

Bringing Ideas to Life

A Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming a Professional Writer

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Kindle Edition

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Introduction

Setting out on the magical journey into the world of writing is filled with wonders beyond your imaginations. It's also littered with obstacles that can add chaos into even the most organized of individuals. It's not easy but then again, the greatest achievements in life never are.

With that said, it's not as difficult as you probably believe either. The public tends to transform professional writing into a dream that has little chance at success. That's simply not the case. The problem is that celebrity status is often seen as the only form of success for writers. However, that's rare. True success is about unlocking your life, not comparing it to that of someone else. In other words, don't measure your own success using another person.

Imagine if you had control of your own income. If you could wake up every day and write. You can gain control of every aspect of your life as a writer. This book will reveal several different methods of taking control. Once you are in control, you are successful.

This book will show you how to unlock success through writing. There are no secret recipes. There are no loopholes. You will unlock the potential in your own life while never resorting to black hat techniques. Let's get started!

Motivation

Inspiration and motivation are the keys to unlocking the true power in all writers. They both go hand-in-hand. Inspiration comes easier when a writer is properly motivated. So those who are constantly motivated to keep pressing forward find it much easier to write than those who let adversity constantly push them around like a rag doll. Writing is a journey filled with ups and downs. Some of the time, it can seem as if we are standing still. This means that our first focus of being a successful writer should be motivation.

Mindset

The first thing we will discuss is mindset. Mindset is the component that separates those who dream from those who fulfill their dreams. Success requires a mindset that does not come naturally. It's not taught in schools nor learned growing up. It's not practiced as a normal in society. In fact, some people tend to grow up believing that true success comes from nothing but hard work while others think it's just flat out luck. Both are myths that have no basis of fact. I know people who work their butt off and barely get by. They are constantly stressed because their bills are barely being paid and they hate their job. I also know people who work less than 20 hours a week and make thousands. They are happy and enjoy life. If hard work were the only ingredient needed to be successful, then why would someone working less hours be happier and make more money? It doesn't make sense when you look at it that way. On the other hand, if success and luck went hand-in-hand, then there would be far fewer successful individuals in the world. I would guess that only 1 in every 6 million would fall into that category.

Those who are successful understand that an hour spent moving forward is worth more than 24 hours standing still. This simply means that any actions you take should be working toward a goal. Working toward a goal will allow your hard work to achieve something greater. Hard work without a plan is useless. Think of it this way. You can spend 8 hours digging a hole in your front yard but what would be the purpose? You just wasted your time. Using that same philosophy, a dog spends about 5 minutes doing the same thing. Their purpose is to either cool off or warm up. With a goal, they accomplished their work in 5 minutes versus wasting 8 hours "working hard" to accomplish nothing.

Now let's discuss the mindset for a writer. Writers require a unique approach to everyday life. All of the things that you learned growing up are likely to be tossed out of a window. Before I discuss this too much, let's take a look at the three big mistakes that new writers tend to make.

- Unrealistic expectations

- Lack of a plan (Yes, writing requires a plan)
- Poor time management

Don't panic. I don't want to scare you. My goal is to open your mind. The best way to achieve success as a writer is to avoid these three mistakes. This one step can lead to success. Let's look at them more closely.

Unrealistic Expectations

This might be the biggest mistake that anyone starting their own business makes. And yes, becoming a professional writer is a business. In our mind, we think that being our own boss will be stress free. Trust me; it's a lot harder than you might believe. If it were easy then everyone would do it.

Another unrealistic expectation is that writers get rich quickly. While there are rare instances of this, most writers are not rich. Even the truly great writers did not set out to become wealthy. They did it because it's something they love. So if you're only writing as a way to get rich, you are probably in for a disappointment. In fact, income gained by writers is way different than most are used to. We will discuss more about this later in the book.

To avoid falling prey to unrealistic expectations, just focus on what you can do: set goals and work toward achieving them. The rest will fall into place.

Lack of a Plan

All businesses must have a plan set into place in order to be successful. Writing is a business. Therefore, it requires a plan. It can be as simple as writing your goals down on a piece of paper and then working to achieve those goals. But there must be some kind of plan in place.

Poor Time Management

Time management is essential to a writer's life. Poor time management will cost you money. It will also lead to other problematic issues. Avoid this by working smart and managing your time effectively. Time management is one of the main focuses of this book. The practices and examples contained within these pages are designed to take time management into account.

How to Stay Motivated

Writers are fueled by inspiration. Many people see inspiration as a magical force that just randomly happens. That's simply not the case. While there are times that certain visuals and sensations can inspire us, most inspiration is derived directly from motivation. If you stay motivated, you will find inspiration easier to come by.

Everyone is different so we all require different stimuli in order to stay motivated. Some people are better motivated by normal routines while others prefer change. Whatever the case, here are a few writing methods that should help. If you like to maintain a standard routine, then choose your favorite and stick with it. If you like change, then swap them from time-to-time.

Methods of Writing

Overall, choose a writing method that you love. If it differs from what's in this book, that's okay. We are all different and there are thousands of writing techniques to choose from – most of which are sure to be successful.

Practice 1 - The 3 Block Method

This method involves scheduling your time on a daily basis. Time management is very important, not just in writing but for your everyday life. In fact, people who practice time management live more productive and longer lives. Here's how the three block method works.

Schedule your writing time into three separate blocks. The reason for this is that when writing, you never want to sit at the computer for too long. So here's how the block scheduling works.

BLOCK 1

- Write for 2 hours.
- 15 minute break.
- Write for 2 hours.
- 30 minute break.

BLOCK 2

- Write for 2 hours.
- 30 minute break.

BLOCK 3

- Write for an hour.

Notice that as you get further into the day, your writing time decreases? The reason for this is that the most productive time to write is in the morning. Another cool thing about this method is that you only work 7 hours a day! However, as you get better at writing, you could literally work 3 to 4 hours a day.

Of course, not everyone will have this much free time. Some will have a job that occupies most of their time. I would never recommend quitting a job to pursue writing – not right away. It's smart to slowly build up to being able to dedicate more time to your writing career.

Practice 2 - 15 Minute Windows

This is a great choice for part time writers because it only requires an hour a day. However, I'm going to show you how to incorporate this method into full time writing.

Here's how it works. The normal method is that you write for 15 minutes and pick four times of the day to do this, the following times are recommended:

- Morning

- Lunch
- Before Dinner
- Before Bed

The reason that this works so well is that writing for 15 minutes at a time is actually more productive than writing for an hour. This is my preferred method.

Although the above method is great for part-time writers, here's a way to convert it into a full day. We will simply take and combine it with the 3 block method. The key is to making this work is to have at least 2 writing projects open. I know that this may seem confusing, but it's amazing how that your mind will get worn out with one project but be perfectly fresh for the next.

BLOCK 1

- 15 minutes writing PROJECT A
- 15 minutes writing PROJECT B
- 15 minute break
- 15 minutes writing PROJECT A
- 15 minutes writing PROJECT B
- 30 minute break

BLOCK 2

- 15 minutes writing PROJECT A
- 15 minutes writing PROJECT B
- 15 minute break
- 15 minutes writing PROJECT A
- 15 minutes writing PROJECT B
- 30 minute break

BLOCK 3

- 15 minutes writing PROJECT A
- 15 minutes writing PROJECT B
- 15 minute break

- 15 minutes writing PROJECT A
- 15 minutes writing PROJECT B
- 30 minute break

The best thing about this method is that you will actually only work for 3 hours a day. But during each 15 minute section, you should be writing. No texting. No catching up with Facebook buddies. Steady writing.

Practice 3 - Twice a day

This method is very simple and requires only 6 hours of work per day.

- Write for 4 hours
- Take a 1 hour break
- Write for 2 hours

Like I said earlier, you can either take one method and stick with it or switch them up from time-to-time. I personally use the 15 minute method most of the time but I like to swap it up every month or so.

What to Expect from this Book

If you're like most individuals who have aspirations of being a writer, your mind is probably cluttered with the thousands of possibilities that are screaming your name. With all of the chaos surrounding the world of writing, it's not unusual for those dreams to seem impossible. It's difficult to see the first step to take. Often, the results are half-written manuscripts collecting dust and dreams being swept away by the relentless winds created by theories and beliefs. You're likely asking yourself:

- How can I finish my book?
- How do I find a publisher?
- Is writing a profession or a hobby?
- Can I really make a living as a writer?
- How long will it take to be successful?

The first thing that you must accomplish is finishing your book. All other worries come second to that. Most never finish their first book. They fall prey to shattered dreams and broken words. So finishing your first book should be your primary goal in the beginning. Everything else is just a tool to use in meeting that goal.

The transition towards becoming a writer might seem like a huge leap, but in reality it's just a series of small steps. Knowing the correct path will ultimately lead to success. Everyone has a story to tell. Everyone has information that could help another person. So I truly believe that most people can be successful writers. Unfortunately, the reality is that so few capitalize on the opportunity.

Before going any further, I feel compelled to point out what this book is not:

- A get rich quick scheme
- A way to make money without offering a contribution to society
- A shortcut to becoming successful (success is earned, not bestowed)
- How to trick people into buying your book (I've read books that do this)
- How to legally plagiarize another's work (Believe it or not, I've also seen books that do this as well)

This book is to show you how to become a professional writer. There are no shortcuts or quick ways to achieve success. It's something that is earned through planning and focus. Here is a brief summary of what I plan to go through during the course of this book.

Why Money Matters to Writers

Many aspiring writers are being told that they should not focus on finances when starting out. So many experts try and preach to new writers that finances come second to their writing. Sometimes it's even worse – they teach that money is evil and should be feared. Although I tend to have an open mind when it comes to opinions, I

do not see any logic to this. I understand that most of these individuals are simply trying to eliminate a worry from the minds of aspiring writers. Ignoring an issue does not make it go away. I find that attacking it head on is the much better approach. There is no need to fear money once you understand how to incorporate it into your plan for becoming a professional writer.

While I might not be in love with the idea of money and wealth, it is something that is necessary in today's society. Although this book is not based around finances, the basics of money management are discussed in order to make the most of your writing opportunities. That includes types of income, their purpose, and how to incorporate them into your life as an aspiring writer.

How to Get that First Book Written

The hardest thing to accomplish is completing your first book. When I say complete, I mean writing a book that is ready to be read by the public. This is often the most difficult hurdle for writers to get through and the biggest reason why the majority give up. As intimidating as your first book might seem, it's really not as difficult to complete as most would have you believe. The majority of this book is designed to get you through that major hurdle in an easy to follow step-by-step guide.

Initial Income as a Writer

Most of us have seen interviews with big name authors about how they became successful. While it's not a bad idea to work toward this level of success, it's very unlikely that you will achieve it early in your career. That makes self-publishing the most viable option for most. However, if you've ever performed an internet search for "self publishing" then you've likely seen countless options - none of which are cheap. Here's the good news. I'm willing to bet that almost every option you've looked at is what I would call a "scam". I use the term lightly but feel it to be appropriate with most self publishing options. I will explain why I feel this to be the case later on.

The best self publishing options are free, with costs associated with registering the book (in a way that you legally control all rights to it) and marketing. I can show you how to accomplish all of this with no out of pocket expenses. You will only use money that is earned through writing.

Inspiration and Time Management Go Hand-In-Hand

I've hear people say all of the time that inspiration is always random, happening on a whim because of something they seen or felt through another sense. While this is certainly the case at times, most inspiration is actually planned through proper time management practices. What does time management have to do with inspiration? The answer is simple. If you learn to budget your time in a way that allows your mind to be fresh and active at specific times, you will find inspiration a lot easier to come by. Being a professional writer is about taking control of your life - including inspiration. Once you learn to master when and how you're inspired, writing becomes a breeze. In fact, you will start seeing writer's block as the biggest myth ever to encompass the world of writing.

Having the Right Tools for the Job

There are so many tools available for writers that sometimes choosing the right ones can seem overwhelming. Some are free while others cost money. Some are seen by beginners are unnecessary while experts call them essential. This book will go through some of the best tools on the market and show you which ones you really need to start learning to use.

Marketing Tips

Writers are only as successful as their marketing strategies. One of the biggest misconceptions is that best-selling books make the list because they are such good books. In reality, an author can write the most useful and entertaining book in history. Without marketing, no one will ever read it. Best sellers are established through a combination of outstanding writing and marketing.

This book will guide you through some of the most utilized and successful marketing strategies in existence. While some marketing does cost money, most of the best strategies are free. I'll explain these in more detail later.

Publishing Options

In the writing world, authors are either labeled as "indie" or "traditionally published". The truth is that successful writers are both. In the beginning, you are going to be the only one who believes in your work. You will have to prove yourself to others and establish a reputation. This is easier than it sounds. This book will discuss this in much greater detail. You will learn:

- How to effectively "self-publish" while still leaving your book's options open.
- How to prove the value of your book.
- Why traditional publishers are still important.
- How to get signed by a traditional publisher.

Types of Income

Now let's get down to the bottom line. People tend to look at money several different ways: some say it's the root of all evil while others simply see it as a means to an end. In reality, money is just one of the many factors that define our lifestyle. It can create security, put food on the table, and a roof over our heads. Money is also the reason for a lot of crime and negativity in the world. It's my belief that money is simply what you make it.

This certainly isn't a book based on managing finances or getting rich. My plan is to show you how to become a successful writer. Whether you like it or not, the world we live in requires money in order to live the lifestyle that is possible during this time. Notice that I didn't say that money is necessary to survive? It's not and to say that it would be a lie. I mean, you could pitch a tent in the woods and hunt for your own food. However, to live in society and become a successful writer requires generating an income.

It's a common belief that the only way to make money is to have a job and work 40 (or more) hours a week. Most of us are raised to believe this. This belief is not completely true. The underlying truth is that contributing to society is why anyone earns an income. Whether it's Joe going to work at the shoe factory everyday or Bob taking the boat out to fish all day, they are both contributing to society. Joe is doing his part to supply shoes to others and earns his paycheck for doing so. Fisherman Bob goes out on his boat and earns his living.

Although he may work for himself, Bob still contributes to society by catching fish for others to eat. As you can see, even though Joe and Bob earn their money from different methods, they have one thing in common. They both make a contribution to society.

You might be asking yourself what any of this has to do with being a successful writer. Now I'm going to answer that with something that most amateur writers do not understand – one of many things that separate success from failure. It's a common belief that writers should only focus on writing – all the time. That is as far from the truth as it gets. I see new writers on Twitter all of the time, constantly posting that they are writing. Yet, half of these individuals never finish their first book. Others finish, yet never publish. Don't get me wrong, I'm not bad mouthing anyone for only writing as a hobby. They live their life by their own rules. However, if you're reading this book then you might be on the precipice between amateur and professional writer. You want to take that leap of faith, yet are afraid of no one catching you on the way down. Holding your manuscript close to heart, you wonder how those before you found the courage to hurl themselves off of this precipice. Here's your answer. They didn't! I mean really, does it seem like a good idea to jump off a precipice whilst unable to see the ground? Success doesn't require blind obedience. It requires a plan and then execution of that plan. There is no leap of faith. Luck does not exist. Success is a series of steps and it all begins with a single step.

The first step to planning success is to learn to look at money a little bit differently. There are three different types of income: earned,

portfolio, and passive. I'm going to show you how to incorporate each of these into your life.

The life of a writer is much different than you will learn in school. In other words, writers earn income a lot differently than most others. Our contribution to the world is entertainment, information, and ideas. I want to go ahead and get the part that scares so many individuals - money. So let's look at the three different types of income in more detail.

Earned Income

Any type of income that is generated by working in the here and now is called earned income. For example, an employee going to work every day for an hourly or salary pay is earning income. However, earned income doesn't necessarily require that one works for another. A teenager mowing their neighbor's yard for some extra cash is earning income.

Some of the things that generate earned income include:

- Working at a Job
- Consulting
- Money won on Poker Night
- Anything that pays that requires time and effort in the here and now.

Earned income (as you might have guessed) is the most common way people make money. The downside to earned income is that if you stop working, you stop getting paid. The amount of money earned is proportional to the time and effort spent working so it's harder to increase income without either working more hours or learning more skills. Furthermore, earned income has the highest tax rate of all income types.

If all that is true, then why would the majority of the world depend on earned income? There are two reasons: one, it's easy and requires no plan to get started; two, it requires no start-up capital. I'm going to

show you how to use earned income to your advantage as a writer. I'll also show you how to break a life-long habit of becoming dependant on it to meet the demands of your life. Breaking free of the need for earned income is the first step to unlocking true success. For writers, it's a necessity.

