



Stanford eCorner

Content Creators as the Brand

Brian Murray, *HarperCollins*

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According to Brian Murray, CEO and president of HarperCollins, the publishing industry has traditionally functioned using a business-to-business model, eschewing direct relationships with consumers. In conversation with STVP Executive Director Tina Seelig, Murray explains why his company puts its authors forward as the brand.



Transcript

We always view the author as the brand and we are putting the author forward and trying to help them build their brand and their platform. We can help them do that. The publishers' name does help, certainly when it comes to maybe not with that consumer who's not in publishing, but when it comes to the reviewer, when it comes to the media. If you want a book, if you want to get on major media or if you want to get reviewed in the newspaper, who's publishing it really matters. So, our business traditionally has always been a B2B, a business to business kind of channel. So we work with the buyers, we work with the reviewers, we will market directly to consumers, but we don't have that direct consumer relationship. Now that may change as we go forward. I mean, the digital world that's developing around us creates a lot of new opportunities for us to reconsider that traditional practice and there is a lot of debate and discussion within the publishing industry about exactly that issue. There are a few brands, but maybe in certain genres there are some brands that people read a lot of fantasy, they might know a brand or two, a publishing brand, but by and large the biggest publishing companies we have a lot of imprints and those imprints are really creative teams. They are - we don't have a monolithic publishing process, we have what we call imprints where you have a publisher and then the creative team around them and we find that those small teams are where the best creative work takes place.

And so if you're going to organize that way, they have to do the best job with each one of their imprints in order to make those connections with media, with reviewers and book buyers. So it's a complicated issue. And it may change in the future, but for now we put the author out as the brand.