

bookbaby

MAKING MONEY WITH YOUR eBOOK



THINK LIKE A MARKETER &
SELL YOUR BOOK LIKE A PRO

BY STEVEN SPATZ CMO, BookBaby

“HOW DO I MARKET MY BOOK?”



It's the question on everyone's mind. As the virtual bookshelves strain under the weight of thousands of new titles being added each week, the topic dominates writers' forums, blogs and conferences around the world.

It even produces posts like this that appeared in a Linked In thread about book marketing: **I am looking for someone who will promise me a “best seller” campaign for very little money or work.**

Within a few hours over 100+ responses poured in – not one offered to fulfill this misguided writer's fantasy. Yet for all those responding with jeers and derision, I'll wager that most harbor secret hopes that some kind of 'get rich quick' scheme really is out there for their own flagging book promotional efforts.


The fact is it doesn't exist. There are no secret formulas, no guarantees of success in book promotion. “Can't Miss” ideas can and will. “Foolproof” methods

SO WHAT'S A WRITER TO DO?


There's another approach to consider – so let's ask the question one more time: **How do I market my book?** My answer to this question is simple: Like a marketer. Not an author.

Successful promotion of your book will require some combination of time, effort, money and luck. With extra helpings of the latter. But if you approach your book like a disciplined and focused marketer, you can't help but increase the chance for your book to stand out and be discovered.

That's what makes this guide different from the hundreds out there. This is a guide for marketers. Not authors. Beginning today – right now – you need to think like a marketer. Which means you need to think of your book as a product – nothing more and nothing less. This isn't an easy assignment for most authors. I experienced this in a very personal way



Put away your subjective feelings. You need think of your book like it's a tube of toothpaste sold at CVS.



aren't. And it gets even more confounding: What works for one successful author might not work for you. Like the investment ads all say: “Past performance is not an indicator of future success.”

If you have money to burn there are a lot of book promotion experts who can build a buzz. Luckily for the cash strapped author, the internet is flooded with book marketing information and advice. Literally thousands of whitepapers, articles and guides are available free – just like this one! The problem is: If you did everything suggested in these well-intentioned articles, you wouldn't have any time to write your next book.

when I presented a talk about book marketing at the Philadelphia's Writer's Conference last summer. I made the point about book-as-product in a visual way:

You need to subtract emotion from the equation. Put away your subjective feelings. You need think of your book like it's a tube of toothpaste sold at CVS. It's a can of dog food being promoted at Acme. Your book is nothing more than a case of toilet paper on a dusty shelf at Walmart.

To be honest, that last line didn't go over too well with this crowd. But it's this magnitude of paradigm shift that's critical to making an important change in your behavior. You need to stop behaving like an author trying to market your book. You need to

become a marketer with a product to promote and sell – that just happens to be a book. It is a very important distinction and may hold the key to turning your eBook into the money-maker you’ve dreamt about.

BEFORE THE BEGINNING.

Have you finished your book? If the answer is yes... That’s too bad. I’m sorry to hear it.

You haven’t even started your book? In that case, congratulations are in order! Because you, Mr. Author-turned-Marketer, can take full advantage of your new marketing mindset and strategies.

That doesn’t mean this guide won’t be useful for already-published authors. But you are putting the cart before the horse if you write your book before understanding the wants, needs and desires of your potential readers. Many important elements to making money on your eBook happen before you write your first word. Why? Because it fits with how a marketer approaches an opportunity to create and sell a new product. For example, here’s a very simplified chain of events that every marketer uses to develop a new product:

Step 1: Identify the market. For our assignment, this is your identifying your potential reader base. Who are these people and what are they reading? What are they willing to spend? Where are they buying?

Step 2: Match the market to your product. Using market intelligence, you can establish your product position with an established marketing tool.

Step 3: Build the product. It’s not just the writing – it’s the packaging, marketing materials, metadata and more.

Step 4: Sell the product. Make your product available in all the usual – and unusual – places.

