



# News & Views

▶ Empowering authors and publishers to create and market books

FEBRUARY 2011

## February 9 meeting at Brentwood Community Center Getting your business into action... NOW!

Jack Canfield once said, "A best seller is 10% content and 90% marketing." Many authors, unfortunately, think their job is done once the book is published. Aspiring authors and publishers are also potential business owners. With the dream of publishing a book come the practical demands of building a business to support that enterprise.

Take your passion and turn it into a business with **Kelly Alcorn**. Kelly will give hands-on guidance to execute a sound business strategy. You will learn the steps to be successfully in action and assess your strengths and weaknesses. You will learn three key ways to overcome your obstacles that have limited your success.



**Featured Speaker: Kelly Alcorn, the Business Activation Strategist**, will share the Activation Model designed to move you from inaction to moving powerfully forward in your business and life. Use it in all areas of your publishing endeavor—writing, designing, marketing, sales, printing, distribution, fulfillment, business management, etc. Whether

publishing through a traditional publisher or independently, successful authors combine creativity with business savvy to promote their work and sell more books. Get past what's holding you back and make your dream a reality.

Alcorn was in the mortgage industry for over 10 years and as she says "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times." A recognized leader in the mortgage business and a huge proponent for personal development, she realized in 2008 that she wanted to explore life outside the mortgage industry. While continuing her training and development, Kelly discovered a passion for helping the business community and created her coaching model to assist individuals to get in to action, and became the "Business Activation Strategist."

Kelly has created a four component "activation" process as well as a system to help people create clear and concise sixty-

second business introductions for use in networking. Kelly is a featured author in the newly-released *Seven Points of Impact*, an anthology of inspirational writings and life guidance. Visit her website at: [kellyalcorn.com](http://kellyalcorn.com)

### SLPA meets on the second Wednesday of the month at:

**Brentwood Community Center  
2505 S. Brentwood Boulevard, Brentwood, MO 63144**

Doors open for networking at 6:30 PM, meeting begins at 7:00 PM. 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.

## What's Ahead?

### March 9 Book Marketing Made Easier

No matter what the genre, we all need information and resources to help us sell books. The meeting will cover promoting books through traditional venues such as book signings, book reviews, interviews, etc.

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Find SLPA on LinkedIn and Facebook!



## How to promote your book by writing effective titles for your articles and blog posts

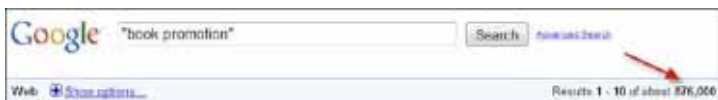
by Dana Lynn Smith



Writing articles and blog posts is a terrific way to promote your book. The title of an article affects its ranking in search engines and influences how many people click through to the article from a search engine results page or take time to read a post on your blog. Here are some tips for creating great titles.

**1. Do your keyword research first.** Keywords are the words and phrases that people use to search for your topic on a search engine like Google. I use the Google Keyword Tool to create keyword lists for topics that I write about. For example, I have lists of keywords related to book marketing, book promotion, authors, book publishing, etc.

It's tempting to select the most popular keywords, but you may be better off selecting keywords with less competition (fewer searches and fewer competing pages.) One easy way to find out how many other Web pages are using a particular keyword is to type the keyword (in "quotes") into a search engine and see how many pages it brings up. For example, "book promotion" gets 118,800 annual searches, but there are 876,000 competing pages (seven pages for every search) while "promoting your book" gets 15,600 searches but has only 31,500 competing pages (two pages for every search.)



**2. Determine the primary keyword phrase for your article and use it in the title of the article, and then use it again several times in the body of the article.** You may want to select a secondary keyword to use in the article as well. For maximum search engine optimization value, use the primary keyword at the beginning of the title. The first three to five words are most important. Here is an example for the "promote your book" keyword: *Promote Your Book With Facebook Groups*

**3. Consider using a compound title, containing two different phrases.** This lets you get your most important keyword up front and perhaps repeat certain words. The experts at ezinearticles.com recommend longer article titles, with 50 characters or more. If you need to use punctuation in the title, use a hyphen rather than a colon. For example: *Promote Your Book in Your Own Backyard - 10 Strategies for Success*

**4. Many people use the words "how to" when searching on search engines.** Capitalize on those searches with a how to title: *How to Promote Your Book and Yourself on Facebook*