Passive Income

Passive income is our life source as writers and is money generated automatically through work or investments that were created on a previous date. For example, writing a book generates passive income. You invested the time in writing it, while not being paid at the time. Then upon publication, anytime someone purchases the book, you receive money (for the rest of your life). Another example would be a landlord renting a home to another. They invested the time and money to buy and maintain the property and now they are generating a regular income passively. Here are some examples of passive income:

- Business Income (assuming the owner has employees)
- Rental Income
- Intellectual Property (books, content, etc.)
- Affiliate Marketing

Once the initial investment is made (whether it is time or money), passive income will continue to come every month or year with little to no work required (aside from the initial investment). Those earning passive income also have full control over their investment (which is what separates it from portfolio income).

This is the main type of income that we are going to strive to achieve in this book. Don't misunderstand. Passive income is not a get rich quick strategy. It takes time and patience to achieve. It will not happen overnight and could potentially take years. However, you should have two main goals as a writer.

Goal 1: Provide a useful contribution to society by writing an informative and/or entertaining book. Accomplish this by being absolutely sure that you write the absolute best book you can.

Goal 2: Transform your income capability from earned into passive.

Notice that I emphasize contributing to society above earning money. Why? Because if you make a positive contribution, you are guaranteed more success than if you put out a horrible book. Furthermore, I want you to understand that there are thousands of programs that litter the internet that show you ways of making money through methods that have no contribution to society at all. These are scams and I feel most will be illegal in the future. In fact, I would go as far as to say that any income that is generated without a contribution to society could be seen as criminal. There are a few exceptions, like winning the lottery.

Don't try any underhanded means of making money. Provide a legitimate contribution. It will not only keep your income safe, but you will feel accomplished.

As you might have guessed by now, passive income is how people become wealthy. It allows one to continue to earn income no matter what happens in life.

Financial Tips

Now that the scary beast has been tamed into a purring cat, let's discuss finances in more detail. Like I've mentioned before, this book isn't about managing your financial life. There are full books written on that subject, some of which are recommended reading for everyone. For the sake of this book, I'm only going to go through some of the ones I feel are important for writers.

[List of Financial Books on Amazon](#)

The goal of this book is to become a professional writer. I define a professional writer as one who writes for their full time income. That's as realistic of a goal as you're going to get. Not some half-

baked get rich quick scheme. Not some delusion of grandeur, but a legitimate profession.

The trick to being a professional writer is to have enough passive income to keep you going while writing the next book on your list. The more books you publish, the higher your income. Why is managing finances so important for a writer? If you plan on being a full-time writer, then you can expect to wait significant periods of time between payments. That means you will have to be good enough with money to keep yourself going through those breaks. Royalties can be paid anywhere from once a month to once a year. Amazon pays royalties every month but only 60 days (or more) after the buyer made a purchase. For example, if you sell 1,000 books on January 1, you will not get paid for those sales until March 30.

Don't let that scare you away. You only need to learn how to adapt to a different form of income. This is the problem that a lot of first time published authors have - and the reason they give up after their first book. Here are a few pointers on how you can prepare for the financial side of life as a professional writer.

The first thing, and I cannot emphasize this enough, is that if you are living paycheck to paycheck, then you really need to break that habit. This advice is keen for everyone but can be absolutely devastating for new writers. It's not going to be easy, but breaking this habit is absolutely necessary to create financial stability.

Create a budget. This will not only help get your finances in order, but will make life in general much less stressful. A budget can be something as simple as writing down expenses and income on a piece of paper. However, I recommend some sort of financial software to keep your finances on track. Our main goal is to remove financial stress from your life.

Start saving money today. I know, you've heard this a thousand times (if not more). If your response is, "I have too many expenses to save money," then you should know that you're making the same excuse as millions of others. The way around this is to dedicate 10%

of your income to savings. Do this **before** expenses; otherwise there will never be enough money. Trust me, if you dedicate yourself to making it happen, you will find a way.

The final financial tip that I highly recommend is that you contribute to a retirement plan. If you don't already have one, then make it one of your goals to open an IRA. Contribute no less than 5% of your income into this account. Many people don't realize that retirement accounts have far more usefulness than to simply give you money when you retire. They give you options through your entire life. For example, some people choose to buy their home with a loan from a retirement account instead of getting a mortgage. In my humble opinion, the more options an individual has in their life, the less stress finances will cause them.

I hope that you understand why I would mention all of these boring, financial tips in a book about how to become a successful writer. Financial stability is important for all of us and money is probably the number one reason why most people choose not to seek writing as a full time opportunity. If you can get your finances in order and plan accordingly, you can choose any profession that you desire. Live your life to its fullest – make your dreams a reality.

Investment vs. Reinvestment

I'm not referring to stock investments or anything else dependant on someone else. I'm referring to investing in yourself and your future. Starting a career as a writer is just like starting any other business. It requires investments in order to achieve optimum results. One of the cool things about writing is that you can control your income, to an extent. You will need to reinvest some of the income you earn into marketing and other areas that will increase your future passive income.

Nothing is free in business. There will be expenses. This book will show you how to earn the initial income in a way that won't cost a penny in out of pocket expenses. That will be explained in greater

detail later in this book. For now, understand that there are expenses with some of the methods that I recommend.

Writing Programs

I'm finally done talking about boring financial stuff. Now it's time to dive into the fun, vibrant world of writing. Let's start off by going through some of the writing programs that I recommend. If you find one that's better suited for you, then by all means use it instead of my recommendations. You are the one who has to live with it.

Google Docs

When starting out, I recommend Google Docs. It's free, powerful, and provides everything you'll need to get started. As you start making money, you can reinvest some of that money into purchasing a better program.

Google Docs is a very useful tool that can be used for a great number of things, one of which is word processing. It's completely free and all you need to use it is a Google account. Another cool feature that Google Docs gives you is the ability to share documents instantly with other people. This is great for freelancing. In addition, your files are backed up and protected just in case your computer crashes.

Advantages:

- Completely Free
- Able to share documents with anyone.
- Instantly download the documents in any format, including MS Word and PDF.

Disadvantages:

- Must have Internet access to use.

Open Office

Open Office is an innovative program and almost as powerful as the almighty Microsoft Office. The entire package includes a word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Open Office is one of the most popular choices for those new to writing and who don't have the extra money to spend on MS Office.

Advantages:

- Powerful Word Processing for a very low cost
- Does not require Internet. Can be run locally on your computer.

Disadvantages:

- Does cost money

Microsoft Office

MS Office is the most popular choice for business users and is by far the most powerful. However, it costs money - \$129 (for the basic version) to be exact. But this may be the course of action you wish to take. I recommend MS Office once you are making enough money through writing to afford it.

Advantages:

- Just about everyone uses this program.
- Very easy to use.
- Can be run locally on your computer.

Disadvantages:

- Costs \$129.

yWriter

Those of you who have attempted your first novel all know that the first 50 to 100 pages come easy. After that, the plot starts to jumble and the story can take on a life of its own. While this isn't always a bad thing, a writer needs to be able to control the chaos to some extent. That's where yWriter comes into play.

Its sole purpose is structuring a novel – separating it into easy to manage chapters and scenes. It even allows you to build characters, locations, and even items. It lets you to associate graphic files with each listing. Needless to say, it makes novel writing a lot easier.

What about those who want to write a non-fiction book? The structuring features are great for that as well. Just treat scenes as subchapters in that case.

All-in-all, yWriter's interface is clean and easy to use. It's a program built for beginners. It even integrates a word processor right into the program.

The best thing about yWriter is that it's free, with the option to donate money. However, this is completely optional and does not affect the program features at all.

Recap

Although you are the one who will ultimately decide which writing program you will use, always keep in mind that whatever you choose should be as simple as possible. You don't want to be struggling with use of a program while writing. Otherwise, you are fighting two battles at once. Keep things simple and introduce advanced features little by little if you're a beginner.

Time Management Tips

Managing time is one of the secrets to staving off the mythical excuse formerly known as "writer's block". Once you learn to master time, you will be able to control when and where you are inspired (most of the time). Here are a few quick tips that will help you to master your time more effectively.

Use a Calendar

Most people have "to-do" lists. The problem is that in most cases, they grow into something that eventually becomes too overwhelming to control. That's when panic sets in and as a result, human nature tends to force us to run endlessly from one task to the next, never really accomplishing anything. This can be avoided by keeping a calendar and scheduling specific times to complete items as they come up. You will also be able to see your progress.

Be Sure your Next Day is Planned before Going to Bed

Take 30 minutes before bed to be sure your next day is planned. You don't want to waste time figuring out what to do next. You should always know what you will be doing through your day. It's best to

wake up, knowing everything you plan to accomplish on a given day.

Learn to Act instead of React

One of our worst habits is reacting to things around us without acting on our own. It's not hard to break this habit. The problem is that it's extremely difficult to realize it's even happening – until it's too late. Let me explain.

When the phone rings, what is your first impulse? Answer it, of course. That is programmed into our brains on a subconscious level. It is also a reaction and not an action. In other words, you answer the phone and speak to whoever is at the other end because they called you. So you reacted to their call. You might wonder how this is a bad habit. Bear with me and I'll explain.

I'm willing to bet that if you kept track of every time that you react to your phone, it would add up to several hours per week. However, that's only one scenario. What about your email? Do you leave it running while you're on your computer? Do you read messages as soon as you get them? What about social media? Are you constantly reacting to messages sent from friends and family? What else do you react to through the course of the day? Sit down and make a list.

I would be willing to bet that everyone reading this book spends more than 10% of their day reacting. If you want to be successful, you need to turn those reactions into actions by living life on your terms. Leave your phone turned off and schedule times to check it. Determine a specific time to check your email. If you determine a time in advance to return all calls and messages, then you are acting instead of reacting to others.

Breaking the reaction habit might not seem like it would mean a lot, but it is actually a life changing event. You will empower yourself to start taking action on your terms. More importantly, you will free up more time each day to get more productive things done instead of being interrupted every time you start making progress.

Set Office Hours

When you are writing, make sure everyone knows that you are not to be disturbed. I can tell you first hand that friends and family will think that because you are home, you are free to do whatever they want, whenever they want. Make sure they know that this is not the case. This is your time. You are working. They should treat this time as if you are at the office.

Why Word Count Matters

Everyone has their own technique for writing. Finding whatever drives you should be your overall goal. While I certainly cannot predict what another will find the most productive, I can discuss some of the most common options. Just remember that you are unique. What works for another might not work for you. Don't let anyone *convince* you that their *way* is the only way.

Before I get too far into this, I would like to point out that for professional writers, words equal money. Increasing your productivity by just 1,000 words per day can lead to a huge boost in income. Now before I start scaring away readers with these huge word counts, I will point out that these large numbers do not come in the beginning. The longer you write, the easier words will come. In fact, those who finish writing their first book gain about a 100% increase in their writing production from that point forward. One of the easiest ways to increase income in the beginning stages as a writer is to increase word count.

The first thing that must be done is to set up a goal of words per day. I would recommend that beginners stick to a low number. Of course, that is just a quick way to set a goal on a daily basis. Let me explain.

If you're planning to dedicate 4 hours a day to writing, then your word count goal would be lower than if you are planning to write for 8 hours. There are several who would disagree with me about keeping track of your word count. They would argue that writers should not be worried about such things – they should just write. I disagree. One can be the hardest and most dedicated worker in the world, yet still get nowhere. In addition, without documentation,

progress can sometimes be difficult (if not impossible) to see. This leaves one with a feeling that they are being unproductive. Success requires some sort of plan; otherwise, most of the effort you put forth is wasted.

I highly recommend keeping track of word count per day. Programs like yWriter will automatically keep track of your daily word count. You can easily pull up a report to see your progress. This is yet another advantage to using yWriter.

Controlling your Environment

Let me start out by saying that I disagree with the whole concept of completely closing yourself off from anything other than your monitor. Some people recommend that writer's completely close themselves off from the world – going as far as to close the drapes on a window because someone walking by outside can be a distraction. I don't want to sound mean, but if someone can't focus their efforts enough to keep from being distracted by someone walking by outside, then they need practice.

In the long term, closing yourself off from the world will completely destroy your ability to write anything that is the least bit entertaining or realistic. Writers draw from the world around them. Do you want your words to be the equivalent of a walled up room or would you rather that your words contain the emotion and brilliance of the world around you?

Changing your surroundings is one of the most powerful tools at your disposal. Find great places to write. Places that are aesthetically pleasing or that move you. Here are a few good locations:

Choose a Second Location in your Home

Okay, so you have your main writing space. Now find another in your home. You may have to create one. Maybe it's in the corner of your living room? Maybe in the den next to the fireplace? The idea is to change things up from time-to-time and not get locked in on a single frame of mind.

Library

I find that being surrounded by some of the greatest literary works in history is quite inspirational. I try and spend at least one day every month at the library. It's one of the ways that I remain in control of my own inspiration.

Furthermore, if you need to research something for your book, then you're in the perfect place. There are so many advantages to writing at the library.

Coffee House

Although this fact can be argued either way, I'm definitely pro writing in a coffee house. I'm not the only one. Lots of authors write from coffee houses and are very productive. Although you might not be as productive here than another location (like a library), you will promote inspiration. Let me explain.

There's something about the smell and environment that offers inspiration. However, that's not the main reason that writers choose a coffee house. Observation is a key tool used by writers. Observing different people's behaviors and listening in on random conversations are essential to creating realistic characters in a book. Seeing how the host/hostess reacts to a rude customer or how they act to an overly polite customer are but two examples of a normal observation one might overhear at a coffee house. Observation is the real reason why a coffee house is such a popular choice. Also, it's good practice for learning to focus.

These are just three of the possibilities. Use your imagination to find more or just stick with these. Just remember your goals.

Don't Wait for Inspiration to Come to You

Inspiration is defined as *a process of being mentally stimulated to feel or perform an action.*

Action is defined as *a process of doing something.*

So if the end result of inspiration is an action, then it's only logical to assume that one cannot be inspired by simply sitting around and waiting for it to happen. Yet, why do so many of us grow up believing inspiration is a magical force that just *happens*? The answer is one that many of us would like to avoid. We simply don't want to face the responsibility of being in full control. When we know we're in control, it adds stress on our subconscious. It's human nature to always take the path of least resistance – sometimes this happens without us ever realizing it. Learning how to maintain control without adding stress is the true answer – not running from it. From now on, I don't want you waiting for inspiration to come to you. I want you to motivate yourself to find it! Remember, motivation and inspiration go hand-in-hand.

Read

As writers, we need to read – a lot. Read other fiction books. Read nonfiction. The more we read, the more we learn. Don't look at it as a chore. Try and find subjects that are enjoyable and entertaining. Learn things you want to learn. Read fiction that you love. If you become a full-time writer, then you will actually be able to schedule reading time into your daily routine. Imagine being able to read as part of your job. Reading:

- Allows us see ideas and styles that are being used by other writers.
- Educates us.
- Inspires us.
- Helps us learn to evaluate good writing and judge bad writing, helping us avoid the latter.
- Sparks our imagination

Take a Walk

Sometimes we just have to drop what we're doing and walk away in order to recharge our mental battery. Taking a walk is not only great for finding inspiration, but healthy. Nature has a way of pulling out

feelings and emotions that are otherwise dormant. It let's us unwind in a natural way. Try and work a daily walk into your routine. Don't fall prey to the myth "I don't have time." If you want to make something happen, you can make the time.

Watch your Favorite Movie

This is a strategy that I've found works quite well at sparking inspiration. We all have movies that we absolutely love. What I like to do when I'm having trouble getting motivated is to sit down and watch one of my favorite movies. As it's playing, I take notes about:

- Plot points.
- Characters (Protagonist, Antagonist, and Support)
- The Hook

Then I play around with these things afterwards. I might try changing the plot or maybe even swap the protagonist and antagonist roles. This gets my inner fire sparked. Once I feel more motivated, I then push myself into my own work.

Outsourcing

Outsourcing is an essential part of business if you plan on being a long-term writer. Outsourcing is a fancy term meaning that specific work is contracted out to another source. In other words, paying a freelancer to write content for your website would be a good example of outsourcing.

Some of the things you will find yourself outsourcing are:

- Blog Posts
- Newsletters
- Press Releases
- Website Content

Since I will be mentioning outsourcing through the course of this book, let's take a moment to look at some of the advantages that come with paying an outside source for content creation.

1. Save Money

That's right. Outsourcing saves money. If you ever want to unlock the full potential of professional writing, then you will need to create a lot of content. Plus you will need an editor, proofreader, and other go to guy or gal. This is too much work to accomplish alone. So you either hire an employee to work for you, or outsource the work. Outsourcing is the most cost friendly option because you don't have to worry about:

- Providing specialized training.
- Providing benefits to employees.

Being able to focus on writing new books should be your number one priority. Which brings us to:

2. Save Time

Time and money often go hand-in-hand. When outsourcing work, you free up a lot of time. This will allow you to focus your efforts onto a single venue – often a novel or nonfiction book. Let your advertising be put together by others. You will find yourself able to complete multiple projects at the same time.

3. Get Better Results

Outsourcing content for your website and blogs will ultimately increase traffic to these venues. As a result, you will see an increase in sales. Using the methods mentioned throughout this book will cause this increase to generate extra income. Sometimes this increase will return the money spent to outsource the work in the first place!

