

## Book Marketing For The Bewildered

Or, my experience in selling books  
(/products/services)

Caveat: this is one's guys experience. (Sensei: one who has walked this path before. Per Jason Brick)

Note: the slides/notes and list are available at:  
[www.waltsocha.com/WM](http://www.waltsocha.com/WM)

A wise person learns from his/her mistakes. A super wise person learns from others' mistakes.

Jason gave a breakfast (or lunch?) presentation at WWC2017 and his comment about "who has walked this path before" resonated with me.

Should be also helpful for products (other than books) and services.

## Leading Questions

- Why am I here?
- Why should you listen to me?

Warning: Gonna throw these questions back at you!

Why am I here?

- I owe you
- Forces me to understand what I think I know.

Why should you listen to me?

- I've given presentations here before
- Two years of being a webinar junkie (see list of people to follow on a later slide)
- Been through it (first launch a disaster, second was okay, third one is gonna be great)

## Agenda

- [x] Two (leading) questions
- Assumptions
- Bewildering options
- Who is your Audience?
- What is a Brand/Platform?
- Promotion
- The “free” problem
- Dealing with Amazon: Author page, Categories, Keywords
- Website: SEO, Metadata
- Email List
- Growing an Email List
- Blog topics
- Typical Launch (and results)
- Post Launch
- List of people to follow on SM
- Checklist of small steps for the bewildered
- Brief demos: Amazon, Facebook Ads, WordPress, MailChimp, (Scrivener, Vellum)
- Goal:
  - Show & demonstrate tools and options so you can continue your climb up the learning curve
  - Provide (some) references (to check up on what I’m presenting and for self/further study)

I’ve broken every corporate rule on PPT presentations with the small font...

Goals:

...to show my interpretation of what the “experts” suggest

...provide references with which to make your own decision

The demos will depend on time. Not sure how far we’ll get.  
But will hope to finish in December.

Note: the demos will only be an overview. Hopefully enough to help you decide whether the various software resources will be part of your “plan.”

## Assumptions

- Gotta have a great book
  - Structured
  - Professionally edited (\$\$\$)
  - Great cover (\$\$)
  - Great blurb
  - Appropriate Front Matter and Back Matter
    - Including a CTA (Call To Action)
  - Professional formatted (\$)
    - eBooks have their expectations
    - Print books have their expectations
    - Hire it out...but limits responsiveness
    - Option: DIY...Vellum (or other options)

Story structure is how we think: *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human* by Jonathan Gottschall

Also: “*The Story Grid*” by Shawn Coyne

Also: “The 12 Key Pillars of Novel Construction” by C. S. Lakin

Suggestion: review front and back matter in the books you own (or survey at Powells)

Derek Doepker: “...never know how expensive something is just based on cost...”

Editing...because you already “know” what you’ve said, your eyes slide right over mistakes

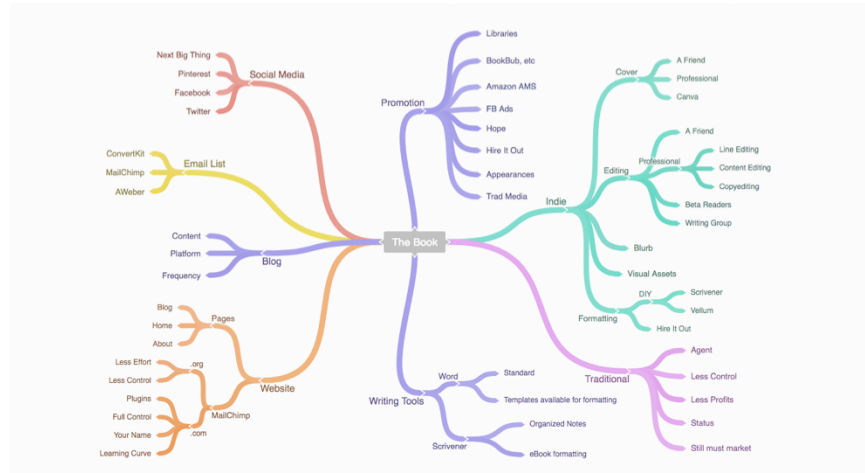
Don’t forget your “visual assets” (that match your cover): images for use on SM, banners for website, business card images.

