



News & Views

► Empowering authors and publishers to create and market books

DECEMBER 2011

December 14 meeting: Holiday Party and Networking Blitz



“Speed Dating” and “Speed Interviewing” are popular ways to help folks meet others who share their interests, or to find the right employment fit. At the SLPA’s December meeting, we’ll take that fun and fast-paced concept and turn it into a great way to meet fellow authors and other publishing pros to share ideas on our book projects.

Whether you have an idea for a book, the finished product, or are somewhere in the publishing process, this meeting is an excellent way to meet the right folks to move your project forward. We welcome writers, editors, graphic artists, printers, book coaches, marketing gurus, and creative souls to join the conversations.

Our meeting will include tips on how to get the most out this networking blitz, holiday treats, and door prizes. **Be sure to bring along business cards, flyers, and book samples.**

Our facilitators:

Maria Rodgers O'Rourke is SLPA vice president. A contributor to *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, she created the *Prepare Your Heart* series of devotional books. Catch Maria's *Everyday Inspired* daily podcast series and the *Prepare Your Heart and Home for a Great Christmas* show at BlogTalkRadio.com.

Bob Baker is a full-time author who has developed a successful niche writing and speaking about music marketing. He is about to start his fifth term as president of the St. Louis Publishers Association. Bob's books include *55 Ways to Promote & Sell Your Book on the Internet* and *Guerrilla Music Marketing Handbook*. Get access to Bob's materials at FullTimeAuthor.com and TheBuzzFactor.com.

SLPA meets on the second Wednesday of the month:
Brentwood Community Center
2505 S. Brentwood Boulevard, Brentwood, MO 63144

Doors open for networking at 6:30 P.M. and meeting begins at 7:00 P.M. The formal meeting concludes at about 8:30 with networking continuing after the meeting.

Our regular meetings are free to members.

Guests - \$10.00 at the door, cash or check only.



The top 4 book marketing tactics in today's world

by John Kremer

Here are the top four book promotion activities you can engage in to sell more books in today's world...

1. Speak. Speaking builds a word-of-mouth army better than anything else. Speak locally—at garden clubs, libraries, bookstores, Rotary clubs, JCs, poetry nights, story swaps, book club meetings, etc. Then expand out to a wider area, to nearby cities, to nearby states. Eventually, expand out to an even wider audience.

When someone hears you speak, they become a bigger fan than if they had just read your book. If they like you when they hear you speak, they will tell ten times more people than by just reading your book.

2. Book yourself on national TV. TV is still the largest mass market media. It still reaches more people than any other media—and with more impact. It's worth spending the time contacting the ten or twenty news and talk shows that reach your audience. For most national TV shows, you can get the contact information in one of two ways: 1. from their websites, and 2. via your network of friends and fellow authors.

Your appearance on one major TV show will not only expose you to millions of viewers, but it also opens the door to dozens and sometimes hundreds of other media: newspapers, magazines, radio, more TV shows, etc.

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3. Create relationships with high-traffic websites. How many major high-traffic websites that attract your target reader have you created relationships with? Are these real relationships where you contribute content to them on a regular basis? In today's world, Internet relationships are the key to marketing success.

Uncover five to ten top websites that already reach the audience you want to reach. Look over their sites until you find a way to contact someone behind the site—a webmaster, an editor, the founder. Then email them with an offer of free content for their readers: an interview with you, a review copy of your book, a free article (that is really good), some tips for their readers, a Q&A column on your specialty, etc. Their obligation, in return, is to link to your website or sales page.

4. Do a Superstar Blog Tour. Or a Mega Blog Tour. Or a Blogpalooza. I'm not talking about the old-style humdrum virtual book tour of 15 or 20 blogs. I'm talking about an event blog tour that creates Internet buzz on a major scale. Event blog tours can build brands, create incredible website traffic, and sell tons of books.

The neat thing is that effective event blog tours take less time to carry out than the traditional Amazon Bestseller Campaign – and are almost always more effective in selling books, building a brand, and driving traffic.

Conclusion

These four book marketing techniques work for almost any kind of book: fiction, nonfiction, memoirs, children's books, how-to, spiritual, business, even cookbooks. You don't have to do all four. Start with one and work it hard – you'll get better results than doing Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, EzineArticles, or other Internet marketing flavors of the week. 

John Kremer is the author of *1001 Ways to Market Your Books*. You'll find plenty of tips and resources his site: www.bookmarket.com.

