

Your Book Publishing Coach Newsletter

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

Vol. 2, Issue 6 **June 2007**



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

Story of the Successful (but Broke) Author

This is the story of a Successful Author.

Successful Author (SA for short) grew up loving to read, and she wrote at an early age. Her first story was published in the eighth grade school newspaper. She was thrilled.

SA went off to college. She majored in English, but did not want to teach. Strangely, she took only one creative writing course. She knew she wanted to write, but the one course made her doubt her abilities more than believe in them. She did take a course in publishing, and decided that was where she belonged.

"Publishing is too difficult to break into," everyone told her. In her heart, she doubted. Could she write? Could she break into publishing somehow besides the secretarial route? (Which she knew she would never progress in; administration was not her strong suit.)

SA decided to teach herself to write by reading books on writing, and doing lots of writing of all kinds. Before she graduated from college, she interviewed at various small publishing houses. Not in New York, where the competition was fierce.

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In the Midwest.

And she got a job! With a publisher, no less. A forward-thinking publisher who started a radio show. SA helped produced the show. She got to interview authors, write up radio scripts, edit the shows, and even run the direct marketing aspect of the program.

When the radio program was discontinued (production costs were high, in the old days), she was asked to write marketing copy for a book club. Then, to manage the book club.

Then she heard about a job opening at a magazine. She got the job. Started writing articles. Her very first article won a First Place award.

Soon she was writing books as well as articles. Then she went freelance, writing books, editing books, writing marketing copy. Writing, writing, writing! She loved it.

She got really good at writing book proposals. Got to the point where, whenever she got a book idea, she'd write up a proposal and sell the book. Then she'd write the book. It would get published. Eight, 10, then 11 books in all. Every book published! Yes, surely she was a Successful Author.

But the publisher didn't do much to promote the book. Successful Author had ideas, but the publishers were not very supportive of some of her wild ideas.

Successful Author realized she would need to put some money of her own behind promoting her books. But she preferred to write them, not promote them! Wasn't promotion the publisher's job?

Besides, how could she make a living writing, if she had to take so much (unpaid) time to promote her books? Finally, with the paltry royalties paid (she made an average of \$1.16 per book), she'd have to sell 1500 books every month just to pay the mortgage!

Successful Author continued her day job (to pay the mortgage and other sundries), and saw her books go out of print, one by one. When her favorite book went out of print, Successful Author was both heartbroken and outraged.

Hadn't the book sold 12,000 copies—in hardcover? Wasn't that way above the norm of 4000 or less books sold? Why would it go out of print, only 18 months after it was published?

Successful Author sent the book to SuperSuccessful Author, who loved the book and endorsed it in her newsletter in glowing terms. Unfortunately, the book was out of print. Ironic timing.

Successful Author wrote yet another book proposal and went to Book Expo America one year to promote it to publishers. Two publishers made offers. Successful Author's literary agent fumbled one offer, and so the second offer was accepted. The book was published yet again.

Successful Author wrote yet another book, this time with another author. It took two years to write. A great book but ... too much time, too much work, for too little money.

By now Successful Author was learning something. A couple of things, in fact.

1. You can't make enough money to live on writing just books. The publishing industry is set up such that royalties are paltry, advances shrinking. That's if you get a contract. With technology making it easier for anyone to publish, there's a glut of books and traditional publishing is getting more and more competitive.

2. The author must take full responsibility for all marketing and promotion efforts.

How can any author afford to do number two, given the realities of number one? Can an author who likes to write make a living from writing books? Successful Author set out on a quest to find answers.

In this quest, Successful Author discovered more truths. Both happy and sad truths.

Sad truth: Good marketing is much more important than good writing. (True for nonfiction authors. Slight variation for fiction authors: While marketing is important, good writing in fiction is still important. Arguably more important is the ability to be prolific. One novel per year does not a living make.)

Happy truth: Marketing is fun, it can be learned, and it can be adapted to your own personal style.

Moral of the story: If you want to be a Truly Successful Author—as in, someone who actually makes a good living as an author—you need to take full marketing responsibility and be open to new models of operating as an author.

What are those new models? Some clues can be found on this website, and on the [Your Book Publishing Coach blog](#).

