me laugh. I thought about it, it's like on the job training without the training.

**MELONDY:** It is, it's like you're training yourself isn't it?

**GERALD:** Yeah, well, that's the biggest challenge. We forget there's people who have been where we are. We try to like forge ahead blindly and, I know, I have to consistently remind myself to step back and tap into other people and resources who can help me make better decisions.

**MELONDY:** That's a good idea and that is very important is to tap into other people. Probably, one of the biggest mistakes I made, initially, was being isolated. Trying to do it on my own, it's just not necessary.

**GERALD:** Well, not asking for help too. Everybody's afraid to in the beginning or they think people won't give them the help they need, or advice, or resources, or anything like that. But I found in the self-employment and entrepreneurial space, everybody's just there to help and if you have any questions, or problems, or anything, there's always somebody there to help out. It's really been a great experience for me.

**MELONDY:** One of the things I've learned, too, is that when most people have become successful as self-employed, they're not too far away, sometimes, to where you are. They remember what it felt like and they remember how they had to take those baby steps and you're right, they're more likely willing to share that information. They can still remember what those feelings are. They're not so far away, most of us that think that they're an overnight success but there's no such thing.

**GERALD:** No, I talked about this with Michelle in my last interview. We had said, 'it's a gradual progression and everybody goes through it.' Everybody starts in the beginning and then becomes, they go through the motions, they get their lumps, they get a little experience, they become veterans. Then, eventually, if they're lucky they become industry experts or something like that.

There is that progression and somebody, somewhere is either a little ahead of you or a little behind you. It's your job to figure out who those people are and reach out. You had mentioned



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

failure too. I just wanted to make a comment about that. You have to learn how to embrace failure.

Welcome it, not in the sense that you'll fail over all but little failures are lessons that get you back on course and help you know what not to do. Sometimes, until you fail you never know what the bad direction is or the bad decision. It's funny I always look at this the same as when I met my wife, Amber.

Instead of thinking about what I wanted in a wife, I thought about what I didn't want. I, seriously, had a list of can't haves. Once you identify what's wrong or bad, dangerous or, simply, not right for you. It's easy to avoid those things in the future.

**MELONDY:** That's a good idea, I like that a lot. I'm going to have to use that one Gerald.

**GERALD:** I always work backwards.

**MELONDY:** I'm not married yet so maybe I need to create my list.

**GERALD:** What was your biggest fear or biggest fears that held you back from starting your own business?

**MELONDY:** My biggest fear was not having anyone to model after in my immediate circle. I came from a family that, basically, had the mindset of go out, get a good job, work hard, if that job plays out find another job. It's a little bit different for my family to see me striving to be self-employed and to make it on my own.

My biggest fear was just not knowing, right away if it was possible. I have friends that own their own businesses but in my community, I came from a really small community and there just were not a lot of business owners persay, so that was my fear.

**GERALD:** Right. So I have a little story for you about what you just said and I thought I'd share it. I, definitely, can see why that would be a major problem. My father jumped into self-employment in 1978 starting his own commercial printing business called, Accudata Business Products. If anyone need commercial printing in Northern New Jersey look them up!

That's a shameless plug. I was born into a family of business owners and I grew up, watched my



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

dad run a successful business, and he's now in his 36th year of business ownership. That's been huge for me. I grew up in that print shop, literally. I did everything from making note pads and cutting business cards to running a printing press, and cutting negatives and everything like that.

I saw how we ran the business, I saw how we treated people, how we handled customers and employees, and a lot of that just stuck with me. But I'll say that it was, somewhat, of my downfall for a while too. The reason I say that is because the advice and the work ethic my father subscribes to is not one that was right for me. For a long time, I couldn't see a logical way around the way he did things.

I thought that just the way he did it was right and I had to just follow his path. I'm talking, specifically, about having employees and how to handle your workload. In his business it saw major growth, expansion, and then, somewhat, of a deflation due to technology shifting a lot of the business went away from massive printing needs like there were in the 80's and 90's.