Have you heard of Goodreads?

Goodreads is a free website for book lovers. Members recommend books, compare what they're reading, track what they've read and would like to read, form book clubs and more. Even better for authors is the fact that the website offers an Author Program. This free feature enables authors to reach out to their readers and promote their books. Authors can publicize upcoming events, post videos, share book excerpts and blog. Check out their website at www.goodreads.com to see if this is something you would like to add to your marketing arsenal. 

The art of the start for writers & authors

By Bob Baker

In one way I feel blessed. But that doesn't mean I am off the hook. Not by a long shot.

Let me clarify... **I have rarely encountered the malady known as "writer's block."** If anything, I am usually cursed with having too many potential ideas to write about. So coming up with the right words to express what I want to communicate has rarely been a problem.

But... **What I do suffer from is something you might call "starter's block."**

In other words, I often have a resistance to starting the writing process. Like when I'm working on a book project, I'll find lots of other things I need to do before working on the chapter at hand.

I'll check email, update Twitter, log into Facebook, eat a snack, make a phone call, see if the snail mail has arrived, rearrange my sock drawer—anything to deter me. Can you relate?

I usually know what topic I'm going to write about. That's not what stops me. The block comes because I put off starting to write.

When I finally commit and say, "**Enough with the distractions! It's time to sit my butt down and type,**" an interesting thing happens.

At first, I grudgingly write an opening line for the section I need to work on. The sentences get pecked out slowly at first, as I rationally search for word choices that express the idea I want to get across.

These opening lines lead to other ideas that further flesh out the concept. Then some word or phrase triggers an association I hadn't thought of before, and it sends me off on an expected tangent that magically reinforces the message.

Then I'm off and running. That's when I get into an almost cosmic state of flow. **The writing then ceases to be a mechanical task and transforms into a heightened state of consciousness** as my fingertips race to keep up with the ideas I'm downloading.

This is the fun part of writing. It's at times like these, when I'm fully engaged in capturing the river of ideas, that I remember why I'm blessed to make a living doing this. I feel completely on purpose—like it's what I'm meant to do.

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The art of the start ... *continued*

And I believe you can and should feel the same way when you write!

But here's the key thing to understand about this process:

To reach that magical state of flow, you must START writing before you actually feel that way.

Too many writers wait to feel inspired before they'll even start putting words on paper (or on the screen). That's rarely worked for me.

Most of the time, it only comes when my butt hits the chair and my fingers hit the keyboard.

Learn to master the art of the start. It's the key to getting things done and being a prolific writer and author! 

Bob Baker is a full-time author who has developed a successful niche writing and speaking about music marketing and self-promotion for songwriters, musicians, and bands. He is about to start his fifth term as president of the St. Louis Publishers Association. Get access to Bob's articles, ezine, blog, podcast, and video clips at FullTimeAuthor.com and TheBuzzFactor.com.

12 rules for writing a great blog

By Kim Pearson

If you're struggling to keep up with writing your blog, here are 12 ideas that will help you write a blog that is compelling, powerful, and fun to write.

As a ghostwriter and ghost-blogger, people pay me to write for them. This means I cannot write sloppily, even if I'm tired. I cannot wait for the Muse to strike, because I have deadlines. My blog posts need to be compelling, powerful, sometimes funny, and most of all moving. Every time.

This isn't easy. To make it easier, I came up with 12 rules for writing blog posts, which I try to follow. (I'm not perfect, so I don't always follow them all.) If you're struggling to keep up with writing your blog, you might be interested in my rules. Here they are:

1. Not too long!

Blog posts are usually from 200 to 500 words. Rarely more than 800 words. Any longer, and people tend to skim or skip them. They look like too much work. If you have more to say, write an article, and if you have a lot more to say, write a book. When writing a blog post, be succinct, clear, and get your point across fast. The web is not made for leisurely reading. Think of your readers hopping like fleas from one blog to another; a sip of

blood here, another sip there. If the blood is tasty, they might stay longer, but you know the old saying—the blood is always redder on the other blog. (Actually I made that up.)

2. Be yourself. You're not a corporation or a king.

You are an individual, writing for other individuals, no better and probably no worse than you. It's your job to connect with them on a personal level so they feel they know you. Whenever possible, use "I" and "you". Share your opinions. Share bits of your story. Relate points of your post to your own life if possible. If your blog is for an organization, you can use the royal "we" but make sure your readers know who the "we" represents. And don't pontificate and don't preach. Don't be a know-it-all. Do you really know it all? Of course you don't, no one does. And no one likes one, either.