If your book is already printed, you’ve jumped straight to Step 3 without the benefit of key marketing intelligence gained and used in those first two important previous steps. Again that’s not to mean you can’t benefit from this approach, but it’s something to consider before putting pen to paper for your next literary effort.



Marketing 101

Every basic discussion about marketing revolves around what is known as the “Four Ps”.

PRODUCT – A product is seen as an item that satisfies what a consumer needs or wants. It is a tangible good or an intangible service. For the purposes of this guide, this is your book. But you need to view it in an unemotional, detached way to come up with a marketing plan.

PRICE – The price is the amount a customer pays for the product. While cost is always an important factor, the eBook world has settled into a relatively few price points. For more information about eBook pricing ideas, go here: <http://tinyurl.com/ar3lfdq>

PROMOTION – This represents all of the methods of communication that a marketer may use to provide information to different parties about the product. eBook marketers need to use all of the tactics and techniques in the marketers’ toolbox to come up with their own winning marketing mix.

PLACE – Place refers to providing the product at a place which is convenient for consumers to access. Place is synonymous with distribution. For marketing your eBook, these are you online retail bookstore outlets and methods for reaching your potential reading audience.



1 IN SEARCH OF YOUR READERS.

Your readers are out there, somewhere. As a marketer you understand how vital it is to gather as much information as possible on these all-important buyers.

To tackle Step 1, marketers can employ a vast array of tools to identify, analyze and segment markets niches. Most of them come with hefty price tags or require the services of a fully staffed marketing department. Yet one of the most powerful tools that even the most professional marketing departments use is something you're already using for free. It's a little website called Google.

More specifically you can use the keyword toolbox application for [Google Adwords](#). You do not need to buy ads or even set up an account to use this tool. (However, I do recommend you create an account because it makes it easier to filter, record and use your results). When you type in different words or phrases you'll see how many people search for those and closely matched terms. You can apply different filters including location, language, devices used and more.

What are you looking for as a marketer? It's simple. The more searches that match your proposed book topic, the better. That makes sense – if people know and are already searching for information on this subject matter they could easily become paying customers if given the chance.

Applying the same logic to the virtual bookshelves of books already listed at Amazon.com might be less obvious. Do the same search using your own terms and phrases. If you find a lot of books already listed for sale matching your keywords, that's good news, not bad. Finding existing competition within the world's biggest bookstore says that readers are already buying and reading this specific topic within your chosen genre.

Now an author might be discouraged by these results. They might want to create a totally unique book, covering new ground with storylines that have never been told, much less conceived.

The marketer in you takes a completely different view. Familiarity breeds success in most cases. Marketing is about promoting benefits to the consumer. Product education is a distraction.

Let's use the example of another product to illustrate my point. Let's say we want to sell something that compliments the aforementioned dog food. The geniuses in product development come up with something that's never been on the market – say, steak sauce for dogs. Rover's A.1. sauce is certainly unique and we won't be competing with any other brand for store shelf space. But how many people are looking to buy canine condiments? It makes our marketing job that much harder if we have to introduce and explain this brand new product.

Now let's say our product development team comes up with a product that needs little explanation: Dog food packaged in 100% recycled materials featuring environmental artwork created by 5 year olds,



**One of the most powerful tools
that even the most professional
marketing departments use
is something you're already
using for free...**



with a share of profits going towards eco-friendly school grants. We're not breaking new ground here – all dog food is packaged. But we've staked out a different and unique position within the market – eco – and education-friendly.

Marketer/authors can take this same approach with their books, bringing their unique voice and stories into well-traveled – and lucrative – book selling niches. But how do you articulate this? That's Step 2.



CRAFT YOUR USP ASAP

You can relax a bit. Making money on your eBook doesn't require you to write the greatest book in the history of literature. I'm not suggesting you should just churn out random sentences and sling into the marketplace. It is more important — in fact it is critical — that your book is different and can be marketed by using those differences.