Can format with Scrivener (but I find Vellum easier (and more \$\$))

Kristen Lamb: ...the structure of a blurb is super simple and can be summed up by 3P's made of 2-3 sentences each:

- Protagonist: Who are we rooting for and where are they in life when the book starts?
- Problem: What is the main problem of the book?
- Peril: How does the problem bring the protagonist to the brink of X?

## Some Tools & Options (coogle.it)



There are way plenty of other options.

This is just a sampling.

Coogle.it (...cute...)

## Do you know your Genre and your Audience?

- Affects your Brand (next slide)
- Affects your advertising
- Affects your SM choices
- Affects your Cover
- Affects your Blurb

I had a lot of stress over this as my book series is a bit of a mixed genre:  
...I consider them to be historic thrillers  
...but the element of time travel moves it into SciFi  
...character ages range from 16 to 65 (major) and down to 9 (minor)

Some genres are easy to identify:

...Romance  
...Murder mysteries  
...Erotica  
...YA

Note: each genre has its rules and expectations. **A survey of covers and blurbs may be educational**

Read books in your genre

Don't want to present yourself to the world as a fan of erotic if you're writing YA...

## Your Brand/Platform

- “How the public sees you”
  - Your interaction on SM
  - Your blog, articles, comments, persona, head shot
  - How search engines “see” you
- You want to ~~appear to~~ be knowledgeable
- And always be *relentlessly helpful*...! (Tim Grah)
- Back to those leading questions:
  - Why am I here?
    - Why am I writing this book?
  - Why listen to me?
    - Why should you spend your time/money on my book?

Genre, audience, and the reason you write will heavily influence how you present yourself (your public persona) on SM, etc.

You are judged by the public on your “brand”

Non-writing example: <https://sallysbakingaddiction.com/>

- Her email newsletter gives recipes & baking advice
- yeah, she wants you to buy her cookbook
- which I would if I needed a birthday/holiday gift
- Brand/platform: “expert” on baking goodies

## Promotion (1)

- Problem:
  - You are invisible
  - 4500 new books published every DAY...!
  - The public's attention span is in seconds
- Visibility on the Web (maybe):
  - Interact (SM: FB, Twitter, Pinterest, G+, etc)
    - Q: which ones?
    - A: whatever you're comfortable with
  - Owning your own name in Google's world
  - Always polite (and just ignore Trolls)
  - Always be *Relentlessly Helpful*

Not good. Not bad. Just is.

SM: Do what's comfortable. Don't spread yourself thin chasing every SM fad.

Inform and entertain!

Google yourself. You want to own the first page of results!



## Promotion (2)

- Which SM platform for promoting my book?
  - Whichever matches your plan
- How to develop a plan:
  - Some considerations:
    - Series (“free”?) or stand-alone (\$0.99 temp)
    - Comfort level with SM
    - DIY or hire it out
    - Mental and money budget
  - Check out (note: plenty of other resources):
    - Other authors
    - “*Your First 1000 Copies: The Step-by-Step Guide to Marketing Your Book*” by Tim Grahl
    - “How to Market a Book” (third edition) by Joanna Penn
    - Walt’s launch plan as a basic/minimalistic example

Your comfort level will shift upwards (outta the OMG zone) with a few webinars!

I will provide a list of people (that I follow) who I’ve found to be *(relentlessly) helpful* with climbing the learning curve.

Follow other authors. Note what they blog about. Study their Amazon author page. Notice how they promote.

Mike Dillard: ...the entire business plan can be summed up in 3-steps...

- Step 1: Build an email list.
  - Step 2: Build a great relationship with the people on that list.
  - Step 3: Market helpful products and services to that list.
- Yep. That's it. That's my entire business model.

## Promotion (3)

- Advertising
  - Facebook Ads
    - Facebook is an advertising platform
      - Very few “followers” see your posts
        - » Need to “boost” (for \$ of course)
      - Increases if viewers “like” or “repost”
      - Otherwise, maybe 5%?
    - Targeting!!!
    - Don’t forget a “plan”
  - Amazon Ads
    - AMS (Amazon Marketing Services)
    - Shows up as Sponsored Products
      - Visibility!

\*\*\*Go to Facebook and show ads.