Results lead directly to staying enthusiastic about your writing career. Writers are fueled by enthusiasm. So outsourcing can actually end up fueling your inner fire and motivate you in ways that are simply indescribable.

Step 1: Freelancing

We start our journey into the world of writing by finding some ways to generate earned income. This is the income that will be used to cover any expenses that are incurred along the journey. Remember my promise of not having to spend any money out of your own pocket? This section will discuss how to earn the money that is required to cover some of the expenses of transforming your writing into a steady stream of passive income.

This process will work for any writer and there are several reasons why I recommend you follow this book through every step. This chapter will focus on freelancing. While you might be tempted to use your own money to finance your first book, doing so would cause you to miss several of the advantages that freelancing offers. I will discuss these advantages in more detail. Just remember that there are more important things to consider than money.

Why Freelance?

First off, I feel compelled to mention that I recommend freelancing for both those maintaining a separate job while starting out as a writer as well as those starting their writing career. Here are several reasons why I highly recommend that all aspiring writers take on freelancing.

Build a Portfolio

Not only will freelancing provide opportunities for extra income, more importantly, it gives new writers a chance to build their portfolio. Possessing a deep portfolio is a huge advantage for any writer, especially those looking to get their book published through traditional means.

Great Way to Learn

This is the most important reason why I recommend freelancing. The writing world is different than most people realize. Some of these differences can only be learned through experience. That's where freelancing comes into play. While making money performing services for others, you will gain valuable experience. Furthermore, you will find yourself learning new skills and a variety of subjects. Knowledge is powerful.

Work Load Control/Income Control

As a freelancer, you will have control over your workload. This is what makes freelancing a great choice for both part time and full time writers. If you plan to use freelancing only as a means to finance your books, then you'll be able to take on just enough work to accomplish this goal. If you are planning to be a full time writer, then you will also be able to take on more work. No matter what happens, you are in control.

Furthermore, your income is a direct result of your work effort rather than a set salary. Therefore, you're able to compensate for unexpected expenses. Those who take complete control over their life have much greater success than those whose lives are controlled by others.

Gain New Connections

Writers depend on connections within the field to maintain their success. Freelancing is a great way to gain some lasting connections. Some of them might become essential for your success later in your writing career.

Get Better at Managing your Own Finances

Finally, freelancing forces us to get better at money and time management. Both are essential elements for writers. Freelancing forces one to maintain a schedule while working on projects. It also requires one to analyze costs for their writing in a way they likely

never would without freelancing. You can learn how much your time is worth. This knowledge is priceless during your career as a writer.

Start out with Textbroker

We are going to start with what I consider the best freelancing site for beginners. Every time someone asks me how to break through in the writing world, I always recommend Textbroker. Many of them say the same thing that I bet a lot of you are thinking. "How is writing articles for pennies per word the best way to get started?" Let me answer that question right now.

Why I consider Textbroker the Best Place to Start

There are two reasons and neither of them have to do with monetary gain. When starting out with any big opportunity, it's paramount to understand that your pay is going to be very low. Doctors must intern (work for free), movie directors generally volunteer on movie sets; need I go on? The careers that society looks at as *successful* are those where experience is just as valuable as income. Why do you think individuals starting these careers are willing to intern? It's not because they love working for free. They do this to build their resume. With that said, here's why I consider Textbroker the best place to start out as a writer.

Textbroker is a great place to build a portfolio while getting paid for it. Writing articles on Textbroker is quick and easy. It's almost like interning, but you will actually get paid to gain this experience. Let's face it, if you start digging around for freelancing jobs and have nothing useful to show, then people are not going to choose you when they have the option of someone with a proven track record. Therefore, don't look at Textbroker as freelancing so much as an opportunity to gain experience.

Second (and this one is huge), Textbroker rates you as a writer. So it's a free and easy way to see just how good of a writer you truly are when compared to the rest of the writing world. Let me explain.

Textbroker articles are separated into four categories.

- 2 Star
- 3 Star
- 4 Star
- 5 Star

Every article you write gets graded by the Textbroker staff and assigned a "rating". Depending on your rating, you will be assigned a category. For example, *3 Star* writers can only write *3 Star* articles or lower. The higher your rating, the more you get paid.

Since Textbroker has a staff of individuals whose only job is to rate your writing, you can count on this rating being impartial. This is much different from the feedback of someone who hired you and has no real experience in rating technique against their own opinion. Textbroker allows you to see how in tune your writing skills actually are. They will even show you where you made your mistakes! Normally, you would have to pay big money to be rated by a professional. Here, you are getting paid to be rated. Seems like a pretty good deal to me!

Setting up a Textbroker Account

1. Visit www.textbroker.com
2. Click on the **Authors** tab.
3. Click on any of the **SIGN ME UP** buttons.
4. Fill out all of the information. While checking the **Expertise** boxes, be sure to choose subjects that you are comfortable with. This is looked at by clients before sending you Direct Orders. Then click on **Yes** and **Sign Up**.
5. Next you will need to take the admission test. Don't be alarmed by this. It's just a way for Textbroker to show you where to start. This is actually beneficial to you if you're just starting out. Being graded allows you to see where you stand as a writer when compared to others. No matter where you start, you can always increase your rating by writing high quality articles.

6. Before you can start writing for Textbroker, you are required to file a W-9 form with them. So you might as well get it out of the way. All that's required is for you to print, sign, scan, and email it to the Textbroker staff.

7. Once your admissions test is rated, you're ready to start writing! Congratulations! You're now a professional writer. Okay, maybe I'm exaggerating but isn't that what we do?

What to do Next

Now that you've got your Textbroker account set up, you can start making money. Depending on your rating, you can make up to \$10 per article and easily drop 5 to 10 of them per day. If you do this, that's \$100 per day and you paid nothing for this opportunity.

Either way, the monetary gains here are no where near as important as the experience you will gain. We are actually killing 2 birds with 1 stone – making a little extra money while gauging our ability as a writer.

Textbroker Tips

Here are some quick tips that will help those who are new to the Textbroker world.

Tip 1: Lower Search Times

Textbroker's *Open Orders* feature isn't exactly the greatest tool on the web. You will find that the greatest amount of time spent on Textbroker is searching for articles. To get the most out of this site, you will need to find ways to lower that search time.

Write down categories that interest you. Every time you start your search, look within these categories first. Most of the time, you will find an article within a preferred category.

Another way of lowering the search time is to keep track of previous clients that you have written for. Take note of their trends – that is, what types of articles they seem to order the most. Then use the

search feature to search for articles within those keywords. You can simply send them a message and ask if they have any *Open Orders*.

Finally, if you find yourself struggling to understand a description, simply move on. Unclear directions are not going to change. Textbroker provides a way to rate the description so use it to vent and then move on. Always be professional.

Tip 2: Manage Direct Orders

Your *Direct Order* price should always remain above the price for your level of writing. If you have it set too low, some will try and take advantage of it. There are some out there who truly believe that they are helping you out for allowing you to write their articles for low rates. Avoid this.

Furthermore, sometimes clients will actually approach Textbroker and ask that your rate be lowered. I've had this happen on several occasions. Textbroker will contact you and ask if you mind lowering your rate. Politely refuse and explain yourself. If someone wants you to directly write for them, they will pay you what you're worth.

Tip 3: Lower Revisions

You don't want to spend hours a day revising articles. So get it right the first time around.

Always edit your work twice. The first time will catch most of the mistakes while the second catches anything that may have slipped through the first edit.

Once you've edited twice, read the article out loud. Many English teachers use this tactic in class. It works wonders. Sometimes a sentence will read better on paper than it actually sounds.

Always check a client's stats before accepting one of their articles. As with all jobs, there are some bad apples out there. If the client has a revision rate higher than 5%, do not write for them. Additionally, if

they reject more than 2 to 3% of articles, do not write for them. I know this sounds harsh. Let me explain.

Some people tend to believe that their \$10 will buy them anything they want. They expect more than what they are going to get. On Textbroker, your job is to provide well-written, coherent, and organized content. Some people expect a New York Times quality article. You do not want to work for these people. In many cases, you can avoid the bad apples by looking at their stats.

Tip 4: Don't Argue, Just Block

If there are clients who are constantly a pain in the neck, it's important to never argue with them. Simply block them by clicking their ID number and select, **Add Client to Blacklist**. Their projects will no longer show up in your feed.

Tip 5: Join Teams

Once you have established yourself on Textbroker, join a few teams. TB teams pay higher and offer fairly consistent work which will lower your search time. It's worth dedicating a day to just apply for several teams.

Another advantage to teams is that in most cases, the clients are much friendlier and respond faster to questions. Only professionals set up teams.

Tip 6: Proofreading Test

I'm sure you've noticed that tab at the top of the page that says *Proofreading*. While it may be tempting to take the test, don't do it until you have properly prepared. It may be only 10 questions, but it's extremely difficult. Textbroker seems to have its own guidelines. Although they claim to follow AP guidelines, they don't. They have their own rules. Until you learn them, don't take this test.

Here are additional tips:

- Pay close attention to the Order Details. If you don't follow them, then you will be revising a lot of articles. And that will cost you time. Time equals money.
- Write as many words possible. For example, if the job ranges from 400 to 500 words, try and write 500 so you get the most from the article.
- Save all of your articles on your hard drive and on Google Docs. You will be using them later to build a portfolio. Just remember that you cannot post these articles on a website or use them for any other means other than your portfolio.
- Set a Word Count goal for each day and once you reach it, try increasing it. And remember to follow the writing techniques in the previous chapter. They will increase your daily word count.

Building a Portfolio

You have successfully got started on Textbroker and completed several articles. Now it's time to start turning that content into progress by creating a portfolio. A great portfolio is one that is:

- Well Organized
- Provides Variety
- Has no Mistakes

A portfolio that meets these standards will win you more freelancing gigs while a lousy one will cost you clients. In the beginning, your portfolio will be your only proof that you can provide high quality work. Needless to say (but I will anyway), your portfolio can either help you get your foot through the door, or slam and lock it in your face. Take your time with this and make sure to get it right.

Where to Start

This process can seem daunting at first but it's actually easy when you break it down into steps. So that's what we will do. I will note that your contact information is just as important as the work itself.

While many might argue that a freelancer portfolio can consist of a website or some other electronic presentation, for the purposes of this book, I will counter by saying that it's a good practice to get in the habit of creating a manual portfolio (one that you can physically carry around). By the end of this book, I'm going to be showing you how to approach agents and managers with your works. For that, a manual portfolio will be required. Therefore, I want you to get into the habit of keeping it organized. Using the method that I explain, you will actually be creating both at the same time. Let's get started.

Cover Page

The beginning of your portfolio could be the end of your chances of landing a project. You should add your contact information here, including the following:

- Name
- Phone Number
- Email Address
- Short Biography (2-3 sentences)

Facebook profiles should be avoided. They can actually work against you. Also, the short biography might seem difficult but should not be left out. Just write a couple of sentences explaining who you are and what skills you possess. It doesn't have to go into great detail. I recommend that you review this part on a weekly basis and see if you can improve it. The more experience you gain, the better you will get at writing. Therefore, new improvements might spring to mind.

Adding Content

The meat and potatoes of your portfolio is the content. It's not a secret that in order to build content for a writing portfolio, you need to write. As of now, the only content you have for your portfolio are the articles that you wrote on Textbroker. That's not enough. Remember, a great portfolio is one that provides variety. Articles are just one type of writing. You will need several types of content as follows:

- Articles, Blog Posts, etc.
- Fiction
- Press Releases
- Product Reviews

For now, provide at least one sample for each category. If you don't already have something written in the specific category, then dedicate time to write it. The more content you have, the more powerful your portfolio will be. However, the minimum is one sample per category.

Separate your work into categories. For now, print out all of the samples that you plan to include and separate them into different piles, or use folders for added organization. Whatever works best for you. Organizing your portfolio not only makes it easier for potential clients to find a sample that matches their desired skills, it also shows them that you are a well organized professional.

Introduce variety into your portfolio by choosing different subjects, events, or genres to write about. For example, your fiction category might contain a sample of an action scene and a sample of a romantic scene. This proves that you can write in different genres. Never have more than two samples that are the same category and genre (fiction action scene would be one category/genre).

Next, edit all of your samples one more time. If changes are necessary, reprint the sample. It doesn't matter if you edited each sample a hundred times before printing them. Do it again! There is no such thing as too many edits.

Putting it All Together

You should have enough samples to start your portfolio by now. There are a few things that you will need to invest in. They are as follows:

- Binder (preferably the kind that allows for a custom cover page)
- Plastic Page Protectors

- Separators with Labels

Use the separators to create different sections of the portfolio and label them. Make sure your handwriting is legible. Place each sample into a protective plastic sheet (one page per sheet). Put the pages into the proper categories within the binder. Naturally, your cover page will go in the front.

Great! You have a physical portfolio. Now it's time to create an electronic one. Using the portfolio in your hand as a guide, put all of your files together in a single document. Separate them just like they are separated in the physical portfolio. You will use *Bookmarks* and a *Table of Contents* to separate each category – one entry per physical separator.

When finished, you should be able to click *Print* and your computer spits out a series of pages that looks identical to your physical portfolio (with the exception of separators).

Congratulations! You now have both a physical and electronic portfolio. You're not through yet. In fact, this job never ends. You should constantly add content and make improvements to your portfolio. It's the basis of who you are professionally. As you gain more experience, you will find that some content isn't as good as you would like. So replace it with fresh content.

E lance to Freelance

Here's where you will start focusing on generating earned income. While Textbroker is great for beginners, it isn't exactly the highest paying website for freelancers. Therefore, once you have a great portfolio put together, it's time to find ways of generating large chunks of money. Elance is the best freelancing site on the web. The issue on Elance is that you need experience and a great portfolio to get started. You have the portfolio, so now let's get you some experience.

What is Elance?

For those of you who have never heard of Elance, it's a bid-based freelancing site. Writing is only one category. Elance offers opportunities in numerous freelancing areas including programming, graphics design, and even office assistants.

Companies and individuals post projects on Elance and freelancers bid on these projects. The company will then decide which freelancer they like best and hire them.

Providers on Elance depend on three things to keep steady work coming in.

- Feedback
- Profile
- Proposals

Beginners don't have feedback, so they have to depend on their profile and proposals to land their first jobs. Needless to say, those two factors have to be very strong. But let's start at the beginning. You need to open an account before you can start with Elance. Here's the process.

Opening an Elance Account

As I go through each of the steps, I'll describe what each section is in reference to.

Step 1

The first step is to visit Elance and click on the **My Elance** button. Then select the **Sign up Here** option.

Step 2

This is where you will select the plan you want. There are two main options: individual or business. The choices are self-explanatory. Chances are that you will be choosing the **Individual** option.

Step 3

This step requires that you select a membership plan. This is ultimately your choice. However, I feel compelled to go over the free plan vs. paid plan.

Free Plan

The free plan is not really that bad. However, your profile will be associated with an annoying little badge labeled *Free Member*. This alone makes it difficult for experienced freelancers to win proposals. It's next to impossible for beginners to get selected with this badge. However, it's not impossible.

Free plans do not get as many *Connects* as paid accounts. *Connects* are points used towards bidding. For example, to place a proposal on a project, you will have to spend a specific amount of *Connects*. The cost to bid is determined by the budget posted for the project.

Paid Plan

This is really the easiest way for beginners to start getting jobs quickly on Elance. It costs \$10 per month and gives you a badge that states you are a paid member. Furthermore, you get more connects with a paid plan. That means you can place more proposals. If you choose the paid membership option, just know that you will make this money back very quickly.

Step 4

Select the category you wish to freelance in. Since this book is about becoming a professional writer, you should choose **Writing and Translation**. You can actually choose more than one category if you have other areas you wish to freelance in. Elance charges a monthly fee for each additional category you choose. I recommend you stick with just the **Writing and Translation** to begin. Plus, by following the plan in this book, you won't be freelancing for too awfully long (unless you choose to).

Step 5

After clicking **Continue**, you will have the opportunity to provide profile information. I'll go into this in greater detail in the next section. For now, just get your account set up. You can fill out this section later.

Step 6

Post a photo of yourself. Make sure it's a picture of you (logos are only allowed for business accounts) and of high quality. Keep in mind that this will be your first impression on potential clients.

E lance Profile

I know. You're all excited about the opportunities on Elance. You might have already browsed through the site and you're ready to put your skills to the ultimate test. Don't get too carried away at this point. Before making your first proposal, take the time to go through and set up your profile. Setting up an effective profile will put you ahead of most beginners.

Since you're just starting out on Elance, your feedback will be empty. That puts even more pressure on your profile. The main goal is to build the most accurate representation of yourself as possible.

