



News & Views

▶ Empowering authors and publishers to create and market books

AUGUST 2011

August 10 meeting: Field trip to No Waste Publishing!

Each August we typically conduct our monthly meeting onsite at a local company to provide our members and guests the opportunity to see firsthand some aspect of the publishing industry. This year, we're headed to:

 **No Waste Publishing/Creative Imaging**
1568 Fencorp Dr. • Fenton MO 63026
Toll Free 1•866•845•BOOK
www.nowastepublishing.com

Our hosts at No Waste provide printing services for independent publishers and have years of experience working with publishing projects of all types.

There is no charge for this event, so please join us as a guest of SLPA and No Waste Publishing for refreshments, tours, and great conversation to get your book into print!

Doors open at 6:30 pm for networking. Formal meeting to begin at 7:00 pm. 

Book learning

“What will you take away from tonight’s meeting?”

Members and guests of SLPA were asked this question following the July presentation *Aiming for an agent/publisher: The query letter story*. Here’s what a few folks had to say:



“Jennifer provided wow factor to basic tips for writing query letters.”
—Sandy Shaw



“I’m intrigued by the idea of providing giveaways to my readers”
—Carol Jackson

Special event October 1: Book Masters Marketing Summit

Authors, do you want to sell more books?

Are you selling all the books you would like to? Would you like to take your sales to their highest level?

If you answered yes, then **September 30th** and **October 1st** should be blocked on your calendar. **Dan Poynter, Judith Briles and Brian Jud are coming to St. Louis.** The Three Masters of Book Marketing and Publishing will give you everything you need to know to make a big difference in your sales. Special discount for SLPA members!

September 30th: Optional dinner with the Masters:

Starts at 6.30 p.m. This is your opportunity to discuss your book project with Judith, Brian and Dan over dinner.

October 1st: It’s an all-day summit.

Book Masters Marketing is “content-heavy” with personal interaction. Bring lots of paper to take notes. Bring two pens in case one runs out of ink. Get answers to your questions about how to sell your books. You will leave with enough tips, hints and plans to keep you busy for weeks—and make more money for years.

Event location: Sheraton Clayton Plaza Hotel
7730 Bonhomme Ave, Clayton MO 63105

See the agenda at: <http://mastersofbookmarketing.com/agenda/>
For more information email: BrianJud@bookmarketing.com 

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Tough love: Things no one is brave enough to tell self-published authors

by M.J. Rose and Amy Edelman

Part 3 of a 3-part series

Part three in a series about what authors who are self-publishing need to know—not sugar coated and not exaggerated. (Part one: *You need to write a great book and self publish for the right reasons*, see *SLPA News & Views* June 2011. Part two: we covered *Damn it, learn the business*, and *Watch for pickpockets*, see *SLPA News & Views* July 2011.)

What's next?

No one owes you anything

Like we said—and it bears repeating—even if writing is an art, publishing is a business. Even self-publishing. So you need to act like a business person, with all the people you deal with, and treat everyone with respect.

From the copy editor, to the people the people you try to get reviews from—don't act as if anyone owes you anything. They don't. Yes, you may be broke. And yes, your book may be the best thing since *Harry Potter*. But everyone has to make a living. Don't ask for favors from strangers. Don't ask them to lower their prices for you for no good reason. Even if you are in your bedroom wearing bunny slippers and pjs—when you email the cover designer you need to treat her right if you want her to treat you right back.

There's an old saying... you get what you pay for. And if you aren't willing to pay for things that are important (an editor, a cover designer, pinpointed advertising, a publicist to help you get reviews) you may as well file the book into a folder on your desktop and get a job at the Gap.

Embrace the control

One of the biggest differences between you and a traditionally published author is that a self-pubbed author is responsible for everything. Not just writing the book—but cover design, editing, producing, distribution and publicity as well.

An author can look at that as either a good or a bad thing. There are many traditionally published authors who have hated the cover their publisher's decided on. Or the title or the marketing or the advertising. But there was nothing they could do about it.

As a self-published author you have the choice. Embrace the power to create a book that is truly yours. Don't be a whiner or a copycat. Remember, for every author who gives you his tried and true method of how to do it, there will be another author who did it exactly opposite and succeeded too. Learn what you can but be true to your vision.

Money is tight and books—especially these days—are bountiful. People don't buy books—even \$.99 ones—without reading an excerpt or a few reviews on the page at the online bookstore. Ten thousand people may click on your book, but not one will hit “buy” if it doesn't grab their attention, intrigue them, amuse them, or move them.

