



# News & Views

St. Louis Publishers Association

February 2013

stlouispublishers.org

**WEDNESDAY, February 13, 2013, 7pm**

## ▶ Beyond the Book: How to Write Killer Book Titles and Back Cover Copy, Assemble Media Kits, and Craft a Fresh Message for Your Backlist Titles.

Writing a book is easy, compared to selling it. This month, we focus on how to step out of “author mode” and write about your book in ways that motivate readers to buy it.

Writing “marketing copy” is a specialized discipline, and when you understand how to think through the process, you can connect with your reader in influential ways. In this session you’ll learn how to create compelling marketing copy, ranging from a strong title to back cover copy to positioning yourself as an interview guest.

We’ll cover:

- The strategic approach to writing about your book that makes readers want to buy
- How co-creation is changing the way products are marketed today
- Breathing new life into a backlist title
- Creating marketing material that people will want to keep
- Putting the tools the media needs at their fingertips

Join us on February 13. You’ll leave equipped with tools to help you think about your book in new ways that can help you sell more books.

**Sue Sylvia** is the Copy Editing Supervisor at Momentum, a global marketing agency, where she helps craft the messaging for clients as diverse as American Express, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, UPS and Smucker’s. She is also a publisher (Staircase Press) and book designer. Sue designs books and marketing material for many small publishers and loves mentoring authors and publishers on marketing and launching their books. She is a former member of the SLPA board.

## ▶ SLPA Meetings

SLPA meets on the second Wednesday of the month:

Brentwood Community Center  
2505 S. Brentwood Blvd., Room 101  
Brentwood, MO 63144  
(Enter through the door closest to the flagpole)

Doors open for networking at 6:30pm and meeting begins at 7pm. The formal meeting concludes at about 8:30pm with networking continuing after the meeting.

Our regular meetings are free to members. Guests – \$10 at the door, cash or check only.

## ▶ How To Stop Thinking Like An Author

by Sue Sylvia

I’ve worked with many authors who can write a terrific book, but when faced with “how to explain” their book to someone else, they’re completely stuck. Knowing how to craft an “elevator speech” requires a different kind of thinking—and you really have to think put yourself in an outsider’s shoes to do it well. You have to take the topic that you’ve been laser-focused on for a few years while writing and explain it in a sentence to someone who might never have heard of your topic before. Most of us are not used to



Sue Sylvia

thinking in sound bites, but our world today is fueled by this kind of communication. Where do you start?

Step outside yourself. No one cares that you just spent six years writing a book. However, your reader will care if you deliver the message that there’s fascinating information on that specific issue he wants to know about and it can be found in your new book. It’s all about your reader! And you’re not an author—you’re a Subject Matter Expert. You know something your reader wants to know. Embrace that! Focus on what makes your book unique and lead with that angle. They will buy your book. You’ll be asked to do interviews.

It’s easier to see how this works if you’re writing non-fiction. But if you’re writing a memoir, fiction or a children’s story, you need to focus on an intangible—how will it make your reader feel? Draw them in with that. Think about how the legendary Harley-Davidson sells motorcycles. Visit their website. Yes, they offer up plenty of facts and specs about the different models, but the Harley mystique transcends the machine. They’ve spawned an entire culture! How did they do it? In reality, they are not “selling motorcycles,” they are “advocating freedom.” That may sound weird, but think about it and you’ll understand what I mean. This is how companies compel you to want their product more than the other brand every day.

You can apply this same kind of thinking to your modest (or non-existent) marketing budget. What does your reader want—facts, feelings—that your book offers them?

OK, now let’s think about what all that means in sound bites. Write 250 words about what your book offers your reader. Now pare that down to 100 words. Next, do one sentence. Six bullets. Now step away for a day, come back and edit them. Keep crafting. Keep these

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handy and now you're equipped to communicate in any format! You can apply this discipline to any book, no matter how long ago you published, but the best time to apply this discipline is while you're still developing your book. It should not change your "author voice," but it may influence the way you deliver your material. It could even influence your book's title. If the title of this article had been "How To Write Book Marketing Copy," would you have been as interested in reading it?