\*\*\*Go to Amazon and show ads  
(try 1632 Eric Flint).

Follow Mark Dawson for FB ads advice. He’s *relentlessly helpful*! (Yeah, he’s gonna try to sell you his course (which I bought))

I didn’t have an advertising plan...and wasted \$

Need to know your demographics

## The “free” problem

- Need to give new readers a reason to invest their (scarce) time, (scarcer) money, and email address (precious) on an unknown author
- “Reader Magnets”
- “Free” helps
  - Certainly ain’t lucrative
  - Think of samples at the grocery store
- Easier if one is writing a series
- Options if writing a stand-alone book:
  - Backstories
  - Short stories (featuring the book’s character(s))

No way around this.

Still works.

Can give away other things than your book via Rafflecopter or KingSumo

No book yet? Then: preview chapters, deleted scenes, character histories, other author’s books (with permission), etc

May be best is Reader Magnet matches brand (my short story collection probably wasn’t a good RM for me).

## ISBNs

- The general consensus seems to be: get your own.
  - but \$\$\$
- And set up a Publishing House (not your name)
- Your own ISBN will make it easier to sell to bookstores and libraries...

Horribly expensive as a single (\$125). Better for ten. Reasonable at a hundred (\$6 but with high upfront cost).

A good review article:

<https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2010/11/isbn-101-for-self-publishers/>

...or google “Joel Friedlander ISBN”

My “publishing house” is Wyeast Press. And my ISBNs are all tied to that entity.

Unfortunately, ISBNs are not transferrable.

But at Bowker (aka “Bonkers” because of the price)

## Dealing with the Gorilla in the Room (1)

- Amazon is the major player
  - Probably the best place to start
  - Only interested in making money selling stuff
  - Search Engine with a “Shopping Cart”
- KDP (eBooks)
- CreateSpace (print books)
- Amazon Author Page
- Catagories
- Keywords

“Only wants to sell stuff” ...can match your intentions

\*\*\*Visit author page. Free billboard!

\*\*\*Visit KDP page.

\*\*\*Visit CreateSpace page.

**Catagories:** which shelf in the bookstore

**Keywords:** what words you use to ask the bookstore employee for a book on that shelf.

Note: some people advocate adding subtitles.

## Dealing with the Gorilla in the Room (2)

- Strong Suggestion:
  - Choose(/Write) a half-dozen short stories
  - Assemble in a Word Document
  - Import into Scrivener or Vellum
  - Created an eBook (other options: <https://goo.gl/MjRqEo>)
  - Created a cover in Canva
  - Write a blurb
  - Upload to Amazon KDP
  - Choose your two Categories
  - Choose your seven Keywords (Key Phrases)
  - Upload to Amazon CreateSpace
- Congratulations: You have just mastered Amazon!
  - Use as Reader Magnet if appropriate to brand and plan

The WM anthology is a great start. But nothing beats personal experience.

\*\*\*Show “Eclectic Shorts”. (Not sure about keeping it live...not part of my “brand”)

Comment about images:

...careful about using images from the web

...set your camera to high resolution (describe my cover problem)

Blurbs are hard. Write before/while writing your book.

<https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2017/08/mining-gold-taking-control-of-your-metadata/>

Pricing: maybe start at \$0.99 Then upload to Nook and/or Kobo at free. Then notify Amazon to price match (more practice!). Then, if it matches your novel, do \$5 FB ads targeting different demographics. Great practice (and development of confidence).

Optional: play with KDP Select. And set a “free” promotion. Again: great practice.

Note: doesn’t have to be just practice...goferit. Especially if part of brand.

# Websites

- URL (Uniform Resource Locator)• Back it up!!!
  - [www.firstlast.com](http://www.firstlast.com)
  - first@firstlast.com
- Website versus Blog
- Why WordPress
- Plugins (pre-written code to add functionality)
- SEO: Search Engine Optimization (huh?)
  - Metadata
  - Links
  - (or UDWAPSTSCFYB)
- Typical Website Pages
  - Home
  - Media Kit(/About/Contact)
  - Blog
  - Books(/Products/Services)
  - Landing Page (not part of menu, hidden)
  - Privacy policy (I'm still working on this one)

This is a couple hour presentation on its own.

