

Your Book Publishing Coach Newsletter

*The insider's guide to writing,
publishing, and making money with information products*

Vol. 2, Issue



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*******MAIN ARTICLE*******

How to Choose a Best-Selling Title

The publisher of one of my books wanted to call it this: "So, What Do You Do for a Living?"

Appalled, I contacted them immediately. "I have concerns about my title," I said as calmly as possible. "I'm thinking that maybe it sounds more like back cover copy than a title. It is not something that says what the book is or will do for people...."

I went through my list of further objections, trying not to hyperventilate.

Fortunately, the publisher listened. I know now that the title we ended up with is still not stellar—*Men in Search of Work*, subtitle: *And the Women Who Love Them* But at least it said what the book was about.

Back in the beginning of the 20th century, Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius sold more than 100 million "little blue books"—and he advertised by title alone, no sales copy. That should be your goal—to have a title so compelling that the title itself sells the book.

What would that entail? Measure your title or potential title against these 5 criteria.

5 Characteristics of a Best-Selling Title

1. It arouses curiosity or emotion or engages the imagination. This is why [The Secret](#) or "*The Secret to ...*" or "*Secrets of ...*" are so popular—it does both. It arouses curiosity, and also makes us want to be included in. We don't like to feel left out (or left behind—another very

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popular title of a book and series). Doesn't [Chicken Soup for the Soul](#) just reek comfort? What about [The Dangerous Book for Boys](#)—doesn't it make your brain itch with curiosity? (It has no subtitle, by the way, to alleviate the curiosity. Very clever.)

For fiction, a provocative title is often the best. A recent study found that figurative or abstract titles, such as *Sleeping Murder*, or *Presumed Innocent*, produce more top-sellers than literal ones, such as [The DaVinci Code](#).

2. It states or at least hints at a benefit or promise (if it's nonfiction). People read fiction to be entertained. They read nonfiction books, by and large, to solve problem. If your nonfiction book also entertains, and your fiction informs in some way, all the better. Your title and/or subtitle must promise at least one or the other. (By the way, the book itself must deliver on its promise or it won't generate the word of mouth necessary to build a book to best-sellerdom.)

3. It calls out to a specific audience. Even if a book has nearly universal appeal, the title should speak to a specific benefit "everyone" wants. [You: On a Diet](#) is clearly for people who want to lose weight. (Which is just about everyone, of course.)

Or consider [The 4-Hour Work Week: Escape 9-5, Live Anywhere, and Join the New Rich](#) by Tim Ferriss. It's an irresistible promise that calls out to the laziness in all of us. Who wouldn't want to work only 4 hours a week and still be rich? Yet, even though it appeals to just about everyone, that appeal is very specific.

4. The title is memorable in some way. This is where strong nouns and verbs come in, or alliteration, rhyming, or some way of tapping into the collective consciousness comes in. Consider these titles:

- [Rich Dad, Poor Dad](#)
- [What to Expect When You're Expecting](#)
- [The Glass Castle](#)
- [90 Minutes in Heaven](#)
- [Blink](#)
- [The World is Flat](#)

5. It uses keywords/phrases people search on the Internet. This is not absolutely necessary for a print book, but nowadays it doesn't hurt. If however your product is an ebook or other information product you're selling and delivering digitally, keywords are a must for your title. This of course applies to nonfiction, since people don't generally use search engines to find fiction, unless they already know the title.

No title can have all of the above characteristics. But if it's strong in at least three of them, you probably have a winner of a title.

***** SPECIAL RESOURCE*****

Want more help on choosing your best-selling title? Here's how to learn more ...

This topic of finding a great title is so important, and so misunderstood even by publishers, that I started doing a lot of research on the topic. I've already uncovered a lot of very interesting, usable and little-known information. Such as:

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- scientific studies of what makes a best-selling title
- the different "jobs" your title and subtitle must do. Miss even one, and your book is likely doomed.
- magic words that make people buy one book over another
- a nifty tool to boost your chances of coming up with a best-selling novel title
- at least 10 places to go for great title ideas (including at least two I guarantee you've never heard of)
- how to make sure your titles are also search-engine friendly (there's a little-known *free* tool for researching this that will blow your mind)

All these topics--and much more--are covered in my upcoming 5-Module TeleCourse: [The Publishing Insider's Guide to Choosing Your Best-Selling Title](#). Get in on the early-bird special and get the [Jump Start Your Book: 12 Questions You Must Answer to Write a Book that Sells Tool Kit](#) FREE! [Get more details here](#).