A lot of companies just took it in-house or they just do it digital now. He slowly saw the volume decrease and the cost of having employees continue to rise every year and because of this he gave me the advice to never hire employees if I don't have to and to do everything myself as long as I can. Then if I get to the point where I, simply, can't handle it anymore, dial it back, or look into bringing help. I took that to heart for nearly a decade. I vowed to do it all myself. However, maybe it's because my, particular, business requires a great deal of personal involvement in each project.

My parents, they have, print vendors who handle the printing for them and they, simply, manage the projects. As you know, a print shop, there really isn't much to it you, simply, create or collect the art work. You get it ready for press, you print the job, you package it, and you ship it to the customer.

**MELONDY:** Exactly.

**GERALD:** My business is more wrapped up in design, content, and a great deal of complexity in the end product. I'm not really sure the advice made sense for me like it did for him, but the bottom line here, I learned my lesson that even being around a successful business owner my whole life I had to learn how to take what they were doing and apply only the pieces that made sense to my business. While I do consider my father a personal idol and somebody I aspire to be like. I cast his advice aside and since I did that I've, literally, tripled sales for the company.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**MELONDY:** That's a good story. It makes sense.

**GERALD:** So don't always trust that even having a model to follow is a sure fire way to success. I just wanted to share that because I felt like really applies because a lot of people say that they didn't really have somebody there that they could model it or they didn't have a direction to go. Sometimes, you just have to feel your way through it and figure it out on your own.

**MELONDY:** That's, exactly, right and one of the things I was able to do later on is to go back and look at my community from a different way instead of just looking at who had a brick and mortar business. There were lots of people in my community. They were more like the entrepreneurs. There were people who had a garden in their backyard where they sold their vegetables.

The husband sold vegetables and the wife did hair in her kitchen. There were people who repaired cars so there were all these people that were able to make a living, not necessarily, with the brick and mortar and doing it the traditional way. I did go back and pull from those. I went back and pulled from those models of people that used their skills and their abilities to take care of their lively hood.

**GERALD:** Yeah, and you have to do what's comfortable for you. You see other people in these other roles and the way they run their business. There might be a part of it that makes sense for you but not the whole thing. I never saw the sense in having a brick and mortar business for myself.

Number one because my wife is active duty military so we can just get sent away at any point. I didn't see the point in putting all my money and invest in something that would just, literally, only last for a couple years before I had to uproot it again. Also I just like the fact that I can now work with anybody around the globe. My business has, essentially, flattened the globe and the economy in a sense where I'm not just tied to working with local talent, which is what I love.

The fact that I have, my project manager lives in Alabama. I've got an SEO team up in New Jersey, I've got a pay-per-click team in Pennsylvania so it's nice to have these people all over the country and not feel like I have to have people in my office for us to be productive.

**MELONDY:** Exactly, none of the books that we've published have actually, although I reside in



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

Pensacola. I've only had one article that I've published in been Bena, Pensacola. All of our authors are in some other state, which is very interesting, but in the word had gotten out mostly by word of mouth.

A buzz marketing plan if you, for lack of better word, just the buzz about how we handle our customers. Again, you're right, everything is flat, I don't have to worry about the fact if my next customer is going to be in Arkansas or two or three are going to be in Michigan.

**GERALD:** Right.

**MELONDY:** You're able to still continue to work with those.

**GERALD:** Yeah, I was going to ask you that. How they find you but, I guess, it's word of mouth and referrals.

**MELONDY:** It's word of mouth and its referrals. That's been our biggest thing. We're going to push that a little bit further as the year goes on to move a little more into the market and align with our customers, basically, come to us because they hear about how we treat our customers and the work that we do.

**GERALD:** Right. So what has been your biggest self-employment failure to date and what did you learn?

**MELONDY:** Oh my gosh. It was my own failure. It was, definitely, something I did against myself and not against a customer. I, actually, had a workshop that was coming and I rushed a project. I had a book that had to be out for myself, I needed it done at a certain time, and I skipped steps. I never skip steps but this, particular, time I skipped the steps and as a result my project and my result was not up to my standard.

Now the great thing about it is other people who, actually, got the book were like, 'we don't know what the problem is, we don't see it, but it did not meet, Level Seven standards. I learned really the hard way that you don't skip steps, for me.