Why WordPress? Just software. Can install on your own computer/server/host. Massive open-sourced support/plugins. 28% of the web. Even if Atomattic goes down, WordPress will continue.

WordPress.org:

- download the software on your own (rented) site
- control
- need URL, host
  - [www.firstlast.com](http://www.firstlast.com)
- plugins (Google “best WordPress plugins”)

WordPress.com:

...“WordPress” is in the name (can \$ it off)  
...no plugins  
...more limited  
...less mental overhead

SEO...confusing? Think of it as UDWAPSTSCFYB (use descriptive words and phrases so total strangers can find your book)

PG's website checklist: <https://goo.gl/DeRtXc>

## Email List

- You own your list
  - SM sites can “disappear”
  - SM can change
  - SM’s reach is very small
  - Backup your list
- People still respond to email message
- Must opt-in
- Potential subscribers need a reason to opt-in
- Must use an ESP (email service provider)
  - To avoid be regarded as spam
- Takes work & time to grow your list

MailChimp is easily an hour discussion.

\*\*\*Show email message sequence.

Mass mailings from an individual risks being labeled as SPAM. EMS has opt-in processes (and the reputation) to avoid that.

Options:

<https://janefriedman.com/mailchimp-alternatives/>

**The email list is constantly stated (by everyone I’m following) as the most important strategy/tool/method for marketing.**



## Growing an Email List

- Why should anyone give you their email address?
  - WIIFM (what's in it for me)
  - “Free” stuff (only if relevant)
  - Keep them by entertaining and/or informing
  - Be “relentlessly helpful”
- Send to MailChimp from your Landing Page

Landing pages need to be simple and not distracting.

\*\*\*Show landing page.

\*\*\*Show MailChimp: list, forms

## Maintain contact with your subs: Blogs

- What the hell to blog about?
  - Entertain and inform (your content)
    - Historic details
    - Location details
    - Reviews of books in your genre
  - Curate (someone else's content)
    - Articles related to your book's setting, social norms...
    - Videos on skills, medieval life, tour of locations...
- How often to blog?
  - Maybe every two weeks or every month?
  - Schedule with Buffer (Hootsuite, etc)
- Pull in random viewers with SEO (lots of searchable terms and lots of relevant links)

Non-fiction and fiction are two different animals.

\*\*\*Show examples from waltsocha.com

Do the leg work of finding the best, most appropriate content (curate) to share.

It ain't pie, go ahead and promote others.

Gold: getting other site to link to yours!!!

Ain't nothing gonna happen fast...

## A Minimalistic Example Launch

- Edited ✓
- Professional cover (and “visual assets”) ✓
- Formatted ✓
- Ask subscribers to join “Street Team”
  - Send advanced copy (1 month before Launch) to Street Team
  - Ask to be notified of any errant typos ASAP
  - Ask them to “buy” a free copy on Launch day
  - Ask them to post a review on Launch’s second day
- Upload to KDP Select (at least 3 days before Launch)
  - Make “free” for Launch days (3 to 5 days)
- Schedule FB ads for Launch Days
- Remind Street Team (a week before Launch)
- Post to whatever SM platform you use before and during Launch
- Remind Street Team to post reviews during Launch
- Launch Day: drink/smoke/worry/whatever
- Thank Street Team after Launch (include reminder to post a review)
- Obsessively monitor KDP reports

What I did for my second book.

First book? A disaster!

Kinda follows Tim Grahl’s *“Your First 1000 Copies: The Step-by-Step Guide to Marketing Your Book”* and simplified with *“Published”* by Chandler Bolt

No subs? Ask friends...especially any that read your genre.

\*\*\*Show KDP Reports.

Signings, Press Release, etc...no mental budget!

\*\*\*Amazon reviewers: show how to find? Not part of launch, but I did “reach out” to several (9). As far as I know, only 1 responded (but that was a 5 star review).

## Post Launch

- Need to maintain visibility
  - Blogs
    - Progress (probably just a mention)
    - Location/history details
    - Other books in the same genre
      - Not in competition! (it ain't pie)
    - Curate other people's content
    - (A discreet request to post a review)
  - Monthly FB ads (weekly?)
  - Amazon ads (AMS)
- Revisit Plan
- Stuff to try
  - Periodic promotions?
  - Interact on Goodreads?
  - BookBub?
- Future?
  - Libraries
  - AudioBooks
  - Pre-orders
  - Distribution avenues that will work with bookstores
  - Other SM platforms?