*****INSIDER'S TIP *****

7 Ways to Find Your Best-Selling Title

If you look on the best seller lists, one of the things the books have in common is an irresistible title. Last week we talked about the five characteristics of a best-selling title. Now let's look at how you can find one for your book.

Coming up with an irresistible title for your book is no small task. Yet it's one of the most important. Your title can make or break your book. It's what invites readers (and publishers) to take a closer look. It's part of what fosters "buzz" and excited word of mouth.

A title is comparable to a headline in an advertisement. Great copywriters often spend the most time coming up with the headline. One of the most important tools in a copywriter's tool kit is a "swipe file"—samples of successful promotions the copywriter can use to spark good ideas of his or her own.

I suggest that, as an author, you create a similar "swipe file" for title ideas.

Where can you go to get good ideas for titles you can adapt? Here are 7 suggestions.

7 Places to Find Title Ideas

1. Search engines. Try the following searches in Google and Yahoo:

- "best-selling titles"
- best seller lists"
- "best book titles"
- "how to name a book"

2. Look to amazon.com. Click on "top sellers" in Books and peruse the list. Notice if there are any patterns (e.g., are memoirs big these days?).

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3. Clickbank.com. This is like the amazon for ebooks, software, and other digital products. Click on "Buy Products" and look at the category that best fits your book or information product idea. Note which titles are top-selling.

4. Ebay. Key in whether you're looking for fiction or nonfiction. You might further sort with keyword "best selling." Don't limit it to books that are just like yours, however. You may find inspiration for your cookbook title among the garden books, or vice versa.

5. Public domain works. Search "public domain" or just go to www.gutenberg.org. Many of these titles are "classics." Again, search the top-selling downloads to see what you can learn.

6. Do a keyword search. There are different programs and tools, but a good place to start is www.goodkeywords.com. They offer a free tool and a short primer on keywords. Google also offers a free tool at <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal/>. See which keywords are most searched on your topic. Then, try to include these words or phrases in your title or subtitle.

7. Ezine directories. Look at the most-read articles on your topic. Chances are, the title is what drew people in. If you are submitting articles to free ezine sites—and I hope you are—go back and look at which articles were the most read. (Articles sites such as www.ezinearticles.com and others give you those statistics.) You can use these winning titles to create the title and main focus of your book.

Next steps ...

Once you've done your research as outlined above, there are 7 more things to do to come up with your winning title. For only \$7 you can access "7 Action Steps for Choosing Your Best-Selling Title" and find out:

- How to use your research to create templates of best-selling titles you can use over again, not just for your title, but for marketing as well
- 7 criteria for choosing your best title (and the minimum number you should shoot for)
- the different "jobs" your title and subtitle must do. Miss even one, and your book is likely doomed.
- 7 ways to test your titles and come up with the winner that you can be sure will sell your book—including one that will actually net you income before your book is even published
- The killer criteria that trumps all others when you test your titles

[Get your instantly downloadable PDF of "7 Action Steps for Choosing Your Best-Selling Title" now!](#) (Note: Since the Action Steps build on this article, it includes the above article for your convenience.)

*******JUMP START YOUR BOOK *******

Are you ready to start your book, eBook or information product NOW? Why wait

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another moment? [Visit the special Web page](#) and find out the 12 questions you must answer in order to write a book that sells.

Even if you don't have a clear idea of what you want to write, these questions—plus the audio training, "How to Start an Information Product from Scratch," will equip you to start this week! These resources will save you hours, months, even years of wasted time-- and ensure that your book will sell. (You *do* want a crack at the best-seller list, don't you?)

Go now to <http://bookpublishinguniversity.com/Besttitle/JumpStartYourBook.html>

***** ON THE BLOG *****

[Picking a Best-Selling Title—A Scientific Tool?](#)

In my research for my course on Choosing a Best-Selling Title, I came across this tool: the [Lulu Titlescorer](#).

It's supposed to tell you what chance your book title has of becoming a best seller.

Note: This is supposed to be for novels, so keep that in mind as you read on.

Of course, I put the two titles of two of my books in: [Abundant Gifts](#), and [MotherStyles](#).