**GERALD:** Did you just skip the steps to expedite the timeline, to get it printed, or was it, was there another reason you had to speed things up a bit?



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**MELONDY:** There was a World Builders Workshop that was being held at a local church. There were going to be several high profile business owners in the community that were going to be present and I was asked to present. The book was due out about two weeks after the workshop so in order to meet the timeline I, actually, skipped the last edit.

I didn't go in, I told her to again and print it, I saw it, thought it was great. When they printed it, it didn't come out. The format was not the way we wanted it. I picked the books up the day before the workshop so I didn't find out until I opened my box up and looked and was like, 'oh my God, no.'

**GERALD:** So there's no way to recoup that loss. You just have to eat it, basically, right?

**MELONDY:** I ate it. It was a learning experience. I ate it, I did really well in my presentation, got a standing ovation. That part was great. The books, I slid them back in the trunk of car and went home.

**GERALD:** That would be nerve racking though. I know, I'm working on my first book now and I'm debating whether to go eBook route, or kindle platform, or too, actually, print and publish the book. I think I'd be a nervous wreck though with the whole printing aspect.

**MELONDY:** I've learned to do both. In fact, what I'm, we're doing now is that we're doing print on demand. If I have a workshop or I have a speaking engagement, I would print the books when I know I'm going to be in the presence of a group of people to sell them. Other than that, we're going to use eBooks.

**GERALD:** That's a good idea. On the flip side of failure what has been your biggest success?

**MELONDY:** Being self-employed for a complete year.

**GERALD:** It's true.

**MELONDY:** You learn. You just learn that you can take care of yourself. You learn that you can survive with less than you thought you could, you learn to trust in your ability.

**GERALD:** Yeah.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**MELONDY:** Last year was a big success when 2014 rolled around, I couldn't believe, I have not been out having to work for another person for a, complete, year.

**GERALD:** Yeah, it's really empowering but at first it's just nothing but scary. That's all you think about is, 'oh my God, where is next month's money coming from, how am I going to pay the bills,' and all this stuff as you started to get into the routine and you realize people do want my services and I am, actually, making money here. Then you can start to let those fears subside a little bit.

**MELONDY:** Yes, it is scary is the best way to describe it. You have this vision of the what if's and the what if's are huge, initially.

**GERALD:** Yeah.

**MELONDY:** Then you survive those what if's and it just gives you a lot more strength as you go along. You learn that, 'okay, nothing fell apart. Okay, I still have lights, I still have utilities, I'm still doing well. After a while you realize, like, wow, I can do this, and this, and this, and take care of myself and my family.

**GERALD:** Yeah, in your bio on STSE, you mentioned earning the nickname, 'The One Session Lady.' How have you or how do you think you might be able to turn that into a powerful marketing tool for your brand.

**MELONDY:** I feel like there is going to be a program. I am really wanting to work on a curriculum around the one session. It's funny, because I didn't think of it that way. One of my clients started coming to me and by the second session she wanted to stop and I thought, 'okay, well, she just doesn't want to stay tuned in and she's being avoidant.

As we went on because we continued our session she was like, 'in the first session I felt so empowered I went out and made all these changes,' and she really did. She really implemented from the very first session what we talked about. She just implemented it. I would like to be able to market it by creating a curriculum around how to do that and what that entails.

Most of its just being in tune with your clients, when you sit down with someone, you can give them so many things but you have to give them strategies. You have to give them strategic ways to change their life.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**GERALD:** Right

**MELONDY:** That's what I do. I come up with strategic steps and I also use a lot of metaphors, which is funny, but people can hear a metaphor and they can use it, like the bamboo effect.

**GERALD:** The one session lady, sounds so marketable too. I think in today's society everybody wants things fast, they want it now, they want instantly. The one session people know in one session you can make these big differences in their life. I think that's a really cool concept and that's really marketable. Why do people choose you over your competitors?

**MELONDY:** What we have done is we have been successful at creating a company that communicates to our customers that they are, truly, in charge and that we are here to make their dreams come true. The difference between just picking a publishing company online is that you come across that don't know you personally. They're not going to take into consideration your timeline. They're not going to take in consideration that this is your first time.