Writing a book is a creative process. Think of publishing and selling your book as an extension of that process.

Not everyone is Amanda Hocking

Amanda Hocking is one in a million. Literally. Over a million books were self published last year. No one else even came close to the number of copies she sold.

In fact you might be surprised to know how few authors sold more than a thousand copies.

In a recent article in the *Washington Post*, Smashwords founder Mark Coker said, “We have less than 50 people who are making more than \$50,000 per year. We have a lot who don't sell a single book.”

Amazon's Jeff Bezos concurred: “There are a lot of books, even low-priced, on Kindle that are not selling at all.”

As we've said in *part one* and *part two*, you shouldn't self publish because you are impatient. Or because you don't like rejection.

And you shouldn't self publish based on the exceptions either.

It's easy to name the five or six authors who have gotten famous self-publishing. But they are still the exception. The hard cold truth is success is a long shot whether you self publish or traditionally publish.

So if you decide to do it, please, do it for the right reasons.

Learn everything you can. Arm yourself with knowledge. Be rational. Be careful. Be bold. Embrace the creativity and celebrate the accomplishment because no matter who publishes you—there's nothing like setting out to write a book and achieving your goal. 

M.J. Rose is the internationally bestselling author of 11 traditionally published novels, one self-published novel and one self-published nonfiction book—*Buzz Your Book*. In 1999, Rose's novel, *Lip Service*, was the first self-published book (e and print) to be discovered online and bought by a traditional publishing house. Rose is also the founder of the first marketing company for authors—**AuthorBuzz.com**—and one of the founding board members of ITW (International Thriller Writers). She can be reached at AuthorBuzzco@gmail.com.

Amy Edelman is the author of two traditionally published books and one indie that she sold to a traditional publisher. She has been a publicist for two decades and is the founder of **IndieReader.com**. She can be reached at Amy@indiereader.com

Workshops add value to your book marketing plan



by Wes Gilbert

Your book is written. Edited. Galley approved. Publication is imminent. You have a marketing plan, and it's well under way.

You've kept the world informed with progress updates to your Facebook, Twitter,

Goodreads, and other social media accounts. A press release is a click away from sending. You've scheduled a blog tour, radio interviews, and you'll be on local TV program in the wee hours of a Sunday morning. Bookstore readings will be here before you know it. You continue to blog on your own site, anticipating the launch.

It seems like you have all available avenues in line to help make your book a success. Or do you? What haven't you considered adding to your book marketing plan?

If asked, most authors would have to say "writing workshops."

Marketing well means utilizing every opportunity to connect with people. Working together, different aspects of your plan provide a network of sales and promotion possibilities. Holding writing workshops are a great way to build direct relationships with the people who are your book's target market. Those relationships can build your credibility, mailing lists, further connections, and book sales.

Teaching or facilitating a writing workshop adds another valuable resource to your marketing methods. Your promotion of the event via tweets, blog posts, social media status updates, and more brings your book (and services) in front of readers and writers in your target market. And at the workshop itself, you are connecting with people who have chosen to be there, and who could become your most ardent readers, fans, or allies.

As an experienced writing workshop attendee, teacher, and facilitator, I can tell you it takes a bit of time and effort, especially when you're putting together your first one. Beyond that, it gets much easier, because you have the materials to reuse or revise, the experience of the process to measure and determine its success, and the additions to your marketing lists to bring more exposure to everything you're doing now, and in the future.

Here's a brief "how-to-overview" you can use to get started on your workshop.

• **Decide what kind of workshop best suits you (and your writing):** Start with your book. Is it a novel? Do a workshop on characters or revision. A non-fiction history of local artists? Ask

one of them to help you do an art workshop and speak about her work in conjunction with your book. I offer services like editing and blogging for businesses, so I could easily hold workshops on working with editors or blogging effectively. You can also partner with another 'expert.' I prefer fiction, and I have a friend whose strength is non-fiction. If we collaborate, we can double our marketing list by promoting to those interested in multiple aspects of writing. Use your imagination, and you'll find you could use many topics to workshop related to your book.