Don't want your subs to forget you while you're writing the next book!

The Plan: using a “free” first book to either increase mailing list or increase Amazon ratings...

Preorders:

<https://www.popediting.net/beyond-sales-3-powerful-benefits-of-preorders-for-newbie-indie-authors>

Haven't really interacted on Goodreads. Need to do so.

Bookbub = \$. And hard to be accepted.

I'm not into book signings...

## Some suggested people to follow (SM, articles, webinars, books)

- Jane Friedman (*"How To Publish Your Book"*)
- Joanna Penn (J F Penn) (Indie)
- Mark Dawson (FB advertising)
- Derek Murphy (Indie) (*"Book Marketing Is Dead"*)
- Tim Grahll (*"Your First 1000 Copies: The Step-by-Step Guide to Marketing Your Book"*)
- Derek Doepker (*"Why Authors Fail"*)
- Chandler Bolt (*"Published"*)
- Joel Friedlander (covers, formatting, general) <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/>
- Mary Rosenblum (Indie, **editing**)
- Sylvia Frost Designs (**covers**)
- C S Lakin (writing, I have several of her books)
- Joan Stewart (publicity)
- <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/>
- Lorelle VanFossen (WordPress) <https://lorelle.wordpress.com/>
- Amy Collins (libraries)
- Nick Stephenson (*"Reader Magnets"*)
- Larry Brooks <http://storyfix.com/>

These individuals provide useful content.

Yes, most are likely to try to sell you something but only after they've been ***relentlessly helpful***.

I've bought stuff from several.

Free resources:

*"Why Authors Fail"* by Derek Doepker

*"Reader Magnets"* by Nick Stephenson

*"Book Marketing Is Dead"* by Derek Murphy

*"Your First 1000 Copies"* (frequently free) by Tim Grahll

Check out their webinars. Yes, they will try to sell you something at the end...but their "free" content is valuable (and relentlessly helpful...!).

## So How The Hallibut Does One Deal With All These Tasks/Skills?

Q: How does one eat ~~an elephant~~ a truck load of tofu?

A: One bite at at time.

The list of “bites” is too long of a list for a slide. Find as Word document at [waltsocha.com/WM](http://waltsocha.com/WM).

These are mostly a series of small (usually!) action items clumped into general activities. If confused, bewildered, and/or don't know what to do...just work on the next item.

Check each item off as time/energy/mental budget allows...

Alter/modify/edit/rearrange to your heart's content.

\*\*\*Show list as Word doc.

These are just my suggestions. If you asked 10 different published authors, you'd probably get 20 different lists.

Complete in any order.

Maybe one per week? About a year's worth...

Develop the habit: a step at a time. (Plan the whole sequence, but only worry about the next single step...)

Did I Mention That You Should Be  
Relentlessly Helpful?



Reminder:

- Entertain
- Inform

And did I mention “*The 12 Pillars of Novel Construction*” by C S Lakin?

## Download slides/list

Go to [www.waltsocha.com/WM](http://www.waltsocha.com/WM)

- For slides with presenter notes (as a PDF)
- For your action item list (as a Word doc)
- Note: this is a “hidden” page...as it’s not part of the website’s menu

### **Tangential:**

Recently read (okay, I listened to the audiobook version of) “The Successful Novelist: A Lifetime of Lessons about Writing and Publishing” by David Morrell. I highly recommend it.

<http://www.creativindie.com/437-book-marketing-tips-from-publishing-experts/>

### **And some self-promotion:**

My first book, “Conflict,” is perma-free on Kindle, Kobo, and Nook:

Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Conflict-Crossover-Walt-Socha-ebook/dp/B01MSJ69DC/>

Nook:

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/conflict-walt-socha/1125130566?ean=2940156877218>

Kobo:

<https://www.kobo.com/us/en/ebook/conflict-23>

The second, “Contact,” is exclusive on Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/Contact-Crossover-Book-Walt-Socha-ebook/dp/B073WRFQYP/>

\*\*\*Show how to simplify an Amazon link