They'll just take your manuscript and just print it. They won't give you the insight. We have been very successful at making our customers feel that we are a part of their dream almost, that we're their dream maker. We're the ones that are going to make sure that they get what they want by standing there next to them and walking them through each one of the steps.

**GERALD:** With the ease of online or DIY Publishing, what advantages do you bring to the table?

**MELONDY:** Again, I guess, our greatest advantage is the personal side of it and, again, the internet is a great place to get things done but there's still a large market of people who want hands on. They want a person that they can pick the phone up and call and that's really going to walk them through it. Our personal edge is our advantage.

**GERALD:** How do you feel about self-publishing versus going through an, actual, publishing house?

**MELONDY:** The idea of going through a publishing house, now, is more complicated than it ever was before because of the vast number of books and the vast number of people that are writing. Getting a publishing house to recognize you and to pick up your book, your manuscript, and to print it, and publish it for you takes a lot of diligence.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

It takes a lot of time, a lot of effort. I, often, advise clients to get a publishing company to decide to sign you on, you almost have to work backwards. You have to self-publish, sell enough of your books and your product

**GERALD:** You have to show them it's worth it, yeah.

**MELONDY:** Exactly, you've got to demonstrate that it's worth it. So self-publishing to me is a path to getting to a larger publishing house if that's your dream or your goal?

**GERALD:** Now, is it they're not willing to take the risk on something before they, actually, see how it performs or is there another reason they do that?

**MELONDY:** I think it's because they don't have to take the risk on you.

**GERALD:** True, yeah.

**MELONDY:** It's not even viable. There's no reason why they have to take a risk anymore. They've got so many, already professional writers that are lining up and beating down their door. What would they choose you over someone else? I think Fifty Shades of Gray is a great example.

**GERALD:** Right.

**MELONDY:** Fifty Shades of Gray, is about to be a book but it started out small and captured lots of attention. Now, she can get whatever she wants.

**GERALD:** What are your thoughts on some of the latest platforms like eBooks, Kindle, and then there's a new one called, snippet, I don't know if you've heard of that one yet but I thought snippet was a cool idea for some other people market that but that, essentially, takes, it's like an eBook but it's also interactive so it has audio clips, it has video clips, so it's utilizing all of multimedia all in this one package.

**MELONDY:** I like the idea of snippet. I, actually, had to watch a Tedd Talk. There was a lady who demonstrated a children's book that you snippet. It was amazing, especially, for young kids. I thought it was just the most amazing way to open their minds and their imagination to reading. eBook and kindle, they aren't going anywhere. They are, definitely, the new trend.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

That's where we're headed. That's where we are, basically. I enjoy kindle, again, like I said earlier though, I am just an old fashion book reading person but you cannot ignore the number of people who like to use kindle. Snippet, like I said, I haven't tried it for myself, I haven't looked into, possibly, moving our publishing company into using that format but do enjoy what I've seen.

**GERALD:** Yeah, it's limited right now. It's only available, I think, on the apple platform so any android or PC users really couldn't take advantage of it just yet, but it sounds like it's up and coming and they're supposed to come out with a PC or android version soon. What do you think about, how easy it is to get books up there though.

Do you think it attracts from the authors who take the time to go through their traditional publishing channels or do you just think it's two, totally, different animals. I don't really think, John Grisham, is really concerned with what my book is about because I'm, probably, going to self-publish, or do an eBook, or something like that. Is it even a factor that people think about?

**MELONDY:** I don't think so, I think that we live in an information error, people just want the information. Or some people who just want information, they're going to go online, they're going to get a book they'll get it on kindle, they get it on Amazon. They'll get it some way they can just read it really fast.

They just want the information and because of that there is almost no comparison between, John Grisham, and somebody who's being published on kindle. There's not a competition, there's almost two different segments of people that are wanting that product. I don't think they even really compete against each other.

**GERALD:** Right, yeah, I agree with that. That makes sense. Do you have any formal marketing strategies? I know you mentioned referrals, essentially, as your main source but is there anything else that's been successful?