3. Be funny, and if you can't be funny, be wry.

Humor attracts. You don't have to make your readers hurt their cheek muscles, but a snort or two is good. A self-deprecating sense of humor, poking a little fun at your own missteps, often makes people like you. They'll want to keep reading just to see what you'll say next—so they can repeat it to their friends and sound funny themselves. Who doesn't like to laugh?

4. Know your readers and what they want, not what you think they need.

You may think everyone should be interested in what you have to say—but this isn't real. Be clear on who you are writing for. What do your readers care about? Who are most likely to be attracted to your subject? Who do you really want to reach? Men or women? Young, middle-aged, older? From a specific geographic area? Working in certain industries? Describe your readers to yourself. Your information must be valuable to them. If it's not, they won't read it. Even if they read it once, they won't come back if your message doesn't help them visualize any benefits. It must be applicable and relevant to your readers, so they can relate it to their own lives.

5. Know your field—its past, present and future.

Tie blog posts to current happenings in your field. This requires research—you'd better know what is new and exciting. You should read other blogs from the same industry, or browse Facebook pages of people interested in this topic, or read industry magazines, e-zines or newsletters. Discuss the history of your field, and why it is the way it is. Take a position on controversies. Ask for feedback from your readers—do they agree with you or think you're a fool?

6. Use sensory detail.

If you always use generalities instead of specifics, if you always tell and never show, don't be surprised if your readers yawn and

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12 rules for writing a great blog ... *continued*

move on. Your readers' emotions are activated if they feel they are "really there." Don't write "flower," write "daffodil." Don't write "we jumped in the car and took off," write "we jumped in the Jaguar and sped off" or "we piled in the pick-up truck and rattled away." And don't get stuck on how things look—remember you have at least five senses. Include what it smells like, feels like, sounds like, tastes like. Sensory details elicit emotions, leading to action or change.

7. Tell stories.

"Reality TV" is popular because people are fascinated by true stories. Most of the great teachers and leaders in history have been good storytellers. Tell a story in a way that captures attention—solve a mystery, master a challenge, conquer a problem, avert a crisis. If your blog mentions products or services, tell stories of those who use those products and services, and how they changed as a result. Interview customers, employees, subscribers, or fans, and let them tell their stories in relation to your topic.

8. Call to action.

What do you want your reader to do, learn, or give you? An email address and permission to add them to your list? Order a free report? Give you a testimonial? Or make a comment on your blog and start a conversation? (A call to action does not mean you write variations on the theme of "Buy My Stuff!")

9. Propitiate the Google Gods.

I haven't yet said anything about SEO or any of that techie-stuff. That's because although you must know some techie stuff, it's much less important than the content. It doesn't matter how many folks you attract if your blog isn't valuable, interesting, or fun to read, because they won't do what you want them to do, and they probably won't come back. That's not to say SEO isn't important. It is. But to write SEO-friendly isn't that hard. If you know your topic, you already know which key words, key phrases, and common questions that people are apt to type into a Search. You're an expert, remember. Make sure you use these words and phrases in your post. The best places are in headers, sub-headers, and the first few lines of your post. But do not overdo it—remember, the most important thing is a well constructed message, not a bunch of key words and phrases flung together. The keywords should not disrupt the natural flow of your writing; they should enhance your message, not distract from it. If the term SEO scares you, remind yourself that you are writing for the human who is reading your post, not the search engine algorithm that discovers it.

10. Be generous.

Link to other blogs and websites. This will increase your readers' knowledge, introducing them to others who may be valuable to them, which in turn increases their appreciation of you. This is also a way to engender good feeling with other bloggers in your industry, and they might reciprocate in kind, and hyperlink to you. The use of hyperlinks also may help to boost your SEO rankings. Win-win-win all around.

11. Tweet your blog.

For every new blog post, tweet about it, including a link to the post. How to write good tweets is a whole other subject, but my number one rule for tweet writing is—**Be Funny and Useful.** This isn't always possible, and never easy in less than 140 characters. (Yes, less than 140 characters—you have to leave room for others to ReTweet.)