Marketers have a term that forms the cornerstone of successful campaigns and promotions. It's called the USP, the Unique Selling Proposition. The Entrepreneur.com encyclopedia defines a unique selling proposition as follows: *The factor or consideration presented by a seller as the reason that one product or service is different from and better than that of the competition.*

- Why do you need a USP for your book? Think of it as a condensed blurb, a concentrated 'elevator pitch' for your book. In just a few seconds your would-be reader (or, in marketing terms, your buyer) can make an instant judgment on your product.

Companies devote a lot of time and effort to craft USPs that can become more than just a tagline. Done correctly these statements become the identity of the brand itself, inextricably linking products to tangible benefits. Here are some notable examples:

- The milk chocolate melts in your mouth, not in your hand. – M&Ms
- When your package absolutely, positively has to get there overnight. – Fed Ex
- The ultimate driving machine. – BMW

Remember my comment earlier about writing the "best" book? See how flat these sample USPs sound when trying to utilize these subjective superlatives:

- "We're the best because we've been in business since 1928."
- "We have the best service."
- "We care the most."

Here are some tips for creating USPs for your book (And yes...you can have more than one):

- Make it short – a phrase, not a sentence.
- Try to convey a positive feeling. Give it impact and emotion.
- Focus on the promise of emotional gratification – the result or benefit – not the work or features you offer.
- Make it consistent with the general perception of your eBook and what you have learned about your potential customers or readers!



MY FAVORITE FOUR LETTER WORD: EASY

Why do so many eBooks fail to sell? It's not for a lack of promotion ideas or information. Hundreds of blogs, articles, white papers and eBooks are available online for authors desperate to boost their sales. Most of them highlight the same sound promotion advice such as:

- Build and promote through your own website. <http://tinyurl.com/b53j355>
- Be active in social media. <http://tinyurl.com/9wcnb8k>
- Establish your own blog. <http://tinyurl.com/a4ykxhp>
- Solicit book reviews. <http://tinyurl.com/atcbb64>

...and many more of the same. Even if you followed every piece of advice there's no guarantee you'll sell more books. As with most things in life it usually comes down to effort. Success is usually one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.

But remember – you're not just an author anymore. As a marketer you need to consider buying behavior. Our focus is on the consumer and motivates them to open their wallet. One basic concept applies to every product under the sun and has more influence than almost any other factor in the buying decision. It's simply this:

What is Affiliate Marketing?

Affiliate marketing programs are one of the most powerful ways to generate sales for your eBook

- A wide affiliate network has the power to build buzz for your eBook
- Once the network is set up, you have a 24/7/365 selling effort that runs on autopilot
- While you must accept a lower profit on each affiliate sale, the small marketing expense is easily justified in finding new readers.

Affiliate marketing is more common than you know. Most all the companies and brands you love and know use affiliate marketing to bring in incremental sales.

Here are a few companies that have created extensive affiliate networks: AT&T · Verizon · Sprint · Yahoo · Google · MSN · Dell · HP · Toshiba · T-Mobile · Expedia · 1800 Contacts · Sears · Walgreens · Newegg · Sony · Home Depot · Amazon · Barnes and Noble · Apple Store.

Even BookBaby uses affiliate marketing – about 15% of our total business comes in through this network.

Make your product easy to buy.

That simple four letter word – easy – has different meanings for different products. For marketing your eBook, making it easy for readers to find and buy your books is critical to your success. Here are two ideas to help make your eBook easy to discover.



4 BE EVERYWHERE

Sure, having your book for sale on Amazon is most important. But there are dozens of other online bookstores serving foreign (non US) or niche markets. Think of it this way: Your book might be one of 1000s in Amazon for your particular genre or niche. But if you're also listed on, say, Kobo, you're now just one of 100s. Or maybe even 10s? The moral to the story: **Get your book listed in as many stores as you can.**

Bookstores, however, are just the tip of the iceberg for your winning distribution plan. If you've been building your own brand through Facebook or your own website, you should make your book available for sale on your own pages. After all, isn't this the ultimate goal in driving traffic to your site, page or blog?