**MELONDY:** Well, we've done a little promotion mix. Again, I think, I'm more traditional than I need to be at this point. There's a time that we're going to have to really move and utilize the computer system a lot more than we do at this point. We do emailing.

I do have an emailing promotional type of program where we send out once a month a small, little newsletter. Again, we're going to have to really move into the area where we become a little



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

more transparent through the internet.

**GERALD:** You'd mentioned social media a little bit. How do you plan on using, utilizing these platforms? Are you planning on posting using like rich media or engaging just one on one with followers?

**MELONDY:** Well, I currently have a business page as well as a personal Facebook page. I do interact, I do, we do a great deal of comments from our authors. I have an author page right now where the authors, actually, go on and they can do quotes, they can do comments about their books.

There's some interactions and you can, actually, start to interact with the authors that we have listed with our publishing group. Facebook is one way, Twitter's another. I haven't, basically, used Twitter a great deal but just trying to get a following on Facebook and twitter is one our first steps to utilize that form of marketing.

**GERALD:** Does publishing eBooks present different profit building opportunities than tradition book publishing?

**MELONDY:** Oh, definitely.

**GERALD:** Yeah.

**MELONDY:** The reason why, of course, you're marketing is getting the word out there and bringing people to your page. Now, in order to get a printed book sold you have to be physically almost there. I always tell my authors it's called, Books a Million, for a reason. There are a million plus books more than that available so what would make a person walk into, Books a Million, and pull you off the shelf.

**GERALD:** Right.

**MELONDY:** So the only way to do that, if you're promoting a book that way is to, personally, promote that book or make yourself known through the internet but most of the time it's going to be personal appearances. eBooks on the other hand is, simply, again, driving traffic to your website and driving peoples interest to that, particular, book.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**GERALD:** How does your business make money publishing eBooks? What would be the end game there? Do you have the same role in the whole publishing process or is it different?

**MELONDY:** Well, at this point we haven't quite moved into that as I'd like too. The role would be the same as far as we'll be responsible for helping them to download the book, format the book, make sure they have their ISB number, make sure they have the proper copyright in place, making all those technical things are taken care of. As easy as it sounds, to me, downloading a book for an eBook is not that complicated. A lot of our clients still have problems with that.

**GERALD:** Yeah, there's a lot of technically challenged people out there.

**MELONDY:** Yes, so our role is not going to be that different. We still are going to have to make sure that they get the technical part taken care of. For example, most companies ask you not to use the same ISB number that you use for your printed book, the one you use for your eBook.

That's a small difference but there's somethings that the most authors would not know about. We can help them to secure the proper numbers that they need to get their books online.

**GERALD:** Right, how is being self-employed affected your family life?

**MELONDY:** The biggest thing I would, Gerald, has been sacrifice. We're just not able to go and do some of the things that we use to do. One, because my time is limited, I'm not able to trips and go places. I have to be very strategic at what we do.

On the other hand my older son who is currently at the University of South Florida is, extremely, proud of the fact that his mom is taking a chance and forging the way in doing something different. He's been very understanding of that, been very helpful.

**GERALD:** Yeah, the whole family has to sacrifice a little bit and understand the commitment that you're making to the business but also that, in that in the in the end it's for the family that just about everybody does this, kind of, thing. I know for a fact I run my marketing firm, Steps to Self-Employment. I'm also getting my MBA so my time just has to juggle between so many different things and everybody just understands that it's just the way it is for now and it's not going to be a forever type situation.

**MELONDY:** In some ways, at times, it feels even more freeing because you know what you have



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

to do. I know what I have to do and I make sure that I get it done. Then I also am conscious of my family and know that, 'okay I can't spend every single minute on my business.' I can't spend every single minute on my class work but I'm able to make those decisions.

As being self-employed you can make those decisions for yourself and you can find a better balance. In one way it's effecting my family because I feel more available than I did when I going out every day and having to be somewhere from seven o'clock in the morning until four o'clock.

**GERALD:** Yeah, yeah, definitely, being able to make your own schedule has been huge for me too. Getting the kids ready for school in the morning, then my one son gets off the bus around three o'clock so I get to see him off the bus, help him with his homework, I get to cook dinner, then I get to put my little baby boy to bed at night.