Clients on Elance (at least long-time ones) understand that everyone has to start somewhere. Therefore, they will not dismiss your proposal solely on the fact that you have no feedback. However, if your profile is lacking, they will see you as an amateur. Let's take a look at each area in more detail.

Skills

Skills are what separate one freelancer from another. Contrary to what many might believe, potential clients will look at this section in great detail - especially the skills that you are tested in. What does that mean? Elance gives you two options when setting your skills: self-assessment or the ability to test each skill by taking a test.

Eance Skill Testing

Eance skills tests are not easy. However, they do show you an overview of what the test will be comprised of before you begin. You should take the time to study these areas before taking the test.

It's worth noting that if you score below average, you do have the option of not showing this skill on your profile. So you have nothing to lose and everything to gain by taking the skills tests.

Since you will be working in the *Writing and Translation* category, go ahead and take these tests:

- Spelling
- Fiction Writing
- Nonfiction Writing

You should have enough knowledge to finish these skills above average. If not, then you really should study them further. Eance will show you what areas to study before taking a test.

Portfolio

This should be easy if you've been following this book. Just upload some of your samples in this field. Do not leave it blank. That makes you come across as an amateur. Instead, just post some items here as filler. This isn't really important because you will be attaching your portfolio to all proposals. It's just essential that this field not be blank.

Here's a quick tip. Post at least one sample of work that demonstrates each skill you have listed on your profile. This is easy and creates more appeal.

Keywords

This might be the most important aspect of your profile. Keywords are how clients will find you. Being invited to submit proposals will save you time and connects, both equal money.

You have the ability to control your ranking in searches that clients perform. Take the time to brainstorm potential keywords that clients might search for when looking for freelancers with your skills. Also, never post more than 10 keywords on your profile. Doing so is known as keyword stuffing and comes across as very unprofessional.

I'll be discussing keywords in great detail once you are ready to begin marketing. For now, just brainstorm some keywords to use. Once you start becoming more familiar with how keyword optimizing works, you can really create a powerful list.

Description

Your description should be broken down into paragraphs. Start with a pitch. You should have this written already (on the front page of your portfolio). Use it for your first paragraph.

Next, offer more details about your experiences. Mention past jobs, ranges of services, and other information. The goal is to let the client get to know you.

End with services that you plan on offering and how you will go about providing these.

Honestly, some people get too carried away with their description. I know several successful freelancers who only have two or three sentences here. So don't let this intimidate you too much. If you find writing a long description to be problematic, then just stick with your pitch. Sometimes less is more. Besides, your proposals will do the same thing as your description, but on a more personal level.

Eance Bidding

Writing an Eance proposal is often an intimidating task for many individuals who are starting out. In truth, it's not as daunting of a task as you might think. Follow this format and you'll be fine.

A proposal should look professional and be to the point. Start off with a simple greeting (Greetings XxXx; Dear xXxX). Use their Elance username in place of the X's.

Introduction Paragraph

Use this paragraph to address the specifics of the project description and how you will be able to meet the demands. Pretend that you are being interviewed by the client and assume they are asking you the following questions:

How would you approach this project?

What skills do you possess that are relevant to this project?

Why should I choose you over other bidders?

Answer these questions in the form of a paragraph. This will show the buyer two things: you possess the skills to meet their demands and that you actually read the description.

Second Paragraph: Past Experiences

This is your opportunity to boast about any experiences that you have. This is also when you mention your portfolio. Be short and to the point here. Two or three sentences should be enough.

Third Paragraph: Pricing and Timeline

This paragraph is used to show the buyer exactly how long each part of the project will take and gives you the opportunity to explain your bid in detail. It's important that you provide a comprehensive bid. That means you need to be as thorough as possible and explain every aspect of how you plan on approaching the project. Three reasons to be comprehensive include:

1. It allows for negotiation
2. It clarifies that you fully understand what the client needs
3. The Final deliverables that you are offering is clear

This protects you from a buyer trying to add on extra work into the project later. Yes, some people will try and do this if you let them. Most importantly, it gives you and the buyer grounds to negotiate. Sometimes buyers don't really understand what they need or are mistaking one service for another (example, editing and proofreading are different). With a comprehensive bid, there are no misinterpretations.

You can also work with the buyer to lower the budget by negotiating certain areas. For example, you can lower word count and reduce cost. Just don't negotiate quality.

Never undersell yourself. There are times when you and the buyer will not be able to meet eye-to-eye. In that case, move on. They might come back to you if they find that their low budget resulted in poor quality work.

Conclusion Paragraph

Finally, use the last paragraph to thank the buyer for the opportunity. Also, offer a chance to negotiate pricing and terms that you have previously mentioned.

Final Tip: Adding a Personal Touch to Proposals

Some projects get hundreds of bids. Some are from very experienced writers while others are the opposite. Adding a personal touch to the bid is how you separate your bid from the rest. Remember, you are not just selling your services. You're selling yourself.

First, you can discuss why you personally find the project appealing enough to bid on. If the project is to create blog posts for a website about "going green", then explain how you feel about the subject. Adding just a little personality to your proposal will help it excel above others. Bidding is a popularity contest and the buyer is going to choose their favorite provider.

Ealance Tips

Ealance remains one of the most effective venues for freelancing on the web. Even with the emergence of other freelancing sites like Fiverr and Freelancing.com, I feel that Ealance will continue to provide the best opportunities for freelancers around the globe.

That makes it all the more important to continue growing and maintaining a reputation on Ealance. Even if you eventually start earning enough passive income to meet all of the demands of your life, having open bridges is still a safe way to live. Security is priceless. With that said, here are some tips to keep in mind. These are just as important for beginners as experts.

Tip 1: Have an Effective Profile Name

Be creative. Your profile name can either be your real name (mine is) or a company name. I wish that I had come up with a creative profile name in the beginning. Now it would be impossible for me to change mine because then clients would not be able to find me. So learn from my mistakes and be creative.

Tip 2: Verify your Identity

Ealance makes it easy to verify your identity. Upon doing so, you will get a badge placed next to your name. Providers with a verified identity get (on average) about twice as many opportunities.

Tip 3: Keep your Portfolio Up to Date

Take the time at least once a month to look through your portfolio and see if there is room for improvement. There almost always is. Maybe you have new content that can replace something older? You might have written a new novel and need to add an excerpt into your portfolio. If so, then do it. Your portfolio will always be a factor in your life as a writer.

Tip 4: Always View Buyer's Profiles before Bidding

Just like with Textbroker, there are some bad apples on Elance. These are individuals who always expect more than what was agreed upon. To avoid this type of client, simply take the time to view their profile before placing a proposal. It only takes a few seconds and can save you hours of stress later on.

Tip 5: Never Start Work Before Escrow is Funded

Elance's policy is very clear. You are not required to start work until the buyer funds the escrow. Don't be bullied. If a buyer refuses to fund the escrow, then simply don't start the project. It's likely that they are trying to rip you off.

Sometimes a project might have milestones. The buyer is only required to fund the escrow for the milestone you are currently working on. You are not required to begin work on the 2nd milestone until they have released funds for the first and funded the 2nd.

Tip 6: Feedback is your Life

Your Elance success will weigh solely on your feedback. While working on a project, constantly update your client with progress reports. Buyers love this and it will help decide how they rate you in the end. Be ready to provide revisions, especially for larger projects. Always be friendly and never, ever argue with the buyer. So long as you provide high quality work and stay friendly to buyers, you're feedback will remain good.

If you happen to be unfortunate enough to run across one of the bad apples and they leave you negative feedback, don't worry about it. There's absolutely nothing you can do to change it. Try and find anything you could have done differently. Learn from your mistakes and then move on.

Your feedback is what keeps you going. Do everything in your power to keep it positive and fresh.

Tips for Successful Freelancing

Even if you're not planning to freelance as a career, you should still take it seriously while on this part of your journey to becoming a professional writer. It's your opportunity to build up good writing habits. Here are some tips to follow in order to be a successful freelancer.

Location, location, location, I've mentioned it before and I will do so once more. You need to set up a work area that is well organized. Have the right supplies on hand. Most importantly, maintain a specific work schedule. Do whatever it takes to maximize your productivity while working.

Don't be afraid to learn. Freelancing offers an opportunity to get a better understanding of things like:

- Marketing
- Communication
- Pricing
- Negotiation

The ability to learn and experience some of the hidden aspects of professional writing is the main reason why I strongly encourage all new writers to dab their hands in freelancing.

If you're not sure how to price a project, research it and learn how much others charge. Keep in mind that reputation and experience allow some individuals to charge a lot more. If you're just starting out, then you will be forced to lower your prices in an effort to establish a reputation. Don't worry so much about that because we are only using freelancing as a means of getting our feet wet. By the end of this book, passive income will be your main focus and freelancing will be more of a hobby than a necessity.

Get the more frustrating tasks out of the way first. That way, you will remove most of the stress of a project as soon as possible. It's a great trick that helps keep us focused on what we do best - writing.

Keep records of all invoices and assignment timelines. Elance actually offers reports for these things. Make the most of them.

Don't forget to advertise your services on your website. Once you establish a freelancing reputation, you may even want to consider local advertising. You'll be surprised at how many people want their stories told and are willing to pay for it. Locals are also more likely to pay you more for your services. Plus, something can be said for creating local networks. If you get enough local business relationships, you will be able to pool your efforts into organized events that will benefit all of you.

Try your absolute best not to miss deadlines. I understand that issues come up from time-to-time and in most of these cases, clients are very understanding. Just make it a goal to stay on schedule.

Be prepared to offer revisions. This includes formatting changes, text changes, and other things that will require you to readdress the project. The trick is to keep revisions to one at most. If a client asks for a revision, make sure that you specifically ask them if those are the only issues. Sometimes, if you don't specifically recommend revisions then a client will ask for them one by one. It seems weird but that's how it is.

Be disciplined when it comes time for payments. As with all professions, some clients will try and wiggle out of paying you. That's one of the reasons why it's so important to make sure an escrow is funded before starting a project. Don't be afraid of staining a relationship. If financial issues tarnish a business relationship, then it's probably best to let it go anyway.

Don't be afraid to say no. You can't possibly accept every project sent in your direction. You may not have time or the client might be expecting too much for too little. Whatever the case, never be scared of turning down projects. There is plenty of work for freelance writers.

Main Goals with Freelancing

You've got your freelancing career rolling down the right path so you might be wondering how exactly we're going to use this to fuel your career as a writer. It's time for a list of goals.

1. Plan on Transforming Earned Income into Passive Income

Our main goal through freelancing is to slowly convert the income gained through freelancing into passive income. How is this done? There are two main methods that writers can use to interchange these two types of income:

- Outsourcing Content
- Publishing Books

For now, just prepare for when these opportunities become available. That leads us to:

2. Save Money

Set a specific amount of your freelance earnings to save and stick to it. I recommend you save at least 20% of all earnings. Over time, you can transform this money into a passive income. More on that will be discussed during the marketing chapter of this book. For now, your primary focus should be on freelancing and writing your first book.

3. Learning the Ropes

Finally, our third goal with freelancing is to learn the ropes. You will soon learn that everything that you thought you knew about the world of writing was wrong. It's a much more complex world with a lot of opportunities – some of which you might have never thought of. Freelancing will help you to understand what the experts are doing. Remember, most individuals that hire freelancers are making money through content that you write. So we need to learn to create and market our own content.

Step 2: Writing the Draft

Intro + Common Mistakes

Now that you have established a presence in the writing world, it's time to get started with the reason why you bought this book. Everyone has a story to tell. Most people simply choose not to tell theirs. Why? There are too many reasons to list them all. In my experience, I've found that most individuals whom choose not to tell their stories do so because they can't see a possibility for success. They don't want to send letters to thousands of publishers because the idea of rejection scares them.

I'll let you in on a little secret. Publishing a book is easy. In fact, I would say that in today's world, the real challenge lies in writing the book – not publishing it. With that said, the draft isn't the most difficult phase of writing. Therefore, it should not be treated as such. Writing a draft is the most enjoyable phase of a book. It's a time when we can let our imaginations run wild. Yet, many aspiring writers ruin this by putting too much pressure on their draft. That brings us to the main mistakes that many tend to make when writing a draft. These are also the main reasons why the majority of aspiring writers cannot get through their initial draft.

Mistake 1: Too Much Focus on the Draft

The fact is that so many I have seen try to write a book seem to focus too much attention on their draft. When they ask me how I can write books so easily, I reply by telling them two things:

1. It's not that I write books *easily*. I write *intelligently*. There is a difference.
2. I just write. Editing comes later. A draft needs not be perfect. It needs only be written.

I normally hear something along the lines of, “Well, I can’t have errors in my work. So I have to edit as I go.”

That’s a huge mistake. When writing a draft, you just write. End of story. You will edit later. If you try to get everything perfect during the drafting phase, you will never finish. Furthermore, there is no possible way that anyone can write a draft that’s perfect. Editing will still be required. So why worry about it during the draft?

Mistake 2: Writing Linearly

This is explained in more detail later in this chapter. For now, here’s the fact. It’s natural for us to think linearly. We watch movies from beginning to end. We read from beginning to end. We are compelled to write from beginning to end. Therein lies the problem. While readers will be reading your book linearly, you do not have to write that way. In fact, some plots require a writer to write from ending to beginning. Think about one of those great crime novels. Do you think the author wrote it from beginning to end? Chances are they didn’t. It’s much easier to write the specifics of the outcome before spreading out clues through a whole book. Wouldn’t knowing the outcome make it easier to create realistic scenarios through the course of a book?

Mistake 3: Trying to Write without an Outline

Would you travel into an unknown area without a map or GPS to guide you? Those that do normally end up getting lost. It’s the same for writers. Writing without an outline will lead to holes in the plot, story, and jumpy writing. Let’s go over this in a little more detail:

Writing an Outline

Writing that first book is almost as intimidating as going head-to-head with a dragon. Every time you muster up the courage to sit down and begin the process of writing, you’re greeted by not-so-friendly blasts of fire. That fire is the seemingly never ending stack of empty pages that you must fill with words that captivate your reader. Then the thought that those words have to be perfect causes your heart to race even faster. There’s so much to do and there’s no way

you can write a book that will read like the one sitting beside your bed. Eventually, you run away.

This is all normal. First of all, you're never going to write a book that reads exactly like your favorite best selling author – nor would you want to. So don't try. Second, an outline makes those empty pages seem a lot less intimidating. So go ahead and draw up an outline. Otherwise, you will end up jumping all over the place and never really accomplishing a thing.

What is an Outline?

It's easy to completely throw an outline way out of proportion by over thinking it. An outline is best when it's simple. It's designed to keep your writing on track with the objectives of your book. An outline keeps the book from seeming overwhelming by breaking it down into chapters. So to answer the question above:

An outline is a list of chapters with each of their individual goals.

Some prefer old fashioned methods like index cards and post-in notes to organize their information while others (including myself) prefer more modern methods like yWriter since it allows for easy organization and manipulation of information from one area to the next. While everyone can use whatever method they prefer for drawing up an outline, it's very important that you have something to guide your writing.

I will discuss outlines in more detail in each of the genre specific sections later in this chapter. That's because fiction and non-fiction tend to require different types of outlines.

Phases of a Book

Regardless of what you might have heard, great writers don't just sit down and start writing, somehow magically stumbling from beginning to end. They spend a lot of time meticulously planning their book. Writing a book is a step-by-step process. Let's take a quick look at the phases that take place during the book writing process.

1. Brainstorming

An idea suddenly sparks an interest in our very soul. In our head, it seems wonderful. Our heart thumps faster in anticipation of getting this idea onto paper. It's only when we see it on paper that we realize it completely sucks. That's why the brainstorming phase is so important. It saves a lot of painstaking hours by catching these issues before we spend too much time worrying about them.

2. Planning

This is the phase of a book when detailed character lists and an outline are created. While brainstorming is mostly a creative outlet for getting our ideas out onto paper, the planning phase is taking those ideas and turning them into a roadmap for writing.

3. Drafting

Writing a draft is a completely creative process. We use the outline to guide our story – and that's it. Our job as writers is to tell our stories, not to control them. During the drafting phase, the objective is to write. Don't worry about it being perfect. Just write.

4. Revision

Editing and proofreading fall into this phase. This is where we transform a draft into a masterpiece. Hiring an editor is the best way to approach this phase. However, you should always edit at least once yourself even if hiring an editor.

5. Formatting

Good editors will take care of this phase along with revisions. Formatting is the process of setting up the look of your book. Font type, size, and line spacing are the most common formatting changes in a book.

6 Publishing

This phase is when we actually put our book out there for readers to purchase. This can include the printing of our book or simply publishing through Kindle and/or Nook.

7. Marketing

Nope, getting your book published is not the final phase. After all, you need readers to find it. That's when marketing comes into play. This is the most important phase of a book as it will ultimately determine its success.

Linear vs. Non-Linear Writing

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one of the three big mistakes that first-time writers tend to make is they follow their sociological instincts and try to write a book from beginning to end. While this will work in some instances, the best fiction is written in a non-linear manner. This is yet another reason why having an outline is essential to making the life of a writer much easier.