But here's a hint: The traditional way books are created and sold is exactly backwards!

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

Are you ready to start your book, eBook or information product NOW? Why wait another moment? Go to <http://www.WordsToProfit.com/JumpStartYourBook.html> and

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find out the 12 questions you must ask before you write your first word. Within a week you can start your book the right way, saving you hours, months, even years of wasted time and ensuring your book will be salable.

Also, when you get **Jump Start Your Book**, you'll get a 51- minute recorded coaching session which contains much more detail on how to create an information product from scratch.

Go now to <http://www.WordsToProfit.com/JumpStartYourBook.html>.

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

The Simple Secret to Making a Living from Your Book

In the "Story of the Successful (But Broke) Author," you were left hanging a bit.

Successful Author had found new ways to market books that actually result in sales. But we didn't tell you what those methods were.

This article will do that. Successful Author said I could share a big secret she learned.

Do You Want to Write ... Or Communicate?

First, you need to understand why the traditional approach to writing, promoting, and selling books is obsolete.

Yes—obsolete!

Believe me, I'm the first one to mourn over this.

Like many authors, I *like to write*. I like to write *books*. I love to play with ideas, tease out words that communicate those ideas in fresh ways.

I always wanted to believe that good writing will attract an audience. Thus, I focused on the writing aspect. The craft.

Craft is important. I don't want to minimize it. But ... I've also come to accept a very important truth.

If my ideas (no matter how artfully rendered) aren't what my intended audience cares about, communication does not happen. Writing without communicating is like an archer shooting arrows aimlessly, not caring where they land or whether they hit any target.

No archer gets satisfaction out of shooting arrows. It's hitting the target that matters.

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Writing for writing's sake is, in the end, narcissism. *Communicating* is what brings the satisfaction.

Ultimately, I want my words to touch people. Make them laugh, cry, rage, or at least mull over what I say. Sometimes (people tell me) my words affect the very way they see the world. Changes behavior.

Amazing!

That's what we're after, isn't it? No matter what we write, we want to communicate. Communication is a two-way street.

So, when you sit down to write a book (or article, blog post—anything), be aware there are three things you're dealing with.

The Three Parts of Communication

There's the Message.

There's the Medium (or Media, if more than one kind. Which is preferable).

And there's the Market—those you are trying to touch with your Message, through the Medium.

How are books traditionally written?

Author has a Message. He or she proceeds to assume the most effective Medium is the printed word, compiled into a book. So the author starts to write the book.

At some point, someone (a publisher, if the author is trying to get one interested—or an annoying book coach like me) asks, "Who is your Market? To whom are you writing? Who wants to hear your Message?"

If you don't have a good answer for this, your book is doomed. (Good answer = a very clear picture in your mind of who would just love your book. My market for *Abundant Gifts* is a woman, probably in her thirties and beyond, who likes to read stories, who has a certain spiritual sensibility that is open and even eager for evidences of God's hand in her everyday life. She is busy, has little time to read, so needs her inspiration in small chunks. See how specific that is?)

Even if your book is self-published, it's doomed if you don't know your Market. You'll end up with a garage full of books and an empty bank account. (Just as publishers end up with warehouses of unsold books and sometimes even go bankrupt.)

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Why the Traditional Model is Obsolete

The traditional, obsolete approach to writing books is:

Message → Medium → Market

Even publishers have adopted this model. Editors get excited about a book, convince the publishing personnel the book will sell, they print the book, then push it through their existing channels, which may or may not be right for that book.

My friends, this is completely backwards!

If you want to communicate, you must know what the people you are communicating with want. Right?

Every successful businessperson knows that before you create a product, you must first make sure there is a large enough market for it. You must also know who your competition is and what sets you apart from that competition. Why would anyone buy your product over someone else's? What do you offer than no one else does?

Yet, authors rarely ask these questions. We get enamored of an idea, are sure that other people will be just as fascinated, and start writing away. Sometimes we get blocked. (I maintain that one reason for "writer's block" is we don't have that clear picture in our minds of that specific person we're writing to.)

Publishers pay attention, by the way. If your book proposal doesn't give pretty convincing answers as to who the market is, the publisher knows exactly where to toss your proposal. (It can be circular or rectangular.)