**5. Use the magic of numbers combined with keywords.**

*Top 10 Book Promotion Strategies for Fiction Authors*

*7 Secrets to Successful Book Marketing*

**6. State the benefit to the reader.** *Sell More Books on Amazon by Increasing Your Book's Visibility in the Search Results*

**7. Identify your audience.** *Top 10 Platform Building Tactics for Authors*

**8. Be clear rather than cute.** It's important that your title convey what the article is actually about, and sometimes it's more important to appeal to your audience than to search engines. For example, instead of "The Magic of Twitter" or "Promote Your Book with Twitter," this title is more appealing: *5 Easy Ways for Authors to Build Their Twitter Network*

Or, you could make this into a longer, compound title with keywords: *Promote Your Book With Twitter - 5 Easy Ways to Build Your Twitter Network*

Next time you write an article or blog post, take a little extra time to craft a title that will appeal to search engines and to readers.



Dana Lynn Smith is a book marketing coach and author of the *Savvy Book Marketer Guides*. For more tips, follow @BookMarketer on Twitter, visit Dana's blog at [TheSavvyBookMarketer.com](http://TheSavvyBookMarketer.com), and get a copy of the *Top Book Marketing Tips* ebook when you sign up for her free newsletter at [BookMarketingNewsletter.com](http://BookMarketingNewsletter.com).

## The Kindle Million Club

On January 12, 2011 Amazon.com, Inc. announced that **Nora Roberts has become the third author to sell over 1 million Kindle books**, becoming the third member of the "Kindle Million Club." As of January 11th, Nora Roberts has sold 1,170,539 Kindle books under her name and her pseudonym J.D. Robb.

The Kindle Million Club recognizes authors whose books have sold over 1 million paid copies in the Kindle Store ([www.amazon.com/kindlestore](http://www.amazon.com/kindlestore)). **Stieg Larsson**, author of the Millennium Trilogy, was the first author to hit the 1 million mark. **James Patterson**, author of more than 65 books that span the genres of suspense, fantasy, romance, historical fiction and children's, was the second author to join the Kindle Million Club.

## Marketing tips for authors

by Tony Eldridge



In today's hi-tech environment of do-it-yourself publishing and marketing, it can be easy for an author to get lost in the noise of what you should and should not do. To add to the confusion, even experts don't always agree on the most important things you must do to be successful.

If you're like many authors, you like to write. That's what you're good at. You don't want to be a professional marketer but you do realize that, like it or not, you'll still have to wear that marketing hat if you want to succeed.

So, how do you navigate the confusing rapids of publishing and marketing your book? Here are a few strategies to consider to help you keep your head above water:

**1. Don't try to do everything at once:** Even the most tech-savvy person would be hard pressed to do everything possible to market their book. It's okay to live with the reality that you don't need to do it all to be a success. You don't have to be on every social media site and you don't have to incorporate all the latest technologies into your book marketing plans. Choose a few that you want to get really good at and start from there. You can always add more later. And yes, no matter what you do today, there will always be more you can do later.

**2. Model someone who you see as successful:** If you don't know where to start, look at an author you follow and study what they are doing. What ideas can you get from him or her? What social media sites is he or she on? What technologies does your favorite author use to market his or her books? You don't have to copy everything someone else does, but you can always choose one or two people to help you come up with ideas for your own marketing and publishing plans.

**3. Limit who you listen to, but continue to read widely:** There are a lot of smart people out there and they don't always say the same things. In order to cope with all the information available to you, limit who you really listen to. At the same time, continue your research so you can adapt what you hear to your own marketing plan. By doing this, you can cut through the noise while still making informed decisions.

**4. Master a few things and outsource the rest:** No one says you have to be an expert on every publishing and book marketing activity you engage in. Consider getting really good at what you enjoy and let someone else handle the things you don't want to learn or things you don't want to spend the time on.


**5. Don't fear trial and error:** Even the greatest marketers have engaged in trial and error. If you sit at the feet of the great ones, they will share stories of lessons they learned the hard way. I'm not saying that you shouldn't use due diligence to make sure your marketing activities are efficient, but don't be afraid to try something new just because you don't understand it perfectly. It's often better to try and fail than never to try at all.

**6. Ask for help:** If you're stumped or you have a big decision to make, lay it out there and ask someone for their advice. If you don't know how something works, ask someone to show you. You can do this by:

- E-mailing someone directly
- Googling your query
- Visiting message boards
- Searching YouTube for how-to videos
- Posting questions on your blog, tweeting your question, or ask your group members

The point is that you have a lot of resources available to you. Don't be afraid to use them.