But there is another powerful selling concept that is often overlooked by authors: Marketing your eBooks through an affiliate program. What exactly is affiliate marketing?

- An affiliate is someone who likes your eBook (or product) and wants to tell others about it. It could be a website owner featuring topics or subjects that are close matches to your book, or it might be a site that only features coupons and discount programs.
- They sign up through a third party network as an affiliate. After doing so, they receive a unique affiliate link backed with tracking codes which they use when mentioning (promoting) your eBook.
- If someone clicks through that link and purchases the eBook through any retail store where your eBook is up for sale, the affiliate receives whatever commission you have set.

That might sound complicated but it's easier than you think. For more details, I suggest you follow the ideas of a great blogger and eBook author, Amy Lynn Andrews. Here's a link to her step-by-step guide to setting up your own affiliate program.

<http://tinyurl.com/bxnfmq>



METADATA – HELPING YOUR READERS FIND YOU


Metadata remains one of most ignored components to eBook marketing and sales success. Metadata is all the information related to a specific book – from the title, author name, and ISBN all the way through

Accurate metadata is essential in your efforts to make it easy for readers to search, find and buy your book. Browsing through the online bookshelves usually begins with a search. If your metadata does not reflect what someone is searching for—no one will ever find your book. It does not matter if you have an eye-catching cover or attention-grabbing title. Without good information about your book, you'll be confined to the virtual back shelves in our modern bookstores.


How do you go about creating good metadata?

Here are a few ideas:

- **Research retailers.** Go to Amazon.com, Apple's iBookstore or BN.com and look up books like



As you begin to consider your book as a product, you'll come up with other ideas, tactics and techniques from the marketing playbook that could boost your sales.



the synopsis, marketing copy, author bio and cover images. In other words, Metadata is the who, what, when and where of your eBook. When your eBook is listed on an online store, customers will see an image of your cover, which they can click on for more information about your work and to access the actual content of your work.

Your Metadata will include:

- Author biography.
- The genre and subgenre of your book, so it can be categorized correctly in eBook stores.
- Short and long book descriptions that will be listed on your book's pages on our partners' stores.
- Keywords that will aid readers searching for your book on Amazon.

yours. What categories are they in? Study the book descriptions. See what words they've used to describe their books. Then search for books using the keywords you found using the keyword tool (see below).

- **Use Google's keyword tool.** The same one suggested in Step One. Look up words you feel describe your book and you'll quickly see whether people are searching for those words and what other words they are using.
- **Be consistent.** Don't put one book description on Amazon and change it around for B&N. Use similar wording for the boilerplate on your press release, book flyer, etc. Create a document or spreadsheet documenting the metadata and where you used it. This is especially important if you have several titles and a huge time saver as you expand your marketing.

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PICK ANY TWO

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Your results may vary

We have a saying around the office that fits here:

Speed. Price. Quality.

Pick any two.

Playing it out:

- You can do something quickly and cheaply – but the quality will be poor.
- You can produce a high quality product at a fast pace – but it will not come cheap.
- You can produce something that is high quality and cheap – but it will not happen quickly.

The same applies to marketing your eBook. Most authors opt for the last option because time is usually accepted as the tradeoff. And unless your book deals with a subject ripped

from today's headlines, you can afford to take the necessary time to develop your plan. There is no particular sales window that demands a forced schedule. Your book will be up at Amazon, B&N and all the others for as long as there is an internet.

This guide contains just a few ideas of how to reorient your thinking as a marketer of eBooks. As you begin to consider your book as a product, you'll come up with other ideas, tactics and techniques from the marketing playbook that could boost your sales.

But remember: There are no guarantees in life or even in marketing your eBook. That author from the LinkedIn group message is going to be waiting a long time before someone takes up his assignment.

When you think like a marketer, you're giving your eBook the best chance for success. It's all about putting yourself and your book in the best position to be discovered and read.