The Solution: Three Key Questions

The solution is actually rather simple. It consists of three steps. Three key questions to answer.

1. "WHO is my target Market?" Get very specific, as I did above. If you can, define not only the demographic (age range, gender, life situation), but also the specific type of problem they have, or what it is they're longing for.
2. "Which MEDIA sources give my target Market the fastest and easiest access to my Message?" Authors usually think only in terms of books. What about blogs, radio, teleseminars, audio "postcards," CDs, podcasts, online book stores, ezines, articles, public speeches, interviews, webinars, magazine articles, newspapers?
3. "WHAT is my Message?" What "promise" does my book make? How does my Message improve someone's life, solve a problem, inspire them, entertain them, etc.?

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Finding Out What the Market Wants

How do you find out what your target Market wants? Ask them!

I did that recently, with my survey. (If you haven't taken it yet, please do! Just click [here](#).)

Guess what? Seventy-one percent of you wanted to know how to get published by a traditional publisher. I am working on a course to help you do just that. And you'd better believe you'll see more articles on that.

Nearly 67 percent want information on marketing, another 62.5 percent wants to know more about promotion/publicity—and the same amount wants writing tips. (Folks, all of these things are what my blog covers, so do subscribe if you haven't yet!)

This is why I'm writing this particular article. My goal is to give you what you want and perceive your need. In that way I serve you well, which gives me deep satisfaction. In that way, I can be assured that the products I create, you will want to buy. (I'm being perfectly transparent here.) Thus, I make a living by giving you what you want. Everybody wins.

You can do the same thing. It's not difficult.

Put up a blog. On that blog, post a survey. (If you don't know how to do any of this and want to know, tell me! I can easily create a Special Report on "How to Create an Effective Author's Website for less than \$30 Per Month." Do you want that? Let me know!)

Drive some traffic to your blog by writing and posting articles in ezines, with a resource box pointing them to your site. (If you're not sure how to do this, [check out what Jeff Herring offers](#).)

Start asking your market to tell you what they want, and give it to them. They will become your loyal fans and, eventually, will buy your book or other information product(s).

Remember this model:

Market → Medium → Message

It may seem new, but it's not at all new to businesses. The problem is, most authors have not seen their book as a business.

If you accept that your book can be a business, you will realize that it has the potential to earn you a wonderful living, as any successful business does.

I want you to make a living from your book.

Seems like you want that, too. My mandate is clear. I'm in business!

(My "door" is always open to your input. Simply [take my survey](#) at any time. There are places to write freestyle what you want.)

*******WRITING TIP*******

Start Small--with an eBook

If the thought of a full-length book scares you, why not start out with something much smaller?

Such as, for instance, an electronic book, or eBook. You can test out your idea, get your feet wet with marketing, and make some money. (Sometimes, alas, even more money than you'd make with a traditionally published book.)

Your eBook doesn't even have to be large. Jimmy D. Brown talks about creating and marketing "Small Reports"—less than 20 pages long!

In fact, I will let Jimmy take it away, because he has a great article on where to find ideas for your eBook. I suggest you read this article, and then get the free Special Report when you're through.

Idea Hangouts: Where to Find Hot Product Ideas to Use For Creating Your Best-Selling eBook

by Jimmy D. Brown of "[Small Reports Fortune](#)"

46,094.

That's how many times I've been asked "Where can I find hot product ideas to write about in my next eBook?"

Really. I've been keeping count. <g>

OK, so it's probably not quite that many times, but you get the idea.

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I get asked that question a LOT.

And so, I've decided to share my favorite "idea hangouts." That's right ... "idea hangouts." It's been my experience that there are specific places where hot product ideas are always gathered. I call them "idea hangouts."

Idea Hangout #1

One of the "idea hangouts" that I've identified is Amazon.com.

Amazon.com is the web's largest bookstore.

It's also a community center for new product ideas. I use it as one of my top brainstorming resources. Again and again I visit this site to come up with topics to write about.

What makes Amazon.com so useful as a research tool for getting new ideas is their searchable database of books. There are thousands of great ideas lurking in there if you just know how to use it.

And that's what I'm here for.

I'm going to show you how to find hot product ideas with Amazon.com anytime you want.

It's really a matter of three simple steps ...