Got a score of 10.2 percent for each. 😞

However, then I put in “Chicken Soup for the Soul.”

Guess what? That too got a score of 10.2%! Phew!

Now you couldn't stop me.

“Think and Grow Rich” — 20.1%!

Okay, so let's go to fiction, just to be fair.

“Left Behind,” one of the best-selling fiction series in the world (before Harry Potter)—20.2%.

“Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone” ... drum roll, please ... 14.6 percent! (ALL the Harry Potter books got this score, by the way.)

“[The First Hundred Million](#)” was a book that sold 100 million copies at the beginning of the 20th century. The author advertised it by title alone.

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Its Lulu score? Let's just say there's hope for my books after all!

Get Your Questions Answered ...

If you have a question for Diane about writing, publishing and/or promoting a book, there's a new way to ask them.

Go to www.askyourbookpublishingcoach1.com and submit your question. (Note that this is an example of an open-ended Ask-type campaign. For more about that, see the articles on Virtual Book Tours at www.wordstoprofit.com.)

I will be answering all questions on a free upcoming teleseminar. Even if you don't have a question but you would like to tune in, make sure you're on my newsletter list so you receive notification of the next teleseminar. You can listen in and hear the questions other people have and still learn a lot.

If you have a question specifically about titling your book, ask it here: <http://www.askyourbookpublishingcoachabouttitles.com>. Here you can also listen to the replay of the teleseminar in which I answered 20 questions on this topic, plus get a bonus.

***** **RECOMMENED RESOURCES** *****

Two Ways to Set Up and Maintain a Web Site Quickly and Inexpensively

How can you create a web site easily and inexpensively and maintain it yourself easily and inexpensively?

In a prior [Resource of the Week](#), I talked about how to [get a domain name inexpensively](#), and a [web hosting company](#) from which you can do just about any Internet marketing task easily yourself (because of their great documentation and tools).

The next step is to set up your site--preferably so that you can maintain it yourself--easily and inexpensively.

There are two kinds of basic structures for your web site. One is a blog-type site, preferably using WordPress, the best blog platform out there. You can set up a blog site yourself on your own server. If you use [ThirdSphere](#), the hosting company I recommend, there is a simple plug-in you choose from the "Snap-in Script Center." You just click the link for WordPress, then follow the setup procedures, and your blog will be installed instantly. You name it with the domain name you chose, and you have your web site up. From there you can look through the many WordPress templates available, find one you

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like, and with a click of your mouse you can install it easily. The beauty of WordPress is that maintaining it is as easy as working in your word processor.

WordPress is relatively easy to set up, as I said, but if you run into problems or need help setting it up, I highly recommend you contact Cathy Perkins, "the WordPress Wizard." She really is! She will get you up and running with a beautiful blog. Her email is cathy@thewordpresswizarad.com. Tell her Diane sent you so you get high priority.

Another approach is to create a customized web site yourself. Some people like using FrontPage or DreamWeaver software. I use a program called [XSite Pro](#) that I like very much. With [XSite Pro](#), I can maintain my website myself, adding or deleting at will. The program is one-time expense of less than \$200, and there is so much you can do with it. I'll let you [go here](#) to find out more. It has many amazing features, including tools to make sure the search engines will find you. I can literally set up a web site or page in minutes and upload it with a click of the mouse. Like the hosting company I recommend, the documentation is excellent.

With this software, I did need to find a web designer to create a logo and header. I used someone recommended to me from elance.com. If you want to find out who I used, you may contact me. If you already have a logo or header, you will not necessarily need a designer.

Again, it does not take much to set up a web site from which you can sell your information products, nor does it take an expensive web master or knowledge of html and other technical details to maintain it. At least the way I've done it, which is why I'm recommending these tools to you.

To recap your web site options:

1. Set up a WordPress blog. If you have a webmaster already, ask them to install WordPress. If not, you can try it yourself (if you use [ThirdSphere](#) or other host that uses the WordPress plug-in, it's really very easy). Or you can contact Cathy Perkins at <http://www.theWordPressWizard.com>.

2. Set up a more traditional web site with software. **I'm recommending [XSite Pro](#) for its remarkable array of features and ease of use** for the initial investment. If you already have a logo and/or header, you won't need a designer. You will be able to plug that into the [XSite Pro program](#) and set your site up quickly.

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