

SECRETS OF

AUTHOR SUCCESS

8

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OF FAMOUS
AUTHORS**





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On a daily basis my company helps authors market their books, and through this process we have seen a lot of things that work... and other things that haven't worked! Over time we have seen patterns, techniques and character traits that exist in authors who are successful.

The short lessons presented in this report were taken from my observations during phone conversations and e-mails with New York Times, USA Today and Wall Street Journal best-selling authors. Some of these lessons might seem like common sense, but in reality they are secrets that can change you as a writer forever! We have found that successful authors get to where they are by consistently applying basic principles. As you read these lessons, you too will realize that these authors didn't get to where they are by accident, but by making very intentional and well-calculated decisions that launched them to where they are today.



#1 Write from the Heart

While working with a New York Times best-seller who wrote about her tragic childhood, she shared with me the story of her success:

“I didn’t even plan to publish my little story, but wanted to recoup the \$350 I paid for basic editing costs and hopefully help a couple of kids who went through the same abusive childhood I did. Never did I expect that a year later, I would be a NY Times best-selling author... and I have not marketed or promoted my book at all.”

Someone who is writing for a greater purpose (or just for themselves!) is able to handle the frustrations and setbacks of marketing and promotion without scars. Focus on your passion for writing or sharing a story. If success is an afterthought, then you can be satisfied that you met your goal even if your book doesn’t sell the way you wanted at the very beginning.



#2 Relate to your **BASE**

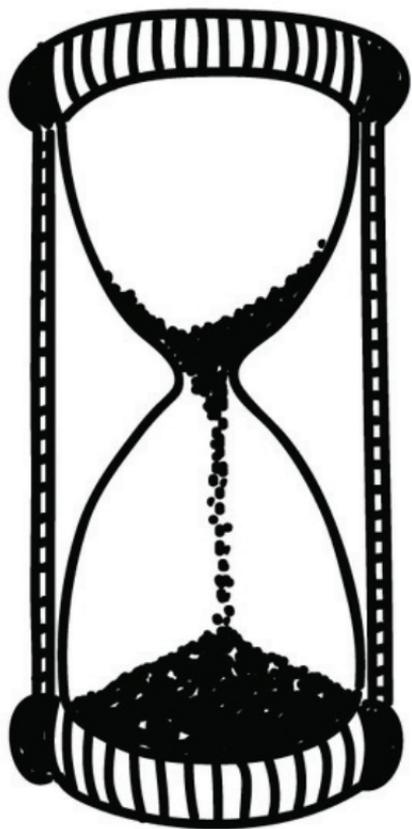
I know one New York Times best-seller whose marketing super-power is making readers feel cared about and listened to. One of the ways this author did this was by creating a Facebook page for one of her well-known fictional characters, and she spent time posting status updates and answering questions as the character! Not only did it get great interaction from fans, but it also built momentum for the fictional series she was promoting. This same author not only spends time relating to her fans on social media, but she also takes great care to be approachable outside the web. Famous authors are very busy and understandably don't have time to respond to standard emails from readers. This author, while still not able to answer every email that came her way, made a smart decision to make her mother her assistant. Her mother responds to emails in a very personal manner and you feel like you were really listened to by someone close to the author.

While these exact methods probably don't apply to you yet, it is important that you don't forget about the people buying your book. Treat them like the friends that they are, and they will be your best marketing tool!



#3 Diversify

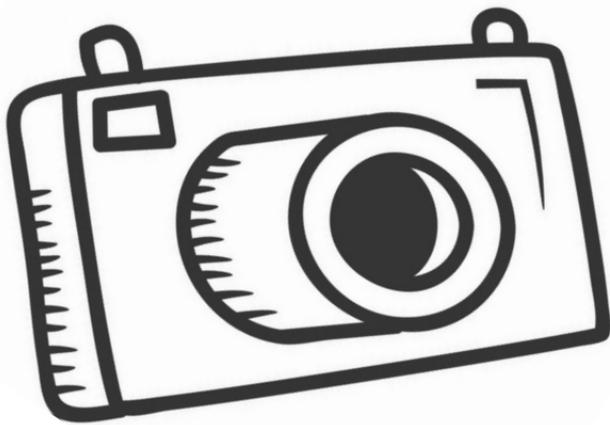
In the e-book world, Amazon would have you believe that they are the only marketplace that matters. This is not the case! While they do control a remarkable 60% of the market, Barnes and Noble and Apple still have something to offer. One author told me that 37% of her sales come through Nook. For her, this results in a 6-figure income from Nook sales alone each year! So, even if you want to offer your book exclusively on Amazon for the first 90 days of your launch to enroll it in the Kindle Select Program, after those 3 months make it available everywhere else. If readers come looking for your book at the other providers of e-books, you want to make sure that your book is waiting to greet them.



#4 Budget Your Time

I was lucky enough to work as a marketing consultant with a New York Times best-seller who had not only been successful with books, but had also written screenplays for major Hollywood blockbusters. During the course of advising him on the launch of his author-related marketing services, we spent hours on the phone and exchanged many e-mails. The

author worked non-stop running two businesses, doing speaking engagements as well as working on small changes for a recent screenplay. During all of this, he never stopped communicating. The man is a master juggler! One day he started a writing project, and everything changed. He would go days without responding to emails. I learned that, while as a business owner he was always accessible, as a writer he had learned the skill of isolation. For him, to get writing done he had to shut everything off and get the job done. It takes willpower, but in writing, great work takes great focus.