Sue Sylvia is the Copy Editing Supervisor at Momentum, a global marketing agency, where she helps craft messaging for clients as diverse as American Express, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, UPS and Smucker's. She's also a publisher and book designer who mentors other authors and publishers on marketing and launching their books. <http://www.StaircasePressDesign.com>

## Interested in Getting Your Book Published?

**March is Small Press Month**, and the St. Louis Publishers Association wants to help authors learn about book publishing. On March 2 from 8-12 we are offering **Getting Your Book Published: What You Need to Know** through the St. Louis Community College. In this four hour workshop we will cover traditional publishing versus self-publishing, how editing and good design can make your book look great, options for getting the book into print, eBook production and hints for book marketing. The cost is \$39, and adults 60 and over pay just \$25.50. For more information contact Kim Wolterman at [membership@stlouispublishers.org](mailto:membership@stlouispublishers.org) or visit the St. Louis Community College website at <http://www.stlcc.edu/continuing-education/classes/index.asp?Cat=XWRT>



Kim Wolterman



The 2013 SLPA board held its annual planning meeting in early January. The St. Louis Publishers Association is in good hands with this vibrant group. Stayed tuned for some exciting speakers and events this year. Pictured from left to right: Jackie Trottmann, Nancy Baumann, Kevin Ericson, Kim Wolterman, Warren Martin, Linda Austin, Bob Baker, Tim Hill, and Cathy Wood.

## ► News You Can Use

The following is a selection of articles, resources, and information to help you CREATE, PRODUCE, and MARKET your books.

### CREATING

#### 5 Things That Should be on Every Writer's Bucket List

January 3, 2013

*Dana Sitar*

"Self-publishing doesn't have to mean publishing and selling a book or novel on your own. It can be as simple as publishing a post to a blog, writing a newsletter, or printing an informational pamphlet." Read more: <http://www.writersdigest.com/online-editor/5-things-that-should-be-on-every-writers-bucket-list>

### PRODUCING

#### To Produce Writing, Toughen Your Resolve and Reign in Your Curiosity

July 12, 2009

*Nancy Whichard*

"To keep yourself from drifting away from your writing and into checking out ever more research, know the focus of your writing session and stick to it."

Read more: <http://successfulwritingtips.com/2009/07/12/to-produce-writing-toughen-your-resolve-and-reign-in-your-curiosity/>

### MARKETING

#### Platform Doesn't Have to be a Four-Letter Word

*Ted Fox*

"When I set out to write my first book, a humor memoir, I thought that writing the book would be the biggest hurdle on my inevitable ascent to the bestseller list. Then I started querying..."

Read more: <http://www.writersdigest.com/editor-blogs/guide-to-literary-agents/platform-doesnt-have-to-be-a-four-letter-word>

## ► The SLPA Mission

The St. Louis Publishers Association empowers authors and publishers to create and market quality products and books. A nationally recognized organization, the SLPA provides educational, informational resources on publishing. Through its monthly meetings, the organization provides networking opportunities for people involved in all aspects of the publishing industry.

Visit the SLPA website at [www.stlouispublishers.org](http://www.stlouispublishers.org).

## ► Questions about SLPA?

### Contact Membership Chair:

Kim Wolterman, [membership@stlouispublishers.org](mailto:membership@stlouispublishers.org)

SLPA News & Views is produced and distributed by the **Communications Committee:**

Manager: Jackie Trottmann, [jackietrottmann@gmail.com](mailto:jackietrottmann@gmail.com)

Content Coordinator: Tim Hill, [thejoethecrab@gmail.com](mailto:thejoethecrab@gmail.com)

Designer: Cathy Wood, [woodce@swbell.net](mailto:woodce@swbell.net)

Publicity: Jackie Trottmann, [publicity@stlouispublishers.org](mailto:publicity@stlouispublishers.org)

**Members:** Get your article featured in the SLPA newsletter and posted on our blog. E-mail Jackie Trottmann at [communications@stlouispublishers.org](mailto:communications@stlouispublishers.org) for more information.