12. Comment and respond.

Okay, now you're writing great blog posts, so you can relax, right? Not so fast. Blogging is an interactive medium. Your blog post is only the first step. Now you need to comment on other blogs, with backlinks to yours. Comment on blogs which are complementary with yours, or even on your competitors'. Don't be afraid to comment on "big" or popular blogs. Your opinion is valuable—you're an expert, remember? That's why you won't make inane or blah comments like "Good blog." Contribute something valuable, something that adds to peoples' knowledge. Again, be generous. And don't forget your own blog—if someone comments on your blog, you need to answer them. Keep the conversation going. This is how you convert readers into real people, people you know and who know you.

A final note: what's the hardest thing about writing blog posts—or writing anything, for that matter? It takes time! Coming up with new topic ideas takes time, researching your readers takes time, staying up to date on your industry takes time, interacting with your readers takes time. And writing well takes time. If you want good content that moves people, the writing must be powerful, compelling, and stick with the readers so they remember you and come back for more. That's why people pay me to do what I do. 

Kim Pearson is an author, ghostwriter, editor, and the owner of Primary Sources, a writing service helping others become authors. She has authored 6 books, ghostwritten more than 35 non-fiction books, edited 20+ more, teaches workshops on writing and history, and writes *From the Compost*, a blog about writing, history, and storytelling. She also teaches others how to be a ghost. Visit her at www.primary-sources.com.

How to write your book fearlessly

By Sophfronia Scott

How big do you think? When it comes to thinking about writing a book or planning strategy for a business, it seems we're constantly being told to "Think Big." Goals are supposed to be just big enough to make us uncomfortable. I do understand the importance of thinking big: it makes you stretch yourself and test your abilities.

But there's a downside to thinking big: it can **inspire fear**. When you think too big or try to do too much, the possibility of failure looms. You fear failing, you fear trying. Next thing you know, you're frozen with fear. I walk this line constantly. My current writing projects can easily be described as "ambitious" so fear is constantly lurking at the edge of the forest of my mind. Can I really write this? Can I finish it? When the fear rises, I find these two quotes to be helpful:

"'Come to the edge,' He said. They said, 'We are afraid.' 'Come to the edge,' He said. They came. He pushed them... and they flew."

—Guillaume Apollinaire

"You don't have to save the whole world in a single bound. Small steps, taken again and again, will accomplish far more than any grandiose scheme." —Ralph Marston

Notice in the first quote that the "they" do not have to start out flying. They are not asked to jump. They only have to "come to the edge." The rest of what they needed—momentum, circumstance, opportunity (or, in this case, a friendly push)—showed up and took them the rest of the way. In the second quote, again, you see that you don't have to accomplish the big thing all at once. You start small and you do something small. As you walk, you **achieve the world** along the way.

You don't have to write a 400-page book or execute a million-dollar business strategy all in one week. But you can write one page. You can send out one email or one letter to promote a product or service. You can then write another page, mail a postcard, or start a newsletter. Before you know it, you'll be on your way. 

Sophfronia Scott is Executive Editor of the Done For You Writing & Publishing Company. Learn what a difference being a published author can make for your business. Get your FREE audio CD, "*How to Succeed in Business By Becoming a Bestselling Author*" and your FREE online writing and book publishing tips at www.DoneForYouWriting.com.

Holiday book marketing tips

By Kim Wolterman

Looking for a way to perk up book sales for the holidays? Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- ▶ How about donating some of your time to a local non-profit group? It will not only help the group, but it can also generate publicity for your book. As an example, if you wrote a book about pets, you could donate time at the local Humane Society. You might be able to have a book signing at a pet adoption, returning a portion of the proceeds to the organization.
- ▶ Do you write books for women? How about a book signing at the local yoga studio, coffee shop or spa? For children's books, seek out boutiques and toy stores.
- ▶ Don't overlook bazaars, craft shows and local holiday events.
- ▶ Give away a copy of your book through your social media outlets by having people sign up for a raffle. 

What's ahead? January 11, 2012

The St. Louis Publishers Association empowers authors and publishers to create and market books. A nationally recognized organization, the SLPA collaborates with other related organizations and is a resource to the media for information related to publishing.

The SLPA provides educational, informational resources on many aspects of the publishing business. Through our monthly meetings, we provide networking opportunities for people involved in all aspects of the publishing business.

As this newsletter goes to press, our board of directors is busy finalizing our roster of topics and speakers for 2012. We'll announce our schedule online, through email messages, and in the next edition of this newsletter. Stay tuned for another great year with SLPA! 



Questions about SLPA?

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