Of course, some people already tend to think on a non-linear level. These individuals are those who are seen as creative by nature. They seem to naturally control their creativity in a way that baffles those around them. They are also isolated most of the time. Everyone that we know exists in linear harmony so when someone tends to look at things in a non-linear way, their actions are often obstructed as strange. Let's take a closer look at the linear thought pattern:

Linear thinking is defined as a pattern of thought that follows a specific progression.

A=B; B=C; C=D; D=E

Linear thinking dictates the more logical approach: starting at the beginning (A) and then moving in a normal progression to reach the final destination (E).

Non-linear thinking is a bit more complex. While the ultimate destination is the same (E), non-linear thought is characterized by one

simple fact. If the above formula is true, then the logical place to start (A) is not the only place to start. One could start in the middle (C) and travel in any direction to reach the same destination.

C=B; B=A

C=D; D=E

C=E; D=A

As you can see, there is no predictable pattern in non-linear thought. It's like letting a dog run loose through the neighborhood. It will run wild and stop to investigate anything it finds interesting.

What does any of this have to do with writing? Everything! Creativity thrives in a non-linear train of thought. Only when you learn to see things in a non-linear manner will you unlock your full potential.

Logic can be Dangerous

Relying too heavily on logic can be dangerous – especially for writers. The danger lies in the limitations that come with logic: one must start at **A**. There is no other logical starting point. For example, a store owner who thinks logically will raise prices any time they need to increase their profits. On the other hand, a creative owner would seek other means like reducing their expenses in other areas (maybe closing an hour earlier each day).

In fact, logic and creativity are polar opposites. They cannot both exist in the same moment. Logic is the path of least resistance so we all want to follow it. Let's look at it from the writer's perspective.

Writer's block is one of the scariest phrases for aspiring writers. It's also the biggest myth in the world of writing. Yes, I said it. Writer's block is a myth. It's only real because we need something to blame any loss in production on. So when we get stuck, it makes us feel better to blame some magical (and evil) power and give it a fancy name instead of dealing with the real issue. In most cases, when a writer gets stuck, it's because they are trying to approach a problem

in their writing with logic. Remember, logic and creativity cannot exist at the same time. Learn to turn off your logic and I guarantee you won't have to deal with this problem nearly as often.

If you do find yourself at a standstill, then pull yourself away from your writing. Take a walk, exercise, take a nap – do anything besides stare at a blank page and curse writer's block while you torture yourself for hours. This is logic at its most dangerous.

Writing out of Time

Creativity spawns from non-linear thought. Therefore, creative writing is at its best when being written in a non-linear manner. Let's take a closer look at the intricacies of non-linear writing.

Imagine you have a well crafted outline lying before you. It's comprised of plot points, multiple characters and settings, and a well established direction for the story to move. You know that your reader will read this book from beginning to end, with you guiding their journey. However, that journey might consist of several jumps from one character and setting to another – and then back again. For example:

Chapter 1: Protagonist Introduction and Inciting Incident

Chapter 2: Antagonist Being Introduced.

Chapter 3: One of the Support Characters Playing Poker and Getting into a Fight

Chapter 4: Protagonist's First Part of Journey

This is just a broad example of a very basic outline. So staring at this outline, logic would dictate that since the reader will follow the story in linear order (CH1, CH2, CH3, and CH4) then you should write it the same way. This is where logic will get you into trouble.

Writing the first chapter would come without problems. However, if you were to move from Chapter 1 to Chapter 2, then you would be jumping from one character to another – from one point in the story

to another. Then eventually, you would be forced to come back to the original character. Jumping around in this manner is chaotic. Would it not be much simpler to finish one part of the story by writing Chapter 1 and then Chapter 4 than to jump around like a rabbit? Of course it would. Always write fiction in sections so that it flows better later on.

As I said earlier, this was a very basic example. There are more complex problems with fiction that would be made easier from non-linear writing. Your goal should be to keep yourself from acting as if you were a reader. You are the writer and must fully control your own story. Here is an exercise for you to try:

Writing Exercise

Choose your favorite book, read it and then write an outline for it. Break down each chapter into settings and characters. List the plot points.

Now read that outline in order. Doing this will effectively put you in the shoes of the writer rather than the reader. Now ask yourself these questions:

How chaotic is the outline when looking at it in order from a writer's perspective?

How do you think the author of this book actually wrote the story that you love so much?

How would you have approached it?

You have now officially started thinking creatively instead of logically. You see the same book from an entirely different perspective. Non-linear thought spawns creativity. Linear thought gives birth to logic. Both are powerful tools but a writer needs to be able to see the advantages of both. Hopefully, you have a better understanding.

Fiction vs. Non-Fiction

Now comes the moment of truth. What type of book do you want to write? It's a very easy question to answer but the end results require a completely different approach. Although I plan to go into each of them in more detail, I want to explain beforehand why every writer should publish at least one nonfiction book. Here they are:

Reason #1: Helps Break Bad Habits

As much as some try and convince themselves otherwise, writing is a business. Books are the products that we sell. Writing nonfiction helps to create a professional outlook on writing. Nonfiction requires that one create and maintain a writing schedule (more on this later). It requires one to learn to create a balance between logic and creativity. In essence, nonfiction will teach you how to turn off the logic switch. Remember, logic can be a bad habit when writing fiction.

Second, fiction writing is a solitary effort. So we can easily become confined in worlds created by our imagination. This can be a bad habit to get into because we need ideas to fuel our creative mind. That requires interaction. Since writing nonfiction requires one to gather information from various resources, it breaks the isolation brought forth by fiction.

Reason #2: It can Clear the Mind

Nonfiction requires more organized writing than fiction. That can help you learn to clear your mind of the clutter than can hurt fiction writing. Nonfiction can create a balance between organization and chaos. I personally find it soothing to start off my day by writing an article or blog post. It helps clear my mind before I dive into my fiction worlds.

Reason #3: Learn Valuable Research Skills

Have you ever been reading a book only to be knocked back from the pages by a sudden lapse in history (by the author), or something that you know is not true? Most of us have. Fiction can create a wonderful

world to escape into but the information must at least be believable. If your story takes place during World War II then you will need to research that era to make sure you get it right.

The problem is that many don't realize that research is required with fiction writing. For nonfiction, it's a given. So writing a nonfiction book will help you to hone your research skills. Learning the process makes you quicker to find specific information that you might need. It's a great habit for fiction writing.

Reason #4: Nonfiction Sells

Finally, let's get down to the nitty gritty. This is something most aspiring writers don't want to hear. Fiction is difficult to sell. Although I'm going to show you several successful and easy marketing strategies throughout this book, it doesn't happen quickly. This makes many authors feel that there's no point in writing a second book, since their first one did not sell.

Nonfiction tends to sell better (and faster) than fiction. There is no better satisfaction for a writer than seeing a book you wrote selling copies. It inspires and will push you forward.

Writing the Draft

Now we come to the process of writing your draft. By now, you should be equipped with the knowledge to make this a breeze. Let's break it down into fiction and nonfiction, since the process requires two totally different approaches.

Writing a Fiction Draft

For the purposes of this book, I'm going to assume that you are writing a novel or novella. The first step to starting fiction is determining the format of the book you're planning to write. Since I'm assuming novel or novella, I won't go into too much detail here. You can write whatever you want. However, keep in mind that poetry and short stories are not very likely to sell until you build a fan base.

Step 1: Brainstorm

You probably already have an idea as to the subject of your story. So I want you to grab a blank sheet of paper and hand write an entire page of how you see your book. Don't think. Turn off your logic. Just focus on writing.

Brainstorming does not have to make sense. The goal is to get something on paper. We all have to start somewhere and this is the best place. I personally keep a notebook and every time a new idea pops into my head, I brainstorm on a sheet of paper. When I need material for a new book, I go back through all of my brainstorming ideas to find my next novel.

Step 2: Create a Protagonist and Antagonist

I'm willing to bet that somewhere in your page of brainstorming there is a character. The story revolves around that character. Therefore, it's time to get more detailed. On a separate page, pull that character from your brainstorming and onto a page all to themselves. Now use the same technique to brainstorm an entire page about just that character. What are their fears? Describe their past. Whatever flows naturally onto the page. Again, the idea is to bring this character to life. Turn off the logic switch and rely on creativity alone.

Once you have a page based around this one character, you are likely to have enough information to come up with a list of traits:

- Fears
- Strengths
- Appearance

The more detailed your protagonist is, the more readers will love them. It's not like you will be listing all of these things in your book. Most will be inert traits that only show up through their actions, reactions, and dialogue. If you've ever wondered how authors seem to bring their characters to life, this is the secret. They brainstorm so much detail that when they actually start writing, their character is so detailed that the writer is only a guide to their actions. Great

characters come to life in a way that their creator only needs put them into a certain scenario and then let them take over.

The antagonist is brought to life in the same manner. Their traits normally draw on the fears of the protagonist. Remember, the villain of a story is just as important as the hero.

Step 3: Lay out the Plot Points

Every story is made up of what are known as plot points. These are important to storytelling. They are as follows:

1. Inciting Incident

This is the incident that pushes the protagonist to start their journey into the story. It's normally some kind of trouble, dilemma, or other circumstance that sets everything into motion. It can happen during the first few pages or a few chapters into a novel. For example, if the book is about a man seeking revenge against another who murdered his wife, the inciting incident would likely be the moment that his wife was murdered.

2. Lock In

At this point, the protagonist is locked into whatever predicament they are in. They are forced to go in a new direction in order to accomplish the overall plot.

3. First Culmination

This is a pivotal moment that occurs about 40% into the story. Think of it like an unexpected hurdle that the hero must face in order to make it to the halfway point of your story. Using the example above, the man seeking revenge might also be pursued by the police. So the first culmination might be that he has been surrounded and facing those who would stop him from achieving his overall goal (which is to kill the evil man who murdered his wife).

4. Main Culmination

This is the final pivotal moment. It is designed to create the tension leading into the final moments of the story. Again, using the revenge plot, this could be that the protagonist has finally tracked down the man responsible for his wife's murder. Now he must only face this man in the final confrontation.

5. The Twist

This is also known as a setback. Something unexpected happens to the protagonist that draws on their fears. In the revenge plot, maybe the protagonist gets shot (very basic setback)? Or if we want to get more unexpected results, then perhaps the hero finds out that the antagonist is his estranged son, jealous by the fact that his father's wife got more love than he? This point must make the reader *need* to read how the story ends.

6. Climax

This is the final face-off between protagonist and antagonist. By this point, your plot should have pulled the reader in. Now you simply blow their socks off with a spectacular climax! For example, our hero finally has the final confrontation against the man who killed his wife.

So at this point, you should have an outline started with these six points laid out. Each of these important plot points will be a chapter.

Step 4: Finish the Outline

This is where you will plan out the steps leading to and from all of the major plot points. Each line should be a chapter and each chapter should consist of:

- **Characters:** Naturally, this is a list of the characters that will be involved in the chapter.
- **Setting:** Place where the chapter will take place
- **Goal:** Overall goal of the chapter.

- **Conflict:** What happens?

- **Outcome:** End Result. Normally would be a lead up to the next chapter.

Start out by listing each of your plot points. Then build the rest of your content to fill in the gaps. Look at your plot point as the framework that will hold your story in place. The other chapters should form the walls that transform that framework into a masterpiece.

Step 5: Start Writing

It's finally time to start writing the next best-selling novel! You have an outline to get started. You have the main characters in front of you. Now you just need to find a place to start. While in most cases you would start at the beginning, there are some exceptions where you would need to write the ending first. One of those exceptions would be if you're writing a crime novel. Since clues are likely to drive your plot, you will find it much easier to write the ending first. That way, you know exactly how to incorporate each of these clues into your story and don't leave huge, gapping holes in your plot.

Either way, start writing. Turn off the logic switch and rely on creativity alone for your draft. Don't worry about typos. Don't worry about grammar. Just write. Revisions come later. Those who worry too much about getting everything perfect at this point will never finish. If you want to finish this book, then focus only on writing.

Schedule time just for writing. Shut away all distractions. For example, don't message friends on Facebook while you're writing. Do nothing during this time other than write! Follow one of the writing methods discussed in the beginning of this book.

You will find that once you start on your book, it's like opening a floodgate. After several minutes, you will be writing instinctively rather than thinking about it first. That means you have opened the floodgates and let your creativity come pouring out. At that point, any distraction will pull you from that writing zone. These are

limited through the course of a day which is why it's so important to block all distractions.

If you're working a full time job, then just schedule two writing times each day. During those times, write for half an hour. Trust me, you will get more done in that 30 minute span than most can in a day.

Detailed Non-Fiction Section

Nonfiction is a different beast. It requires no plot points and no list of characters. So what? That would make it easier, right? Nope. The inability to have those two powerful tools is what makes nonfiction so much harder to write.

Okay, I know that I've been saying that nonfiction is difficult - so difficult that you might be thinking about ripping (or deleting) these pages from this book and never writing one of these nasty nonfiction books! I'll rebuttal just a bit. Nonfiction, while more difficult than fiction, is not that bad - so long as you plan it accordingly. Let's get started.

Step 1: Choose a Topic

The first step is to decide what you want to write about. It's easier to write about subjects that you have experience with. Deciding on a topic starts at the most basic idea, usually just a single word. I'm going to use "Dogs" as a very basic topic and use this example throughout this section.

I'm sure you realize that a book named "Dogs" would probably have a high rate of competition. Furthermore, it's much too broad of a subject and leaves too much room for expectations. A buyer would not know what to expect and as a result, probably wouldn't buy it. So let's take that basic concept and expand on it. To do this, we are doing to use Google Keyword Generator. Here's a link for your convenience:

[Google Keyword Generator](#)

Using this tool, I searched for similar searches for the word "Dogs". The following are some I found on the list:

- Dog Names
- Dog Adoption
- Dog Health
- Types of Dogs
- Dog Breeds
- Dog Facts
- Dog Types
- Small Dogs
- Miniature Dogs

The list is quite extensive but I feel that you get the point. From this list, let's go with "Small Dogs". So we have narrowed our topic from "Dogs" to "Small Dogs". With that in mind, let's perform another search. This time, using the phrase "Small Dogs" to build yet another list. Here are some examples that popped up on the list:

- Names of Small Dogs
- Small White Dogs
- Popular Small Dogs
- Small Dog Clothes
- Very Small Dogs
- Small Lap Dogs
- Kinds of Small Dogs

From this list, we will narrow the topic even further. So let's move from "Small Dogs" to "Popular Small Dogs". So let's brainstorm. Imagine someone is searching for popular small dogs. What do you think they're looking for? It probably varies for each individual and could range from:

- Popular Small Dogs for Children

- How to Choose a Popular Small Dog
- How to Properly Care for Small Dogs

For the purposes of this section, let's go with the first on that list: "Popular Small Dogs for Children". Aim it toward teaching parents looking to buy their kid's first pet.

Note that you do not have to name the book after your topic. I know that many will argue that your book title has to be a keyword rich title but that is not the case. A creative name will convert much better than one focusing only on keywords. There are plenty of other ways that allow for the use of keywords and your book's title should not be one of them.

Step 2: Write an Outline

As with fiction, you will need an outline in order to make your efforts more productive. This can range from a simple list of chapters to a detailed outline of each chapter. Choose whatever works best for you.

Using our example topic from above, here are some possible outlines:

BASIC OUTLINE

Topic: Popular Small Dogs for Children

Chapter 1: Why Choosing the Right Dog is an Important Decision

Chapter 2: Beagles

Chapter 3: Poodle

And so forth.

DETAILED OUTLINE

Topic: Popular Small Dogs for Children

Chapter 1: Why Choosing the Right Dog is an Important Decision

- Cost

- Consider adopting a pet
- How climate should affect your decision

Chapter 2: Beagles

- Introduction describing Beagles
- Advantages of Beagles
- Beagle care

Chapter 3: Poodle

- Introduction describing Poodles
- Advantages of Poodles
- Poodle care

These are only sample outlines. You could get even more creative if you want.

Step 3: Do your Homework

Don't be afraid to research your topic. Do so before you start writing and bookmark resources. The idea is that once you start writing, you want information just a click away.

Step 4: Write the Draft

Unlike fiction, you will need to balance your creativity and logic in a way that compliments your book. Remember, both cannot exist at the same time. So balance requires that your draft be written twice: once from a logical perspective and the second from a creative perspective.

Step 3: Editing

Editing is the most powerful aspect of writing a book. This one step will either transform a manuscript into a best-seller or do nothing. The result of doing nothing is not pleasant. So think of this not so much as an edit, but a complete rewrite. The process itself (the one I'm going to show you) is rather simple but it will take a lot of time and effort on your part. Let's go ahead and get the actual process out of the way.