It's a nice change from what I used to do where I was, basically, stuck in a cubicle for eight or nine hours a day, then plus the commute to work and from work. You waste your life away, essentially, when you could be spending that time doing quality things.

**MELONDY:** It's funny you say that but as soon as you start talking about those things I had flashbacks and I had to catch my breath. You just motivate me to continue in my path for a few more years.

**GERALD:** Yeah, well, I always think about that because I went from, I had a corporate job as a graphic design supervisor and managed this whole marketing team and sat in this little, six by six, cubicle every day and just stared at the wall, essentially. I was there for like six months. After leaving, I worked for a small design firm and it was a nice job, but I didn't really see growth so I thought, 'corporate America's the way to go.' Then I got a job at this company and I was there for like six months and just gave in my pink slip,' it's like I'm out of here.

**MELONDY:** It is difficult. I really enjoyed, again, I have a passion for things I do. Prior to doing this I was teaching, and then working with persons with disability and I loved what I did, but the times, and the hours, and the lack of control, and being in traffic, and having to beg somebody off when my child was sick had to be the worst part, for me. If my family needs me I want to be able to make the decision that I have a right to stay home and work.

**GERALD:** Yeah, and I just, I never liked the idea of just not having control over my destiny.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

That's just really what it is. A lot of people think their jobs are secure but it's never secure. There's never a guaranteed job out there.

Obviously, even with self-employment it's not guaranteed but you, certainly, have more control. You can plan a little better than you would if there was somebody else making decisions that you weren't even aware were being made behind your back.

**MELONDY:** Exactly, that's something that takes place. Again, I talked about that in my book as a very turning point in my life is then I realized that I had placed a lot of my trust in someone else. I had placed a lot of my trust in my employer. They were making major decisions for my life.

**GERALD:** Exactly.

**MELONDY:** Once you decide that, 'gee, I really want to make these decisions for myself,' and I can. I can, I can learn to make these decisions for myself. It's a great place to be. I don't want to go back to that.

**GERALD:** Right, now, being out on your own for a year or so and helping other people achieve success. Do you believe there's a formula to success?

**MELONDY:** I think that everybody has to find their own rhythm. The greatest rhythm for me is just taking the time to get to get to know yourself I think that's the key. You have to know your strengths and weaknesses. Once you learn those then you're able to play on them. You have to be able to know that you're passion is important.

I have to feel good about what I'm doing. I have to feel in control of what I'm doing. I have to have flexibility in my day. My formula for success is when I know what works for me. I would tell anybody else that if they were going to go into self-employment is to do a lot of self-evaluation. What makes you tick, why you're doing it? Have a really strong idea why you're doing it in the first place.

**GERALD:** Right, becomes elf-actualized.

**MELONDY:** Exactly, if you're doing it just because you want to get rich tomorrow than you may have to rethink that. You just have to know what your plans are, and why you're involved in, and who you are as a person. That is going to be the core and the basis of your business.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**GERALD:** Right, what do you think the biggest challenges you'll face will be in the future for your type of business?

**MELONDY:** Well, the publishing company, like we mentioned a couple times before, is always evolving. It definitely has changed from the day that your dad has his company and is going continue changing with eBooks and other forms of getting writing material out there. That's always going to be a challenge is staying up to date.

**GERALD:** Do you think this is a transitional period? Does it slow down at some point or it's just a never ending cycle where content immediately becomes outdated once it's published?

**MELONDY:** Everything I've learned in strategic communication is ever changing. It's not going to stop. I think the pendulum is not going to fling backwards as we have seen it in other cases and other areas. I think communication and information, the way we communicate interact, the way we get information when we give it, receive it is going to always be changing. Technology is just going to continue to push us and move us. Sometimes, in a way, it's much more rapid than we're comfortable with.

**GERALD:** Right, what do you recommend to any author out there who's writing a book on current subject matter? How can you avoid a short shelf life? I know, obviously, to make it relevant for a long period of time but it's easier said than done it seems, right?