- **Develop your workshop material:** After you decide on the workshop, you can gather your resources. There's this little thing called the internet, and you can find material there to teach almost anything you want. (If you use anything from any website or physical source not your own, be sure to fully credit and/or ask those involved) It's a good idea to plan your material based on how long the workshop will run. If I'm doing a workshop on my own, I'll plan for a two hour minimum or four hour maximum time frame. You'll choose yours based on what you'll teach and how much time you think you can fill with interesting and effective content and interaction. Depending on how much material you have, that could be multiple days over several weeks.
- **Choose your venue:** Where would you hold your workshop? Check out local venues like galleries, coffee houses, or arts centers. You may pay a nominal fee like 10% of gross, or perhaps be allowed to use their space for free (or consumption of on-site consumables). Some local colleges offer adult courses outside of their standard curriculum, which may be an opportunity for you.
- **Promotion, invites, registrations and cost:** An invitation sent to your list (and social media) announcing the workshop is yet another way to get an impression in front of your readers, followers, customers, and/or clients. Facebook, Twitter, other social media can help get the word out. Think about other ways you market your book, and consider if those same methods fit in marketing your workshop. Promote via all channels that will reach your audience, including local online calendars and lists. Be sure to send it out a minimum of six to eight weeks ahead of the date (two months is a good first teaser contact).
- **Registrations are easier than ever:** A Google search will lead you to online event services like EventBrite and others. As with venues, many are free or charge a small percentage, but the tools at your disposal with e-mail capture, automatic registrations and payments, and event tutorials can make it cost-effective.
- **Set your price point to match what you provide:** I go with around \$10 an hour, which is reasonable for what I teach. \$10

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Workshops add value ... *continued*

for two hours, plus event site fees, means a price of about \$25. Unless you're putting on a full-blown day-or-weekend-long workshop for thirty or more (which you may be able to do down the road), expect this experience to pay off more in relationships and after-event sales than provide enough to pay the rent or phone bill. Which means you can also consider doing it for free. It's your workshop, you have to create it to make it what you need it to be.

- **Follow up:** Send those e-mails or thank you notes to make a post-workshop connection while it's still a fresh experience (within a week at most). Thank them and give them further value by providing sample chapters, your presentation, an offer for books or services, or even something as simple as a list of writing-related links you like. Make it brief, but also consider asking them for a social media connection or to subscribe to your blog. Be sure to announce any future events like appearances, signings, special eBook sales, etc.

A few other things to consider in planning a workshop: add value for participants with handouts, or offer to e-mail them a freebie. Be accessible afterwards. People may have questions, and they like access to an expert (as you've just proven yourself to be). Consider filming the workshop and providing the video online or marketing it separately, using the materials you created.

Now go, and market your book and yourself via workshops. Whatever form it takes, be sure to make it fun and enjoyable for your attendees and yourself. The benefits of more relationships, more connections, and more book sales, are waiting. 

Wes Gilbert is a freelance writer and editor, published writer, writing workshop teacher, and former fiction editor. He's writing a mystery novel, ghostwriting another, and blogging for business(es) and pleasure. For services or to read other writings, visit wesgilbert.com. Contact for links or reprints at weswriter@aol.com.

What's ahead?

September 14 meeting: Public appearances as a book marketing tool

Your role in book marketing may include many public appearances. Bookstore events, conferences, service clubs and libraries offer many opportunities to promote your book. This meeting will cover how to get the most out of these situations.



How long should your ebook be? 4 answers

by Judy Cullins

I get this question often as a book coach, so I decided to let your know my 2 cents. There's no hard and fast rule on what length an ebook should be, but from my 12 years as a book coach online, I know these ideas will help you decide.

Decide which number is best for your ebook's purpose!

1. A 10-20 page ebook is a good length if your purpose is to use it as a bonus to web visitors when they opt-in and subscribe to your site or ezine. We call it an "ethical bribe."

This book can also be sold as a leader on Kindle for 99 cents or \$2.99, depending on its specific help to the readers. General titles don't usually sell as well as specific ones. Within these low cost or no cost ebooks, you need to add some powerful promo that leads the reader to check out your print books and other packages and services.

2. A 30-120 page ebook (best under 100 pages usually) can sell well. Especially if it offers specific information your audience has to have! Then, sell it at a higher price from \$15.95 to \$39.95. Higher for ebook courses and other training packages.

3. A 20-30 page ebook with a specific title and specific audience can sell well through Kindle from \$2.99 to \$9.99 for best commissions.

4. Aim for your sweet spot. It could be 70 pages or 99 pages. If your book is offered at your site in PDF you have an advantage because it's totally downloadable and printable, and can be ordered any time. Most buyers will print up to 70 pages of a book if they want it bad enough.

Since ebook opportunities are everywhere, you can get started today with any of these choices! 

Judy Cullins' Bio: My life's mission and passion is to help unknown authors create the income they deserve, build their confidence, writing skills, and marketing tactics to get their unique, useful story out to their book's audience who wants an outstanding life and work.

Questions about SLPA?

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