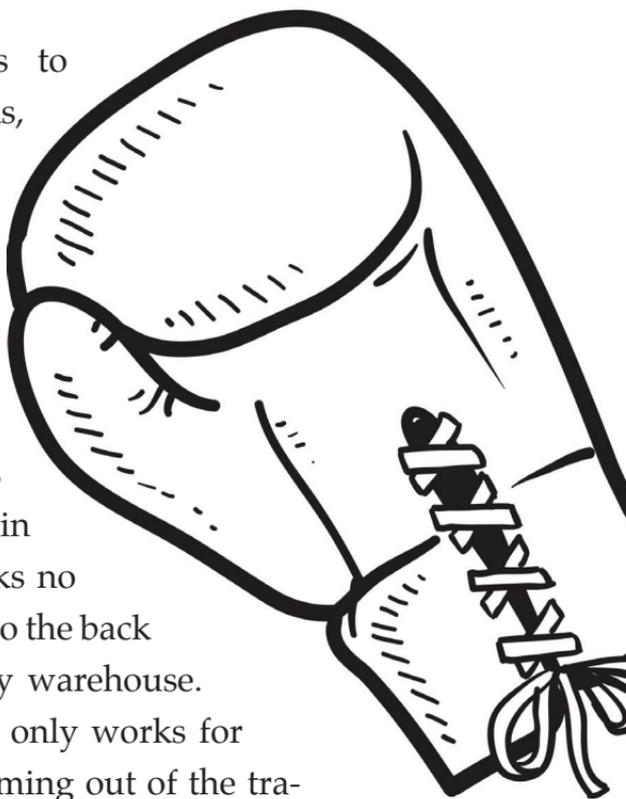


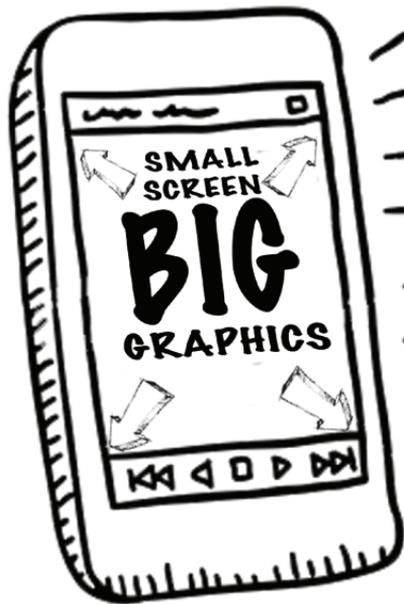
#5 Share Yourself

A hobby of one of my USA Today best-selling clients is amateur photography. She has become known for taking photos of scenic places where she imagined her stories took place, and using these photos for her covers. They were nice photos, and quality has to be considered, but the cool part was how excited her fans became seeing the places where the author envisioned her fictional story happening. Up-and-coming authors sometimes tend to distance their author persona from their real lives. But you should let your passions and hobbies come through in your writing and marketing efforts. For well-known authors, people enjoy knowing that they are real human beings, and for lesser known authors, people tend to feel connected when they have something in common with you. If you love gardening, mention it in your bio or make reference to your hobby on your author blog. Opening your life up to others is one key to book marketing excellence.

#6 I didn't hear no bell

When it comes to your old books, don't throw in the towel just yet! One of my clients re-launched her old books as e-books and sold over 3 million copies. This is because we live in a world where books no longer disappear into the back room of some dusty warehouse. Reviving books not only works for longtime writers coming out of the traditional publishing world, but it can still be useful to lesser-known authors. As you slowly gain a larger fan base, your new fans will start to look through your old titles to read other things you have written. As older books begin to taper off in sales, re-energize your campaign by getting more reviews, a new cover or by getting people to start talking about them on their blogs. This is the digital world, so you can start over whenever you want. So don't go down without a fight... just relaunch and re-market!





#7 Small screen BIG graphics

While working on my first e-book for a New York Times best-seller, I spent hours finely crafting the cover. We finally got it to the point where the author and I both loved it.

As expected, within hours the book hit the best-seller threshold on BN.com. But then, something unexpected happened. Sales did not increase after she hit that status. On BN, the size of a book thumbnail is much smaller in the best-seller spots than they are on a book's product page. That's when we realized that the cover design was impossible to understand at a small size. You don't always have to be able to read all the text, but you need to be able to figure out what is going on. There we were at 2AM dissecting and reconstructing the cover so it would be understandable at a small size without squinting. This was one of those "aha" moments, and it is now something I always think about because it directly affected the sales of a book. This might seem obvious, but when viewing thumbnails on book websites you will see that there are other authors, like me, who apparently didn't get the memo.



When talking to self-published authors who have crossed into the mainstream, one thing often sticks out to me that separates them from the crowd of authors who have yet to make a living from their writing. This is the ability to rely on others for help. As crazy as it might seem, many of the things that propel authors to stardom is the right editor, advertiser, designer, etc. The average self-published author might think that self-publishing means you skip out on the people and strategies used by industry professionals to save money, but to be successful you shouldn't ignore the wisdom of professionals. And you know what? These things *can* be done cost effectively.

As you read our emails over the next few weeks, you will see a mixture of techniques and tools as well as services that can help you optimize the performance of your book. Many of the things we suggest come right out of the playbooks of millionaire authors that we personally know. I hope you keep an open mind as I introduce you to a variety of strategies that will be great additions to your book marketing campaigns.