**MELONDY:** Well, what I think is like very easy to start out and it's just something that people, probably, think or may have thought about is just not using graphics. That sounds, amazing, simple but most of the time when you pull a graphic out it changes. That is going to put the life of your book, it's going to, easily, tie you to a time period.

**GERALD:** That's true so when you're selecting graphics I tell them, first, 'always make it something that is going to be relevant and can change.' If you use people, clothing, things like that are going to change really quickly. The other thing is, like we mentioned before, if you're talking about technology or writing a book about technology you have to keep in mind that you don't want it to be timed and dated by mentioning even like Facebook, or twitter, or how it's been used.

Those things are changing all the time so if you're using technology or things of that nature referencing different social medias and how they're being used and operated. Anything that you



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

write is, probably, going to an ancient by three weeks from now, or a month from now.

**GERALD:** Right, right, yeah.

**MELONDY:** You have to make sure that when you're writing and referencing information that it's something that's not always going to be changing. You just want to stick to the facts, information that is going to be relevant ongoing like talking about balance, or talking about changing our flexibility, things that they don't change that often.

**GERALD:** Conceptual topics versus the specifics.

**MELONDY:** Exactly, you want to do a concept. You don't want to be specific things because those are things that can date a book. Again though, the beauty of an eBook is that you can always change it.

**GERALD:** What's your favorite success quote?

**MELONDY:** You know, it's amazing, I laugh about this because it's the quote that I, actually, had when I was in high school. It's one of those ones our teachers gave us, "Remember the past, conquer the present, and prepare for the future." It was, actually, our high school graduation motto.

**GERALD:** I think that might've been mine.

**MELONDY:** Was it really?

**GERALD:** I'm serious, that sounds really familiar.

**MELONDY:** I laugh when I think about that I'm still holding onto that one and it's still having some kind of impact in my life.

**GERALD:** Well, it's a great quote. I'm a true believer in always remembering where you came from and not letting it hold you back. The key to that, obviously, is to just don't dwell on the past.

**MELONDY:** Again, like we said earlier, when you're in your own business you cannot spend a lot of time dwelling on the mistakes you made yesterday. You've got to learn from those and keep moving.



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

**GERALD:** The preparation aspect of your quote too, it made me think of a great quote by, Albert Einstein, and he said, "You cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for war." I think that's great, to me, personally, because it reminds me that we have to make a choice either to defend our current position or prepare for what's to come. It's a warning, too, that if you don't prepare for the future you're always going to be stuck fighting battles that never progress to anything better.

**MELONDY:** Exactly.

**GERALD:** I think a lot of business owners, they get stuck in that mindset of defending what they, currently, have instead of looking for ways to improve or, like we talked about, new challenges to explore and expand into. Maybe that right there is the core difference between what makes up an entrepreneur and a business owner.

**MELONDY:** Yeah, you're always in a motive, like you said, you're preparing. You're not going to sit there and just do it the same way that your, like you said your dad did it, or the same way your mom did it. You're going to always be looking for new ways and new avenues.

Communication is always changing. I keep going back to communications because, to me, that is a key to marketing that is the key to getting the word out there. It's so important to know that it's going to always be changing.

**GERALD:** Right.

**MELONDY:** There was a skater once and I can't think of his name but the famous quote that he said that, when asked why is he so successful, and he said, "When everybody else is skating to where the puck, I skate to where the puck is going." It's just something that we have to think about. We are always moving ahead. You can't just see where you are right now you've got to look to that future.

**GERALD:** Exactly, the final question I have for you today, if you could give someone looking to start a business one piece of advice what would it be?

**MELONDY:** Do not isolate yourself. Number one is to use, like we mentioned before, but you use the resources that are available, network with people. One of my favorite sayings is, 'don't wait on your mentor to find you, find your mentor.' Go out and find somebody who's doing close



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

to or near like what you're wanting to do and ask questions.

I think that's one of the tools and then also just trust your instincts. Everybody's not going to be a nine to fiver. If you know you're not that person than you have to be able to be courageous enough to step out and live your life according to what's going to make you happy.

**GERALD:** Right, I touched on that point already about asking for help. It's worth saying again. It's made all the difference, for me, with STSE. It was just me and the blog and the aspirations of, maybe, doing a podcast. Within a couple weeks it just turned into this massive content engine.