**7. Barter:** If you have a skill that someone else needs, consider offering a trade in services. If they help you, you'll help them. This is one of the oldest and most effective ways to cope with information overload. Just like the barber would cut the hair of his shoemaker for a pair of sneakers, you can find ways to trade your skills for the skills of someone who can help you with an aspect of your marketing plan.

These are a few ideas on how you can cope with information overload. As a writer, you want to make sure that you don't get so bogged down with doing what everyone says you need to be doing that you don't have time to write. There will never be a shortage of advice out there; you just need to be judicious on how you choose to take action on that advice. 

Tony Eldridge is the author of the award winning action/adventure novel, *The Samson Effect*, which Clive Cussler calls a "first rate thriller brimming with intrigue and adventure." He is also the creator of *Marketing Tips for Authors*, a site that publishes free tips and videos to help authors learn marketing techniques for their books.

*"Make it simple. Make it memorable.  
Make it inviting to look at. Make it fun to read."*



— Leo Burnett, American advertising executive  
(October 21, 1891 – June 7, 1971)



## Write a book: 10 reasons why

by Joanna Penn

Studies have shown that **82% of people want to write a book**, but few of these actually ever achieve that goal. Here are ten reasons you should overcome your blocks and write your book.

**1. Demonstrate your expertise.** You may have spent long years gathering your expertise in a subject. You have notes and seminars, training programs and articles. You may even be a speaker on your subject. Having a book further elevates you in people's eyes so you are perceived as the expert.

**2. Grow your business.** If you market your books to a wider audience, it can be a means to attract new people to your business. They may read your book and then want your professional services to help them in their business. The book then functions as a giant business card.

**3. Use as a product to sell.** You can create another stream of income by writing a book and selling it, either on the internet or in bookstores. You can create spin off products relating to the book that your market may be interested in.

**4. Say something important.** Maybe you are passionate about a cause, maybe you have a story that needs to be told. Your voice is important and your words can be heard if you get them out there. Write your story and inspire others. You don't know how your words can help other people in their own lives.

**5. Start a new career.** If you have always wanted to be an author, then writing a book is the way to start this career. Many people talk about being "an author," but you do actually have to write something to become one! It may take a few years, but you can have a career as an author.

**6. Fulfil a life goal.** If 82% of people want to write a book, how many of these consider it a life goal worth achieving? In these days of digital printing, print-on-demand and small print runs, you can achieve your goal of writing a book even with a small budget. So state your goal, and get writing!

**7. Status and confidence.** Authors are generally respected. People look at you differently when you say you are an author. This will also give you confidence. If you can write a book, and achieve your goal, then you will have become a more interesting and accomplished person in the process.

**8. You don't have to do it alone.** If you want to write but you are unsure how to, there are plenty of courses and tips online to help you. If you have the raw material, you can find a freelancer to help you write or edit it. If you need a community of people to

discuss your ideas with, there are groups online and locally you can join. Writers are everywhere. Start to share your ideas and you will find the support you need.

**9. Be immortal.** A print book will contain your words after you are gone. The internet will become ever more cluttered, but print books are difficult to throw away so they carry on giving for a long time. People may give them to charity shops, or to friends, but seldom will they go in the trash.

**10. Learn about yourself and open the door to new opportunity.** Writing a book can reveal many things, and you can discover a new self in the process of writing. It can open your eyes to new opportunities and ways you can improve your life and other people's.

So pick up that pen, or sit down at the computer and get writing!



Joanna Penn is an author, blogger, speaker and business consultant based in Australia. Her books include *How to Enjoy Your Job*, *From Idea to Book*, and *From Book to Market*. Visit her website at [thecreativepenn.com](http://thecreativepenn.com)

## Are you ready to go back to school?

by Kim Wolterman

The St. Louis Publishers Association is pleased to offer a fantastic learning opportunity to two of its publishing company members. As an affiliate member of the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA), we are able to provide scholarships that cover the registration fees to attend **Publishing University in New York City May 22-23, 2011**. Sponsored by the IBPA, Publishing University is a two day educational event for new and growing publishers. To be eligible for a scholarship you must be a member of both the St. Louis Publishers Association and the IBPA.