Step 1: Decide Upon A Broad Category. When brainstorming ideas, you must begin with a broad category to work with. Some examples might be: weight loss, marketing, dating, travel, baseball.

So, you need that ahead of time. Figure out a broad subject that you know is popular (e.g., you know that losing weight is ALWAYS going to be a popular subject, as is "making money").

As an example for this article, I'm going to choose GOLF.

STEP 2: Search Amazon's database. After picking your broad topic to research, it's time to visit Amazon.com.

Specifically, you're going to SEARCH their database of books they are selling.

Upon arriving at their site, locate their SEARCH form. At the time of this writing, it was in the upper left hand corner of their main page. Pull the menu down and select BOOKS from the options.

In the space provided, type in whatever broad category you chose. I'd type in "Golf."
(You don't need quotation marks.)

If you did indeed start with a broad category, then hundreds (or even thousands) of book listings should appear as a result of the search.

STEP 3 : Brainstorm ideas from the listings. Let the brainstorming session begin!
Now it's time to look at the books that are listed and write down as many possible ideas as you can find.

Look for the different TYPES of books written about the subject, identifying different THEMES, STYLES and SUBCATEGORIES.

Let's look at an example....

When I searched for "Golf," I was able to immediately spot dozens of great ideas. Here are a handful ...

1. *Becoming a better golfer.* There are many golf books available in this area, covering everything from "A-Z of Golf Shots" to specific topics such as "Improving Your Short Game." There were lots of different themes from "learning to break 100" to "shaving 10 shots off your score" to "7 shots that will change your golf game forever."

2. *Guides to Golf Courses.* Again, we have many different ideas here. Specific golf guides like "Florida golfing," "golfing in Tennessee," and "golfing the Robert Trent Jones trail" appear, as well as books on "the best golf courses in America," "best-kept secrets: great golf courses you've probably never played," and "golf vacation guides."

3. *Profiting from Golf.* More ideas pour in with "opening a golf repair business," "becoming a golf retailer," "learning how to caddy," and "buying & selling used golf clubs."

What about "running an online golf auction," "organizing a golf tournament for profit," or even, "writing information products about golf"!

4. *Golf and Business.* There are millions of dollars in business deals negotiated on the golf course every single year. And there are books available to teach folks how to get it done. "How to negotiate business deals during golf outings," "Legal golf tax deductions for businesspeople," and "Business seminars and golf: How to mix training and fun for maximum profit" are just a few more ideas worth exploring.

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5. Golf Products. My, my, my there are so many ideas floating around in here! Everything ranging from reviews of the latest golf equipment to ratings of golf courses to discounts on golf packages. Resource guides to finding the best deals on golfing products, how to negotiate discounts, and how to find the best products for your specific golf game also come to mind as product ideas.

One Broad Category (Golf) + Amazon.com Searchable Database of Books = 28 Potential Product Ideas!

See how easy that was? I found TWENTY-EIGHT potential new product ideas (and there were MANY MORE that I didn't mention in this article) from a simple brainstorming exercise using ONE "idea hangout."

There's got to be a best-seller in that bunch somewhere. And certainly with a little "mix-n-match" I can come up with a hit product with these ideas.

Not bad, eh?

So, now it's YOUR turn. It's a simple system for coming up with product ideas anytime you want.

Like right now.

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.askyourbookpublishingcoach.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/.](http://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.

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

1. Jimmy D. Brown has written a terrific report, called "Small Reports Fortune," that shows how if you can write 7-15 page small reports, you can earn a living online working just a few hours each week from your home. I encourage you to [get this free, Special](#)

[Report right now](#) In it Jimmy reveals his exclusive, simple formula for "creating a six-figure Income with small reports."

If you enjoy writing, and want to make a living from your writing, this is definitely one avenue to explore!

2. Terry Whalin on Book Proposal Secrets: I did an Ask-type Virtual Book Tour with editor, author, and literary agent Terry Whalin in which he answered many questions on how to write a rejection-proof book proposal. If you want your book to be considered by a traditional publisher, you need this resource! Go to <http://www.wordstoprofit.com/EditorRevealsBookProposalSecrets.html> for more information--including how to listen to Terry's Virtual Book Tour in which he answered the questions.

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