Getting all these writers on board and everybody just seeing the bigger picture how as a group we could just help so many more people start their own businesses. I just think it's such an awesome idea but it all just came from not isolating myself, yet again, because I did it for ten years with, Vinci Designs. Finally, branched out and got other people involved in that business. Now with STSE I'm really glad I'm doing it right from the start.

Well, Melondy, that about wraps up the time we have for today. I cannot thank you enough for spending the last hour with us. You've given all of us great insight into your business and I know you'll give people who are contemplating starting their own business a lot of great things to think about. In my opinion, anyone listening to this is better off for having done so. So can you tell us where we can go to find out more about you and your business?

**MELONDY:** Well, the thing to do right now is I do have my Facebook it's what I use most of the time. You can go to my Facebook page. You can also go, I guess, my name, just look my name up, Melondy Neal, on Facebook. We have not secured our website to the point that it's up and running, yet, so that's something I have to work on.

**GERALD:** Okay, so [facebook.com/MelondyNeal](https://facebook.com/MelondyNeal).

**MELONDY:** Yes.

**GERALD:** Okay, I'll make sure I get that up on the show notes. Everyone can just go to [stepstoselfemployment.com/episode06](http://stepstoselfemployment.com/episode06), where you'll be able to grab the full transcript of the show as well as links to everything we mentioned through the podcast.

**MELONDY:** Now my book is also available, will also be available on the website so



## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

[stepstoselfemployment.com](http://stepstoselfemployment.com), is that right? That's where the link will be available?

**GERALD:** Yep.

**MELONDY:** Okay, because you can, actually, buy the book also through the E. Carter.com, [thebambooeffectbyecarter.com](http://thebambooeffectbyecarter.com). you can get the book.

**GERALD:** What about, I was going to ask you about, Vanilla Syrup, is that available online as well?

**MELONDY:** It is not. I'm going to have to put that book in print. I have not. I'm going to make it into a eBook. We were only doing it traditional before when we printed copies out but I'm going to do that in an eBook and have it available, probably, within the next couple months. I'm glad you brought that up because, Vanilla Syrup, actually, is about to be made into a stage play, which is amazing.

**GERALD:** Oh, that's, awesome.

**MELONDY:** It is awesome, it's exciting. There's a local producer here and we're working together. It's a collection of poetry, was going to be a corial poem so it's going to be made into a play.

**GERALD:** That's great, well, yeah, keep us up to date on that and we'll post any updates on your profile on STSE website.

**MELONDY:** Okay, thanks a lot, Gerald.

**GERALD:** So thanks, again, for your time. Best of luck in everything, I'm sure we'll talk again soon.

**MELONDY:** We sure will, bye, bye.

**GERALD:** Well that about wraps up all the time we have for today. I just want to thank all of your for listening and I want to give a special thanks to Melondy Neal for joining us today. Make sure to visit her Facebook page at [facebook.com/melondy.neal](https://facebook.com/melondy.neal). If you enjoyed what you heard please head right over to iTunes or Stitcher radio and give us a five star review or share my



www.stepstoselfemployment.com

## STSE Podcast Episode #006

Starting & Running a Publishing Company in an Evolving Content World with Melondy Neal

podcast with others.

Thank you all so much for listening and all your support. My final call to action please visit [stepstoselfemployment.com](http://stepstoselfemployment.com). Check out all the free resources, articles written by a panel of self-employed individuals, entrepreneurs, and business owners.

Check out the show notes for every single podcast episode, including the show summary, links to any people, websites, or products mentioned on the show as well as a full transcript of the podcast in its entirety. Thanks, again, for tuning in. I'm Gerald Vinci with the self-employment podcast and I'll catch you next time. Stay healthy, stay safe, and make progress every day. So long.

**ANNOUNCER:** Thanks for joining us at [stepstoselfemployment.com](http://stepstoselfemployment.com) start planning your path to self-employment and entrepreneurial success today.

**To listen to the podcast or download in its entirety please visit**

<http://www.stepstoselfemployment.com/episode06/>