Perform Two Different Edits

Go ahead and plan on performing two edits on your draft. The idea is to make it as less complicated a process as possible. Each of the edits will focus on a single element.

First Edit: A Complete Rewrite

First of all, there is a tendency to mistake editing for proofreading. They are entirely different steps. Editing does not consist of proofreading. Editing focuses on the way your content flows. Separating editing and proofreading into their respective processes is one important feat that helps separate the pros from the amateurs.

With that said, your first edit should be a complete rewrite. Print out your draft and lay it out just as you would a book. This time, put yourself into the role of a reader. Turn on your logic. Now, open a blank document and transcribe your draft into a brand new document. If you find that a sentence needs to be slightly altered in order to make it sound better to the reader (remember, you're pretending to be the reader) then feel free to rewrite it. Unlike writing your draft, you will need to focus on getting it right this time. Make sure each sentence flows naturally. Add more or less description where you see fit.

I've found that this simple, yet time consuming process to be the easiest way of fine tuning a book. It allows us to have a simple, logical process guiding us along. The biggest problem with editing

one's own book is that the writer tends to see what *should* be written instead of what *is* written. Completely rewriting every sentence forces us to become more unattached from our own work. This subconsciously forces us into the role of the reader.

Perform all edits from beginning to end (linearly). While writing the draft is a process requiring creativity, you need to remain logical through this step of the editing process.

Second Edit: Experience your Book

Spend a few weeks away from your book before diving into the second edit. Your mind needs to be completely removed from it. My practice is to spend 30 days away from the book in question. I take a week completely removed from writing and then I use the remainder of the time to focus on a new book. This might not be for you. Maybe focus on setting up some of your future marketing campaigns? It doesn't really matter, so long as you don't so much as look at your manuscript during this time.

Once you feel that you are completely removed from your book, begin the second edit. This time, you are going to balance yourself between reader and author. Read your manuscript. Make notes and changes anywhere you feel there might be gaps. Improve adjectives. Add description. Make any changes that you feel will help to improve your book. If something would annoy you as a reader, then fix it. Chances are that if it annoys you, it will annoy your readers.

Don't take this lightly. You need to be hard on yourself. Be vicious. Do not show any pity. If a section flat out sucks, then rewrite it until it's perfect. This is a no holds barred fight!

That's the editing process in a nutshell. It took far less time to describe it than it will to actually do it. Now let's wrap this up with an exercise.

* * * * *

Editing Exercise

Pick up the book closest to you and follow these steps.

1. Transcribe the first chapter through use of the *First Edit* method above. While transcribing, try and find things that you would change. Trust me, you can always improve upon a book, no matter how well written it might be. So try it.
2. Now go through your chapter and edit it once more. You can do this immediately even though for the real thing, you should wait. This is just an exercise to get you used to the process. Use the method for *Second Edit* mentioned above.

Why You Should Eventually Hire an Editor

There is a distinct difference between good writing and great writing. This line is normally drawn by whoever edits. While it's not impossible to fully edit your own work, there is no substitute for hiring an editor. Here are 5 reasons:

1. Time Saving

You can save hours of work by hiring an editor. This will free up other areas where you can devote your attention. Maybe use the free time to add content to your website? Or create a video ad? Heck, you could go ahead and start writing your next book! Freeing up time will increase your income and sometimes pay off in dividends greater than the expenses incurred by hiring an editor.

2. Keeps your Hair Intact

Editing is frustrating. Have you ever experienced one of those moments in life that makes you want to reach up and rip your hair off and then stomp on it in retaliation? Now image the frustration that you felt in that moment and multiply it by ten. That's the equivalent of editing your own book. So hiring an editor will save you a lot of frustration and keep your hair intact.

3. Give your Readers the Best Book Possible

This should always be your number one goal when writing. Hiring an editor is a huge step in this direction. It does cost money but as mentioned earlier, increased profits will likely pay for this cost over time.

4. You Get a Professional Opinion from Another Perspective

Sometimes another set of eyes examining your book can be the most powerful tool at your disposal. You've spent countless hours on your book so it's close to you. That can make it hard to spot critical errors.

Furthermore, nothing can help a book more than a professional critique. You might have problems admitting when there are issues. A professional editor will be heartless (which is what you want). Just remember not to take criticism personally. Use it as a tool and not a hindrance.

5. Perfection

Editing is not just about fixing mistakes, it's about perfection. This is what professional editors add to the process. They will help show you where to make any major changes while fixing minor ones. They can help you decide if a chapter (or several chapters) needs to be rewritten. Perfection is priceless, yet you can actually buy it for your book!

Replace Words with GREAT words

Finally, I want to end this chapter on a positive note. Editing might seem like a chore but if you look at it like an opportunity, it doesn't seem so bad. It's an opportunity to replace good words with great words. It's an opportunity to transform your book from average into superb.

If you take the time to get this right, then your book will sell. The marketing strategies that I'm going to show you later in this book will allow your book to be seen by readers. It's up to you how these readers will see your book. Would you rather make a lasting

impression or a sub-par one? Editing is when you make a difference.
Make your book the best it can possibly be.

Step 4: Proofreading

This chapter is designed to show you the process of proofreading. Some of you might think that editing and proofreading are the same. However, that is not the case. Editing and proofreading are completely different beasts and as such, must be tamed using different methods.

Most times, I will give a little freedom to other beliefs when it comes to writing. This is not one of those times. I will not sway to opinions of those who would say that proofreading and editing are the same. Simply put, only amateurs would call them the same.

I'm going to show you the differences in an effort to make a point that I feel is of the utmost importance. Remember, mindset is important. So to effectively complete this process, you need to be completely confident in the way you perceive it. Let's take a closer look.

Are Proofreading and Editing the Same?

No. The reason that some tend to use the two words interchangeably is because editing and proofreading are both stages of the revision process – but they are completely different stages. Each demands a different mindset. Learn to separate them and you will be unstoppable!

Let's look at some tips that can help with both editing and proofreading. Perhaps this is one reason why people tend to interchange the two terms.

EDITING: Connecting and developing ideas. Adding description. Etc...

PROOFREADING: Finding errors in spelling and grammar.

First and foremost (as I've said before), get some distance between yourself and the book. You cannot edit or proofread a book that you

have just finished writing. It's not possible to get it right so don't even try. Your mind has to be removed from it in order to see it from a fresh perspective. Those who attempt to revise their own work too soon often skip over mistakes. Furthermore, hiring an editor is about as distant as you can get! So it's definitely an option to consider.

Choosing a medium to proofread is important. Some are more comfortable proofreading from the computer screen while others prefer good old fashioned ink and paper. Either way is perfectly fine so long as you are not fighting against the platform of choice. You can't fight two battles at once.

Change the size and layout of your book. Alter the font type, size, and even the line spacing. This is a way to trick your mind into forcing it to see the book from a different perspective.

Quiet time. There is nothing better for proofreading than quiet, alone time. Avoid distractions and devote your full attention to your book. This is the most intimate stage of writing a book so treat it as such.

Set a daily proofreading goal and stick to it. Never go over the limit. The more time you spend proofreading, the less likely you are to catch mistakes.

Let's Start Proofreading

Let's get started with the final revision. Proofreading focuses on elements like grammar and misspelling. This stage should only be done after editing has been completed.

While content is widely acknowledged as the most important part of a book, proofreading ensures that your readers are not distracted from the content by careless errors. Make a good impression.

Another common mistake that many beginners make is that they tend to rush through proofreading. While you should be looking at the book from a reader's perspective, do it slowly. Read each line carefully. Trying to proofread too quickly can lead to errors.

Set up a proofreading schedule. Never proofread more than one chapter in a day. Doing so will cause your mind to start missing mistakes. I would break up proofreading into two sessions per day. Proof half of the chapter to start the day, wait a few hours, and then finish that chapter. Use any remaining free time to work on other things.

This process takes more time but in the end, it will pay off. Taking more time to proofread will save you a lot of headaches later down the line. It's also more efficient.

Don't rely on spelling and grammar check to catch mistakes. While it's often a good idea to run these programs at least once, do not let yourself think that they will catch all errors. They will not!

The Process

In a nutshell, here's the process in order.

1. Set up a Proofreading Schedule.
2. Read Slowly

That's it. Proofreading is more difficult to perform than to explain.

Proofreading Exercise

Use this process to proofread the same chapter that you edited in the last chapter. Find mistakes in grammar and spelling. Since you rewrote it, there's likely to be at least one error.

Step 5: Publishing

You've got your book ready. You've spent countless hours through careful revisions. Now it's time to get your book out there for the world to see. There are two options here:

Self Publishing

Traditional Publishing

Whatever your decision, this book will guide you through each process. I recommend starting off by self-publishing your first book since the search for a traditional publisher can take a while. It's to your advantage to go ahead and get your book out on the market. Don't become dependant on a publisher. Establishing yourself as a writer should be your first step.

Let's start off this chapter by closely examining the ISBN.

ISBN

One of the most misunderstood concepts for new writers is the ISBN. Many publishing companies are quick to take advantage of this lack of knowledge. That's why I've included a whole section devoted to explaining an ISBN. The goal is to equip you with the knowledge necessary to keep from being taken advantage of.

An ISBN is a 10 or 13-digit number that is used to identify a book: printed, electronic, or audio. It is used to identify:

- Title
- Format
- Publisher

If any of those three elements are different, then the ISBN will also be different. So let's assume we have a book being printed.

ISBN: 1234567890123

Title: Know Your ISBN

Format: Print

Publisher: John Doe

That ISBN only identifies the print version of the book titled 'Know Your ISBN' and only if it remains published by John Doe. If any of those elements change, then it requires a new ISBN number. That includes the format. So the same book in Kindle format would have a different ISBN than the print version. It doesn't matter that it's the exact same book. Since it's on a different format then it will be assigned its own ISBN.

Also, once you use an ISBN, you can not reuse it for any other book – ever.

Who Needs One?

Anyone who is planning to publish a book (whether it is a publishing company or an individual planning to self-publish their book) needs an ISBN in order to sell their book.

Let's look at a couple more examples:

Example 1

We plan to print 1,000 copies of 'Know Your ISBN'. No matter how many copies we're printing, since the title, format, and publisher is not changing, we only need 1 ISBN.

Example 2

We plan to make "Know Your ISBN" available in paperback, Kindle, and audio book formats. That means we would need 3 ISBNs: one for each format.

Where to Buy ISBNs

Here's the part where new authors run into problems and where companies tend to take advantage. If you type in "Where to buy

ISBN" into Google, you will get hundreds of options. Some are very cheap. Here's the problem. These companies are taking advantage of writers by offering discounted ISBNs but if you read the fine print, you will discover that these companies list themselves as the publisher. Most people will never have issues with this but if you do manage to finally sign with a high end publisher, these companies are going to make life very difficult for you. In fact, I've heard of rare cases where the author was required to refund all books published under the ISBN. The reason is because when you sign off on another person assigning themselves as the publisher, you are giving them certain rights to your book.

There is only one official source for ISBNs in the United States. That source is Bowker. So when you buy an ISBN from another source, they got that ISBN from Bowker. They just buy ISBNs in bulk and sell for a profit. The issue is that doing this puts them in legal control of your book's identification. Get your ISBN directly from the source and maintain total control. This is the best advice I could possibly give you. So here's how you do it the right way:

Step 1

Visit [Bowker](#) and click on the **Buy Your ISBNs** option at the top.

Step 2

The best option is to either buy 10 ISBNs or 100 ISBNs. You save a lot of money by paying one lump sum. Don't worry. Your ISBNs never expire so you could quite literally buy 100 and be set for a long time (maybe the rest of your life)!

Step 3

Once you have your ISBNs, you can simply assign them to books as you finish them. List yourself as the publisher. That leaves you in complete control of your works. In the future, if you do manage to get signed by a high end publisher, you will have no problem transferring your book to their assigned ISBN.

Self-Publishing an EBook

Let's start out by getting your book to readers as soon as possible. Self-publishing is the best way to accomplish this.

A Book is Judged by its Cover

Contrary to the popular saying, books really are judged by their cover. Self-publishing has become such a popular decision that it has led to some fierce competition. While strong, compelling content will always be the number one priority to pull ahead of the pack of rabid competition, your book's cover is what will make the first impression. Without a strong cover, no one will ever open the first page to see how awesome your book is. So captivating your audience through a compelling cover needs to be your first goal when publishing your book.

How to Create a Great Cover

Simplicity and descriptive: those are two contradictions that you must find a way to balance. A book cover must be simple, yet describe your story at the same time. It can really seem like a paradox for beginners. However, the key lies in the title and cover art. Both can be worth thousands of words.

1. Get the Right Tools

First and foremost, you will need the right tools to create a cover. GIMP is a great (and free) option. In fact, I would dare to say that GIMP is just as good of a tool for creating a book cover as the almighty Photoshop.

You can download GIMP [HERE](#).

2. Be Imaginative

This is another of those times when you need to turn off your logic and let your creativity shine through. Play around with your photo software and feel free to insert images, place text, and just let your imagination run wild. The idea is to breathe life into your ideas.

Create several different designs. Save them all. Don't worry about anything at this point. Just be creative. You can even browse other books within your genre to get some ideas.

3. Turn on your Logic

Once you have several potential cover images saved, you can turn on your logic. Feel free to laugh at the more goofy attempts. Now try and put it all together in a coherent manner. Choose a font for your title that compliments your cover art.

Note that you can include a subtitle on your book's cover. Just be sure to limit it to a single line of text. I see so many books that have two or three sentence subtitles. It looks amateurish and shows me that they did not use their imagination. Save sentences for the description. Your book cover should be as simplistic as possible.

4. Research if you're Having Trouble

If you find yourself having problems with your cover, then get online and do some research. Read articles. Look at other book covers. Watch videos. There's a lot of helpful content out there. Sometimes all it takes is one tip or setting your eyes on one specific design to breathe life into your idea.

5. Create at Least 3 Possible Covers

Then let friends and family choose which they like best. If their opinion matches yours, great! If it varies, then you have a basis for comparison between the cover you like versus the cover others seem to prefer. Having opinions really helps a lot. As humans, we all have different tastes. So you want a cover that caters to the majority. Most times you will approve of the same image that would get a majority vote but there are instances where your opinion would not fall into that category.

Feel free to outsource your cover design. You can get very affordable rates. Here are a couple of great outsourcing sites for your book cover:

Fiveer

There are individuals on Fiveer who are willing to create covers for as little as \$5. However, I strongly urge you to vigorously research a potential freelancer before choosing them. The reason is because some of the freelancers on Fiveer tend to use templates. If this is the case, their templates must be created by them and not copied from another source. If you can afford to spend more money, then use our next option. If not, here's a link to Fiveer:

www.fiveer.com

Elance

Elance is the absolute best place to find a freelancer who will design your book cover from scratch (i.e. not use a template). However, it will cost more money. Weigh out your options carefully. Which is more important: 100% unique cover or saving money? Honestly, you can be successful with a template designed cover but a completely unique cover can make your promotions much easier to manage.

www.elance.com

Publishing onto Kindle

Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) is definitely the best option for self-publishing. The market is extremely hot and Amazon is very active towards promoting their selection of Kindle books. Once you set up your book correctly, you can let Amazon take most of the marketing slack off your hands.

The hardest part is actually getting your book uploaded onto Kindle. Once that's done, it's actually possible to do nothing and watch your book sales go up. Of course, I'm going to show you different forms of marketing to increase these sales even further. For now, let's focus on formatting and uploading.

1. Sign Up for a KDP Account

Signing up for a KDP account is free and easy. Furthermore, you don't even have to have a book ready for publication to sign up for

an account so there's nothing keeping you from doing this right now. Visit the follow link to get started:

<http://kdp.amazon.com>

Click on **Sign Up** and fill out all required information. It's worth noting that you will be required to provide some sensitive information including:

- Social Security Number or EIN
- Bank Account Information
- Address

This information is for tax and payment purposes.

2. Format your Manuscript

Now comes the most difficult step of publishing your book onto Kindle. There are two choices here: do it yourself or outsource the work. I'll go ahead and tell you that if you want to do this yourself, then you will need (at the very least) a basic understanding of HTML and XML. If you don't know what those two terms mean, then you are going to have to outsource the work. For those who want to try and do it yourself, keep reading. Just remember that there is no way to simplify this process.

Start out by studying Kindle guidelines. Watch the videos and read the posts. All of the information can be found here:

[Kindle Help Videos](#)

Next, you will need to download a free tool called Mobipocket. You can find it here:

[Mobipocket](#)

Okay, so let's get started with the actual conversion process. First, I'll show you a basic roadmap of our main goals:

1. Create an HTML version of the book

2. Import the HTML version onto Mobipocket
3. Code an NCX (this will require a basic understanding of XML)
4. Associate the NCX with the HTML.
5. Convert into Kindle Format.

Ready to get started? Great!