As the winner of last year's scholarship, I blogged about Publishing University on my blog <http://writeformation.blogspot.com/> and if you look at the May 2010 entries you can catch a glimpse of the exceptional speakers and sessions offered. If you are interested in applying for this year's scholarship, please send an email to [kimwolterman@gmail.com](mailto:kimwolterman@gmail.com) and I will forward an application to you. **All applications must be returned to me by March 9, 2011.**

More information about Publishing University 2011 can be found at <http://thepublishinguniversity.com>.

## Authors: How to write a press release for your book

by Alexis Grant

Journalists delete dozens of press releases each day. Dozens! I only write about a small fraction of the releases that pop up in my inbox.

So how do you get a journalist to write about your book? Keep in mind that my experience is in newspaper and online journalism, and things might work slightly differently for other types of media. But follow these rules, and you're bound to get more media attention for your book.

### Here's how to create a press release that will catch the eye of a journalist:

**Make it newsy.** I don't give a hoot that you just published your first book. Unless you're Snooki and I'm a tabloid, it's highly unlikely that I'm going to write a story about you and your book.

Pitch yourself well, and hey, it could happen.

What I care about is breaking *news*. So it's up to you to find a way to make your book release sound newsy. The best way to do this is to present yourself as a source on a newsy topic or identify a trend that you're qualified to speak about. Give the journalist reason to interview you, and hopefully when he quotes you, he'll mention your book.

For example, no publication (well, other than *The New York Times* book review and *Oprah Magazine*, of course) is going to write about my book, *Please Send Pants*. What they might write about or discuss on television or radio is the trend of taking a career break to travel or women traveling alone. And guess who would be the perfect source for those stories? Me! That's how I'd pitch myself in a release.

(Yes, this is easier with a nonfiction book, but I think you can accomplish it for most fiction, too.)

**Target, target, target.** Don't spam every journalist and her mother with your press release, hoping it will stick. Find publications that write about what your newsy topic, figure out which journalist writes those stories, and pitch that *specific* journalist.

Yes, this takes time and effort and detective work, both to figure out who that person is and to find their e-mail address. It often takes more work than writing the actual release. But it significantly increases your chances of getting covered. Guess what's likely to happen to your press release if you send it to the general news desk at your dream publication? (Unless you're Snooki.) Nobody will notice it. If you send it to the journalist who covers that beat, even if he's not ready to write about your

topic at that very moment, he might think of you as a source down the road.

**Cater to each journalist you pitch.** Like with a cover letter, your pitch will be far more effective if you cater it to the needs of whoever you send it to. You can quickly blast an entire list of journalists with your press release, but you'll be more likely to get coverage if you make that release relevant for each individual journalist. I'm not talking about rewriting the release a dozen times, just tweaking it.

Here's a good example: A week or so ago, a school released a study about how standing tall makes us act more in charge. If the public-relations professional had pitched it to me like that in an e-mail, I probably would've tossed it out like all the other press releases that clogged my inbox that day. Instead, she told me why job seekers — my target audience — would care: because they're more likely to succeed in an interview if they stand or sit up straight. I liked that practical angle, and ended up writing about it.

**Write the journalist a personal note.** After you paste the press release into the e-mail, write a personal note at the top. Introduce yourself and tell me — in three *sentences*, not three paragraphs — why you're sending me the release and why I should care.

This is when it pays to do the legwork yourself, rather than hire a publicist. Because if the note is from the actual source, so long as that person is cogent and brief, I pay more attention than if someone else writes to me on behalf of that person. Because in general, I don't like working with publicists. It makes extra work for me, because I have to go through them to get to the person I want to talk to. It forces me to take a risk on the actual source; I have no idea whether they know how to string together a sentence, I only know the *publicist* can string together a sentence. Also, public-relations folks tend to want a conference call, rather than simply helping me set up an interview with the source, which is annoying for a bunch of reasons I won't go into here. (Because I've ranted enough.) What I'm saying is, if you know how to promote your book yourself, the pitch is better off coming from you.

In that short personal note, address me by name, and I'll probably read it all the way through. Which means I'm more likely to consider your pitch than if I just skimmed the release. Because when a release lacks a personal note, I'd guess I spend less than 10 seconds looking it over to decide whether I'm interested. Yup, you put all that work into the press release, and I delete it in 10 seconds. And that's exactly why it's crucial to...

**Get to the point.** Fast. If not in the title, then in the first sentence. Tell me right away what you have to offer. And keep your press release short, no longer than a few paragraphs. Because

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Authors: How to write a press release ... *continued*

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Book learning

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