1. Create an HTML version of the Book

First, we will need an HTML version of the book. This doesn't mean that you can simply click Save As and convert your book that way. You will need to format it in a way that works for Kindle. This is best accomplished by using MS Word. Here's a tip that you should always remember:

What you see is NOT what you get.

This simply means that what you see on the screen while looking at the document in MS Word is not always what the text will look like on Kindle. That's because when you convert to an HTML file, you will get tags and coding associated with HTML and not MS Word. Therefore, you have to clean up the formatting so that it's converts into HTML flawlessly.

Utilize Styles and Formatting

From now on, you will need to start correctly using the **Styles and Formatting** feature in Word. In other words, using the menu is no longer an option. When you use shortcuts (easy method) to change the way font looks, it does not create the correct HTML tags. So this look will last only so long as you are reading the text in MS Word. That's useless for Kindle.

So right now, go into your formatting menu option and select **Styles and Formatting**. A list will show up with several different styles. Now I want you to press **CTRL+A** so that all text within your book is highlighted. With all text highlighted, click on **Normal** from your list of **Styles**. This will convert all text into a single style.

For the benefit of seeing how this works, right click the **Normal Style** on your Styles menu and select **Modify**. Change the *Font Size* to 16, click **OK** and watch as all text within your document is changed. From now on, this is how you will change the way text looks within your document.

Now highlight the words *Chapter 1* at the beginning of your book. With that text highlighted, click on **Heading 1** in your Styles menu. Notice how that by changing the style, you changed the look of the text? Now you can go through your book and reformat its look. This time, create styles and change the look of text through the **Modify** option rather than selecting the easy options from the menu. This is how you should be formatting your text from this point forward.

There's one more task to complete now. This involves creating bookmarks. I'll assume that you know how to create a Table of Contents. The basic idea is the same. The only difference is that instead of letting MS Word link to sections of your book, you need to manually go to each section and **Insert** a **Bookmark**. For example:

Chapter 1 will have a bookmark named *Chapter1*.

Chapter 2 will have a bookmark called *Chapter2*.

Once you have assigned bookmarks to all Chapters and Sub-Chapters in your book, create a Table of Contents at the beginning. For each entry, **Insert** a **Hyperlink** and choose the **Place in this Document** option. You will see a list of the bookmarks that you created. Assign each item on your Table of Contents to its corresponding bookmark.

Create an HTML Version

Once you have went through your book and assigned styles in a way so that it looks the way you want, it's time to create an HTML file. This is easy. Just **Save As** an *Unfiltered HTML file*.

Import HTML into Mobipocket

Open Mobipocket and choose **HTML** from under the **Import From Existing File** category. For now, we just need to create the files in order to modify some of the coding. So once your HTML document has been imported, simply select the Build option at the top of the window and then once more to convert into a Kindle format. It's worth noting that this will not be the final version of your book. We are merely creating the source files.

Once the process is completed, you should have a folder assigned to your book in the Mobipocket directory. By default, this is located in your *Documents* in a folder named *My Publications*.

Creating an NCX

This is by far the most difficult step and requires that you understand basic XML. An NCX is the navigational control interface for your book. It's a programmed guide that puts selected sections of your book just a click away. Some will say that an NCX isn't necessary for novels. I will strongly disagree. Kindle books without an NCX are automatically categorized as amateurish. Books with an NCX convert at a much higher rate.

If you plan on doing this yourself, here's how it's accomplished. I'm only going to show you the simple method (one level of entries). You can actually code as many levels as you want.

Below is a basic XML that is comprised of two chapters. Each <NavPoint> is a Chapter. I'm not going to go into much detail about this. What I will mention is that the <Text> tag denotes what the reader will see in the NCX while the <content src> tag is a hyperlink to the section of the book. Again, if you don't understand this, you should probably hire a professional.

Look at the coding sample below. Between the <Text> tags are Chapter 1, Chapter 2, etc.. The <content src> tags are labeled with **BookFileName.html#Chapter1**.

BookFileName = The name of your file.

= Denotes a Bookmark in the file.

Chapter1 = Name of said Bookmark.

* * * * *

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8" ?>
```

```
<!DOCTYPE ncx PUBLIC "-//NISO//DTD ncx 2005-1//EN"
"http://www.daisy.org/z3986/2005/ncx-2005-1.dtd">
```

```
<ncx xmlns="http://www.daisy.org/z3986/2005/ncx/" xml:lang="en-US" version="2005-1">
```

```
<head>
```

```
<meta name="dtb:uid" content="Publishing Our Book" />
```

```
<meta name="dtb:depth" content="1" />
```

```
<meta name="dtb:totalPageCount" content="0" />
```

```
<meta name="dtb:maxPageNumber" content="0" />
```

```
</head>
```

```
<docTitle>
```

```
<text>Publish Our Book</text>
```

```
</docTitle>
```

```
<navMap>
```

```
<navPoint id="navPoint-1" playOrder="1">
```

```
<navLabel>
```

```
<text>Chapter 1</text>
```

```
</navLabel>
```

```
<content src="BookFileName.html#Chapter1" />
```

```
</navPoint>
```

```
<navPoint id="navPoint-2" playOrder="2">
```

```
<navLabel>
```

```
<text>Chapter 2</text>
```

```
</navLabel>

<content src="BookFileName.html#Chapter2" />

</navPoint>

* * * * *
```

Associate the NCX with your Book

In your Publication folder, there is an .opf file. For example, "Our Book.opf. Use Notepad to open this file and then put the following coding into it:

Place between the <Manifest> and </Manifest> tags:

```
<item href="toc.ncx" id="ncx" media-type="application/x-dtbnx+xml" />
```

Replace the <spine> tag with:

```
<spine toc="ncx">
```

Convert to Kindle Format

In Mobipocket, click on **Open** and then select the OPF file that you edited in the previous step. Then click on **Build**. This should produce your upload ready Kindle file. The PRC file will have a fully functional NCX. You can upload it directly onto the KDP interface.

Note: You can preview your newly formatted Kindle version by downloading the [Free Kindle Previewer](#).

3. Upload your Book onto Kindle

Are you ready to publish your book for the world to see? Come on! You can do better than that!? Jump up and enthusiastically scream YES!

The first thing we need to do is find seven keywords to associate with your book. However, I'm going to reveal something that few people know about. I wouldn't call it a secret, but it's definitely great knowledge to possess. Let' use this knowledge to find our seven keywords.

1. Think of three genres that you could use to categorize your book. For example: Fantasy, Sci Fi, and Romance could work for some fiction books.
2. Now visit Amazon and change the search option from **All** into **Kindle Books**. Once that's done, start typing the term into the search bar. Stop about halfway through. Notice how Amazon is showing a list of options below? This is not by accident. This is by design. Those items below your search bar are the most commonly searched terms that buyers search for. They are known as *Buyer Keywords* – or keywords that people search for when just before buying a product. Type your entire phrase into the search bar and then write down the top five *Buyer Keywords*. Now we have terms that we know buyers are searching for. The only thing we are missing is a number of searches.
3. Use Google Keyword Generator and search for each of the *Buyer Keywords* and write down the number of monthly searches it gets. It's also worth noting that Google Keyword Generator shows you what are known as *Search Keywords*. *Search Keywords* are keywords that people search for. While searches are normally used for individuals looking for free information, we know that our *buyer keywords* are being used by individuals willing to spend money. The goal is to find *Buyer Keywords* that get a high volume of searches.
4. Repeat the process for all three starting genre keywords you started with.

By now, you should have a list of keywords that you know buyers are searching for, as well as the number of monthly searches they get on Google. The higher the volume of searches, the more powerful the keyword phrase is.

Now comes the process of uploading the book. Visit KDP and log into your account. Click on **Publish New Book**. Fill out the necessary information. The following are worth noting in detail:

Category: Make sure to choose two categories here in order to have your book listed in as many places as possible.

Keywords: Use the list you created to add keywords. Start with the ones that get the most searched.

Content: This is where you upload your PRC file.

That's it. Your book is published onto Kindle! It's time to move onto other formats.

Publishing onto Smashwords

Smashwords is a great place for new authors to get their book up and running. They make things really easy too! All you're required to do is format your Word document to meet their requirements and then upload it. Their "meatgrinder" automatically converts your book into several formats and once it's accepted into premium distribution, it is automatically posted to numerous sellers like Barnes & Noble and iBooks.

The most difficult part is formatting the document to meet Smashwords requirements. Since there are a lot of requirements, the best way to get started is to read the Smashwords Style Guidelines. It's a free book and can be found by clicking the link below:

[Smashwords Style Guidelines](#)

Once you have your manuscript formatted to meet their requirements, here's the process of actually publishing your book through Smashwords.

1. [Sign up](#) for a free Smashwords account. Fill out all necessary information. You will also need to verify your email address.
2. Print out the tax form, fill it out, scan it, and then email it back to Smashwords. This is required in order for you to sell books through any of their distributors.
3. Log into your Smashwords Account and select **Publish**. Fill out all required information about your book. Pay special attention to Keywords and ISBN. As discussed earlier in this chapter, always use your own ISBN and not one assigned by Smashwords.

That's it! Now you only need to wait for your book to be reviewed and accepted into premium distribution.

Publishing on CreateSpace

Finally, we will focus on getting your book into print. This is made easy through print on demand publishing. Print on demand is a fancy phrase that means a copy of your book is only printed when someone buys it.

CreateSpace is the best (and easiest) print on demand based platform on the web. Would we expect anything less from Amazon? Here are the steps to get your book up and running on CreateSpace. As always, feel free to watch their videos for submission guidelines.

1. Sign up for an account with CreateSpace by clicking the following link:

<https://www.createspace.com/>

Then verify your email address and you will be set.

2. Log into your account. From the Dashboard, click on **Add New Title**.

3. The next page is fairly self-explanatory. It's pretty much the same process as KDP and Smashwords. You can edit any of this at any time so there's no need to be a perfectionist.

4. The next screen is where things start getting different. Here is a short explanation of each factor:

Interior Type: You choose the colors used in your book here. Keep in mind that black and white will make your book significantly cheaper than color. Furthermore, color is only useful under very specific circumstances. So stick with black and white unless you're planning to publish a children's book or graphic novel.

Paper Color: Again, stick with the basics (white). It will make a significant difference in the price that readers will be charged for your book.

Trim Size: This is the size of your book. It must match the size used for formatting. Otherwise, you will need to format a new version.

5. The next section is for your ISBN. Use a custom ISBN that you control.
6. Now you will reach the upload screen. Upload your book file and wait for it to complete. This can take several minutes. Once it finishes uploading, you will want to review the formatting. If you get any errors, fix them and then upload the file again.
7. Next, you will be able to upload the cover. Use the cover that you designed for your print book (discussed earlier in this chapter).
8. Submit your files for review. This will take a couple of days. Once they are approved, order a proof and review the book yourself before publishing it. Do not skip this step. Always review a physical proof of your book before approving it.
9. Once you have reviewed your book, set up your distribution options. I highly recommend that you go ahead and fork up the \$35 for premium distribution. This will assure that your book is listed in many more locations.
10. Finally, all that's left is to set your price. Browse for other books within your genre to assure that your price is fair and that you make a profit. CreateSpace will set a minimum price threshold that you must adhere to. That price is dependant on the size of your book.

The Search for a Traditional Publisher

Even though I recommend that all new authors go ahead and learn the ropes of being a published author by self publishing their book, there's no reason why you can't begin the search for a traditional publisher. Here are a few advantages of traditional publishing:

Advance Payments: One of the biggest advantages with traditional publishing is that there is a chance they will pay you an advance on future royalties. This is a rare instance but is totally possible if they see long-term potential in your book. An advance in royalties will

allow you to immediately start writing your next book without having to worry about where your next payday will come from.

Motivation: Literary agencies will push you further than you could ever hope to push yourself. They will force you to market and most importantly, set up interviews and send out press releases for you. That's why I feel strongly about learning the ropes through self-publishing. It's a tough world. If you're not prepared, then you stand little chance when your agent shoves you out into these shark infested waters.

Exposure: There is a triangle that large publishing companies have been maintaining for years. This triangle consists of publishers, libraries, and bookstores. They maintain this in an effort to compete with the fact that so many authors are self-publishing. Trust me, traditional publishing companies would like nothing more than for a self-published author to fall flat on their face! As you will find, self-publishing makes it hard to get in the click. With a traditional publisher, you are automatically in the click.

This long and tedious search begins with two things: a query letter and a list of agents. It's important to note that you will need to search for an agent – not a publisher. Most publishers will not look at the work of unrepresented authors. So remember that your search for a traditional publisher starts with finding an agent. The search for an agent begins with a query letter.

Writing a Query Letter

A query letter can end up being just as important as the book itself. Its job is simple - to convince an agent to ask for your manuscript. Query letters will vary slightly, depending on the genre of your book (novel, nonfiction, poetry). So I won't go into much detail about every little thing that should be included in a query letter. In fact, you can search the internet for hundreds of opinions on how to lay out a query letter. Instead, I'm going to focus more on essential things that you should do and things you should never do.

Essential Query Letter To Do List

Always address agents by name. Addressing a reader with “To Whom it May Concern” is an amateurish mistake and makes you look silly. Using their name acknowledges that you are professional and courteous enough to do a little research. On the other hand, being generic will show that you’re lazy.

Hook the reader with the first sentence and reel them in with the second. Then keep their attention until the end and close out with a call to action. Never, under any circumstances, include a single word that is not working toward selling your manuscript. Pretend that you’re standing with them in person and trying to sell a copy of your book. Why should they buy it? Why is it compelling to your target audience?

Close to the end of your query letter, try and add a couple of sentences about yourself. Do you have a website that gets thousands of hits? Are you a college graduate? Sell yourself but keep it limited to a couple of sentences at most. You can even include a reason why you chose that particular agent.

Essential Query Letter DO NOT do list

Never come across as arrogant. Some people are laughable when it comes to this. I’ve seen query letters that talked down to the agent, giving them a lesson in what sells. These are the same writers trying to get signed. Don’t do this. I guarantee you that the agent reading your letter knows a lot more about publishing than you do.

Never include flattery in your letter. Flattery would include something along the lines of “thank you for taking the time to read this” or “I know you’re busy”. If you ever get a chance, ask a literary agent what goes through their mind when they read this. They know they’re busy! Flattery is a waste of space that could be used for more useful content. You can add a simple thank you in the area where you sign off on the letter.

Never get too personal. This includes mentioning anything about you personally - including your age. Don’t mention anything about

yourself that doesn't directly address the manuscript you're trying to sell.

Step 6: Marketing

Finally, we have reached the *do or die* phase of your new book. You've written a tale worthy of high praise – or put some of the priceless knowledge you've gathered through experience between two covers. Now prepare for war! Just kidding. Marketing isn't war. Most authors stick together and help one another.

The problem with self-publishing is that you have no help with marketing. You must do it yourself. That's okay though. It's better that you go ahead and take these steps on your own now and get the learning experience under your belt.

Put all of your cards on the table. Remember that this book is only designed to get you started. As you gain more experience, you'll undoubtedly come up with new techniques for marketing. Some will work while others fall flat on their face. Never be afraid of failure. Succumbing to this fear will force you into a shell. Face it. Savor it. This is a once in a lifetime experience so enjoy every moment of it, the good and the bad.

Marketing Mistakes

I browse through new authors on a weekly basis. It's amazing at how many tend to repeat the same mistakes that have led so many before them to give up. I've come to refer to these as the top 3 mistakes. Read this section and then browse through new author's profiles and websites. It will open your mind.

I want to be sure that you don't repeat one of those same mistakes. Here they are:

Mistake 1: No Tagline

Taglines are often associated with movies, so it's no surprise that authors often bypass creating one for their book. However, what they fail to see is that a tagline allows a potential reader to set your book

into its own self-defined category. They ultimately decide through a tagline whether or not they want to read your book.

Great taglines are hooks in themselves. Needless to say, it's not easy to come up with a few words that accurately describe your book in great detail. If it's too general then it will be seen as cliché while you can completely lose a reader with a complex tagline. How do you get it perfect? Let's start with the basics. List the following on a blank sheet of paper:

- Target audience
- Reasons why your target audience would want to read it
- Describe in no more than two sentences what sets your book apart from others of the same genre
- Mindset you feel the reader will get

With this information staring you in the face, a tagline might leap out and slap you. If it does, write it down! However, in some cases the tagline might elude you. Here is a brainstorming technique that can work.

How would you answer the following question if a friend asked it to you: "What is your book about?"

Write down possible responses to that question. Now try combining those responses with the other information that you wrote down from above.

The idea is that you keep brainstorming until something reaches out and grabs your attention. Trust me, it eventually will do just that and you'll wonder how you couldn't see it sooner.

Once you have a tagline, here are five places you should include it:

1. On the front or back cover of your book.
2. On your Facebook Fan Page (discussed later).
3. On your Website.

4. In your Book Trailer (discussed later).
5. On all Promotional material such as bookmarks, posters, or even t-shirts.

Mistake 2: Too Much Humility

Most of us are raised to be humble. For writers, this can be a major setback. Readers want to buy what everyone else is reading. Therefore, you need your book to come across as a must buy. This requires a balance of humility and arrogance.

As a rule, writers exaggerate. We use excessive adjectives to describe the most common of occurrences. We describe a breath using an entire sentence. Writers exaggerate when writing, but it should not end there. We must all exaggerate when promoting our book too. This is something that some find uncomfortable. So you have one of two choices: learn to exaggerate or never sell your books.

The majority of authors give into this fear and in essence, give potential buyers the impression that there is no demand for their book. If a buyer doesn't feel that a lot of people are reading or buying your book, they are more likely to bypass buying it.

As the author, it's your job to create a feeling of demand in potential buyers. Highlight the most advantageous areas of your book and exaggerate them. Try and get professional reviews for your book and point them out.

Mistake 3: Becoming a Salesman

Forget everything you've ever learned about selling. The relentless pursuit and constant seduction techniques used by insurance salesmen is not going to work when selling your book. You will accomplish this through targeted marketing, a compelling description, and keyword targeting. There is no reason to constantly talk about your book. The fine line between arrogance and humility is drawn at this point. Trust me, I know several individuals who talk about nothing else but their book (the one that's not even finished yet). I avoid them because, well to be perfectly blunt, it's very

annoying. Set up a sound marketing plan and then let it ride. Only mention your book when asked.

Book Reviews 101

Reviews are the life source of a new author's success. While it's easy for well established writers to depend on the fan base for reviews, new writers will have trouble selling without posted reviews. Without selling books, a writer can't gain fans. Without fans, there is no fan base. At first glance, it seems like a chicken or the egg dilemma. However, there are ways that new writers can get their books reviewed. There are three key ingredients to make it happen:

- A well-written and edited book.
- Patience.
- Willingness to work.

Rule of thumb is that a reader needs to see five reviews on a book's page in order to buy it. Five reviews is a good, achievable goal. It's always best to try and find reviewers before your book's launch date. That will give you everything you need to start selling right from the launch date. Here's a simple process to get you started.

Note: Never pay for fake book reviews. It does absolutely no good and will likely get you banned from Amazon and other sellers.

Build a List of Possible Reviewers

Before you can ask for reviews, you need to know who to ask. So building a list of possible reviewers is a good first step. Although you can use whatever means you are most comfortable with to record the information, I recommend an Excel spreadsheet. It's perfectly suited and easy to back up. Whatever method you decide, collect the following information:

- Reviewer's name
- Where you found them
- Contact information (most notably an email address)

- Comments field. You will insert information here such as requirements (if any) for submitting a request.

Where to Find Reviewers

There are several places that you can find reviewers. The best are:

- Amazon
- GoodReads
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Use Search Engines and look for other blogs that specialize in reviewing books.

Once you have found a potential reviewer, check their review policy. Make sure they actually provide services for indie authors. Also, be sure they review books within the same genre as yours. If everything checks out, record their information onto your spreadsheet (or other record if you chose not to use Excel).

Write a Letter Requesting a Review

Be sure it's professional and to the point. If it doesn't grab the reader's attention within two sentences, they will ignore it. You only need one query letter, just be sure to leave the "To" field blank. You will be inserting each reviewer individually. It should follow this format:

Dear _____

Introduction about yourself. List your achievements, experience, and the goal of your letter (i.e. to get your book reviewed). This should be two to three sentences.

The body will contain one or two sentences about your book. Include the tagline, genre, and length.

End by asking that they contact you if interested in reviewing your book. This should only be one sentence.

Thanks for your time

After you have finished writing the letter, be sure to proofread it. If there are mistakes in your letter, the reader will automatically assume your book has mistakes too.

Customize and Send your Letter

Go through your list of reviewers and start sending out this letter. Be sure to address the recipient by name. Nothing screams amateur like the words “To whom it may concern”. Then it’s a matter of waiting for replies.

Owning a Website

Starting a website isn’t as difficult as some believe. It’s not expensive either. You can get started for as little as twenty bucks. In fact, having a website is probably the least expensive form of marketing on the planet!

A website lets you reach millions of potential readers while keeping your current ones up to date with new projects and other fun content. You have the potential to literally reach anyone in the world. It works for you twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Your website will never take a break. It will passively promote your book. All of this for less than twenty bucks a month!

Every website consists of two essential components:

Domain: URL where your website is located.

Host: Computer that stores the files for your website.

Registering a Domain

Owning a website starts with the act of registering a domain. There is one problem. The options are vast and the margin for error slim. That’s nothing to worry about though. You have this book to guide you after all!

A domain will be the internet display of your collected works. So getting this right will mean a great deal not just in the immediate future, but through your career. A website is the backbone of internet marketing and it starts here.

Research is the key to unlocking the perfect domain. Begin the process like so many others, with a blank sheet of paper. Turn on your creativity and get creative at this point. Come up with catchy phrases that you feel properly demonstrate what you plan to write in the next few years.

Once you have a few possibilities, start gathering information. The first thing to do is check [Google Keyword Generator](#). This was mentioned in detail earlier so I won't go through the process step-by-step like before.

Include your entire list in your search. When done, you will get a list of important information regarding your phrases as well as related searches. The information you should take note of is:

Competition: This is the number of other businesses targeting the keyword phrase. You want to try and find phrases with a *low* competition.

Monthly Searches: This is the number of times the phrase has been search for on Google during the previous month. The more searches a phrase has, the more potential viewers the page will receive.

With that said, we are still just brainstorming here. Gather this information and write it next to each keyword phrase you had previously written down. Also, add the related searches to your list.

NOTE: Keep this list even when you're finished. You will need it again later.

Registration Process

I'll go through a step-by-step list of the actual process of registering a domain. It's worth noting that while I recommend NameCheap, there are many options. A lot of people love GoDaddy because it provides

everything you need all on one website. However, NameCheap in combination with HostGator is actually cheaper.

Step 1

Visit [NameCheap](#).

Step 2

Notice the bar that reads “Enter Domain to Search”? You need only enter the phrase from your list with the highest search volume into this section and click search. You will be shown whether or not the domain is available. You’re looking for the *.com* extension. If it’s not available, then search for the next phrase on your list, working your way in order of most searches. Repeat until you find one that you can use.

Sometimes, none of the phrases on your list will be available. In this case, you will need to brainstorm another list and go through the process again. Finding a great domain is a time consuming task and can take anywhere from several hours to over a week.

Step 3

Once you find an available domain, you will need to checkout. You’re given the option of registering it for 1 year or 2 years. Always register domains in 2 year increments. Believe it or not, this has an effect on how search engines view your website.

You’re done!

Using your Own Name

As a writer, you have the option of using your own name as the domain of your website. It’s always a good idea to go ahead and grab your name from the world so no one else can register it. In fact, I would go even further and recommend that you start off with two websites because it opens up another opportunity for income. If you’re fortunate enough for your name to be available, I strongly

recommend you go ahead and grab it. Set up your two websites (if you choose to register two) as follows:

YourName.com: This should be your main website.

KeywordPhrase.com: This should be your secondary website.

Although this book isn't designed to list every single income opportunity on the internet, I do feel compelled to add a few that work hand-in-hand with marketing your writing skills. But for now, let's just focus on registering (at most) two domains: your name (if available) and one of the keyword phrases that you have on your list.

Look at it like this. As a writer, your name (or penname) is your brand. So you want to slowly build it. This can take years to accomplish but you have to start somewhere. That's why I recommend you go ahead and get started with it now.

Your second domain will be used for passive income opportunities alongside of promotions.

Finding a Web Host

Web hosting companies differ greatly so it's important to steer clear of the lower tier ones. Use either HostGator (which I recommend with NameCheap) or GoDaddy. Free hosts are out of the question unless you want to have random ads spread around your website. Let's get started with HostGator:

Step 1

Visit [HostGator](#).

Step 2

Click on [View Web Hosting Plans](#).

Step 3

Here you can select which hosting plan you want. **Baby Gator** is by far the best plan available because it offers unlimited domains. You do not want to limit yourself to one domain. So get Baby Gator.

Step 4

Go through the checkout process and pay for your plan. You will then receive a verification email. Save this as it contains important information.

Merging your Domain and Host

Step 1

Remember that email that I told you not to delete. Open it and find the section titled Nameservers. There should be two weird looking addresses that look something like this:

ns1234.hostgator.com

ns1235.hostgator.com

The addresses are unique so they will not be exactly like the two above. I just used them to give you a general idea as to what you need to look for. Those are known as DNS addresses and you need them both. Write them down, print the email, whatever you want.

STEP 2

Go to NameCheap and log into your account.

STEP 3

Hover over **Domains** and select **Manage Domains**.

STEP 4

Click on your Domain.

STEP 5

Click on [Domain Name Server Setup](#) on the left side of the page.

Step 6

Select [Specify Custom DNS Server](#) and then put the two DNS addresses from the email into the two fields below.

You are now ready to start building your website. This used to be so difficult that a professional was required. However, WordPress has made this process a piece of cake.

Installing WordPress

HostGator and GoDaddy both offer WordPress installations. This is by far the easiest and most powerful tool for writers. To get started, you will need to access the C-Panel for your website. This is a webmaster area where you have access to all back end tools and information. To reach it, simply type “/cpanel” after your url.

www.yourdomain.com/cpanel

Find the WordPress installation and simply follow the on-screen instructions to install it. Once you have done this, check the email you used to install WordPress to get your login information. Then use the following URL to access the dashboard:

www.yourdomain.com/wp-admin

Creating your First Post

I'll get you started on the right path. However, I recommend that you play around with WordPress to get the hang of how it all works. It's not that complicated. Here's how to add your first post:

Step 1

Click on [Posts](#) and then [Create New Post](#).

Step 2

Use the area to write a post.

Step 3

Click on [Save and Publish](#).

That's all there is to adding a new post.

Learn Wordpress

It's essential to learn as much about Wordpress as possible. Most of this can be done through trial and error. However, if you want a kick-start then check out these books:

[Wordpress To Go](#)

[Wordpress for Beginners](#)

Monetize your Website

Okay, you have your most powerful marketing tool up and running. Now let's take it a step further. Before we get started, I want to go over one thing first. I will be using the terms "main website" and "secondary website" through this entire section. Here's the difference:

Main Website: The website with your name as the URL.

Secondary Website: The keyword rich domain.

By the end of this section, you'll understand why they are different. The focus is to get your main website ranked (which is a long term goal) while making it so that your secondary website markets for you while generating a passive income.

Search Engine Ranking

This is by far the most powerful tool you will ever need to learn. Answer this question. When you are looking for something online, what is the first thing you do? Do you Google it? You might use

Yahoo, BING, or one of the other search engines on the web – but chances are that you search for the answer on the internet. Have you ever wondered how search engines provide you with information that you asked for?

The reason is because webmasters target their content toward specific phrases so that when a user types in that exact phrase, their website is one of the first you see. As a result, they get thousands of visitors a day. Imagine the power they hold in advertising and promotions.

What's the catch? There really is no *catch*. Sure, you could look around and I bet you'll find some random "business expert" who is willing to "sell" you a "secret" to getting your website ranked. Notice all the quotes? Yeah. They are full of...never mind.

There are no secrets that can instantly get your website ranked. No special tricks. No legal loopholes – these loopholes will actually get your site banned. There are three ways to get your website ranked. Here they are, listed in order of importance:

- 1. Provide high quality and useful content for real people.**
- 2. Tag content with keywords (1% -3% density, never more).**
- 3. Register your domain in 2 year increments.**

Any trick that someone tries to teach you that tries to surpass these is a black hat technique. It will get your site banned. Stick with these three and your website will have long-term success.

1. Set up a Schedule for Adding Content

First and foremost, you need content for your two websites. Since it will take a while to rank your main website, focus on adding the majority of new content to your secondary website. Set up a schedule and stick to it. For example, if you decide you can only find enough time to add one post a week, do something like this:

Week 1 = Post on Secondary Website

Week 2 = Post on Secondary Website

Week 3 = Post on Secondary Website

Week 4 = Post on Main Website

The reason that we will focus mostly on our secondary website will be clear shortly but in a nutshell, it's so that you can start generating a passive income as quickly as possible.

2. Add Google AdSense to Your Website

I would wait until after you get some content on your website before setting up AdSense. For those who don't know about AdSense, it's a platform that lets webmasters place ads on their website. In return, they get paid on a *per-click* basis – meaning that every time a user clicks on an AdSense ad on your website, you get paid. To get started, visit your Google account and select the AdSense option. If you don't have a Google account, then get one.

At this point, you will need to understand some of the more advanced options that WordPress has to offer. Our main concern here is widgets. A widget is embedded onto every page of your website by using a single interface. In other words, if I decided to add a specific video on every page through my website, I would embed that video into a widget.

These are located on the right, left, and sometimes both sides of your page. They are designed as an easy way to incorporate items onto your entire website – both current and future pages. So you will want to create a widget for AdSense ads. Since AdSense automatically detects your content and places only ads that are relevant to your website, creating an AdSense widget will completely automate the process. All current pages and any new pages will have ads automatically added and these ads will match your content.

Read through the AdSense help section and watch the videos to learn more about it.

3. Website Flipping

Website flipping (or domain flipping) is best understood when looking at it from a real estate point of view. It's just like flipping property:

Domain = Land

Website = Home

Your domain is the equivalent of untamed property. You get it for cheap, but it's useless in the beginning. You have to cultivate it into something of value. The reason I'm adding this as a part of marketing for your book is because it's essentially an opportunity to make free money. Let me explain.

While building a website and ranking it, you can use it to promote anything you want – including your book. This is the reason I had you choose two domains: a main and a secondary. The secondary is the one you will use for this process.

Website flipping is made up of four easy steps:

- 1. Purchase a Domain (you already did)**
- 2. Build a Website (already done)**
- 3. Add content (already doing this)**
- 4. Wait for it to rank and then sell it.**

As you can see, selling the domain is the only step that you are not already doing. Ranked websites can sell for thousands of dollars. You will have your main website and by the time you get ready to sell your secondary, your main will already be working its way up in rankings. Website flipping takes quite a bit of time. However, since this is just a secondary method added to your main marketing plan, it doesn't really matter how long it takes to sell.

Here's the great thing. There is only one aspect of website flipping that is not already part of your overall marketing plan. Search Google

for places where you can list your domain in order to sell it. GoDaddy and NameCheap both have areas for this.

Social Media

I'm sure that everyone reading this book has used social media in one form or another. It's become the backbone of communications, creating a free and friendly atmosphere for keeping in touch with distant relatives and friends who have moved away. However, it's also become one of the most powerful promotional tools on the web. Needless to say, if you want to be a successful writer then you're going to have to get involved in this broad, digital world.

Facebook

We can't talk about social media marketing without Facebook being at the top of the list. Millions of people use Facebook on a daily basis. As a result, Facebook gives you access to millions of potential readers.

Facebook is essential if you want to effectively market your book. If you don't already have an account, then stop whatever it is that you're doing and get one. There's no reason not to. If you already have an account that you use to keep in touch with family and friends, then you are already moving in the right direction. However, your profile will likely need to be tweaked in order to market effectively.

Facebook Goals

Facebook gives you access to millions of potential readers. It doesn't happen automatically though. There are some goals that you will need to accomplish.

Goal 1: Establish your Presence

Let's face it, humans establish their opinion of another through a first impression. While it isn't impossible to reestablish a reputation even after totally screwing things up the first time around, it can be very

difficult. Your best bet is to give people a great first impression. Facebook provides an excellent platform for accomplishing this.

So our first goal with Facebook is to establish a presence. Tell people about yourself. Let them get to know you. Someone reading your profile should learn:

- Who you are
- What you have to offer
- Why they should trust you

Goal 2: Drive Traffic to your Website

Once you have made a good first impression, readers will be more likely to see what you have to offer. This is when Facebook is at its most powerful. Post links to your personal website in an effort to get its traffic up. If you have followed this book to this point, then your website will show visitors your professional side. If this is done correctly, you will have established both a friendly personality and professionalism. Both of these are equally as important for writers to establish.

Now it's time to add the finishing touches. Provide links to other sources such as:

- Twitter
- You Tube (More on this later)
- Blogs
- Author Profile
- Books

Goal 3: Search Engine Ranking

Once you've established a good first impression and have linked to different outlets, it's time to make it easy for people to find you. That's where search engines come into play. Getting a Facebook page ranked on search engines is extremely easy. The trick is to use the

right keywords. Don't worry. We will discuss this in more detail. For now, it's just important to know your Facebook goals.

Let's Get Started

I bet you're ready to get started with Facebook. It can be a lot of fun but most importantly, it will be extremely rewarding. Like everything else, it can seem intimidating at first. That's why we will simplify the process.

Step 1: Create a Profile (or revamp your current profile)

This is where so many people really make themselves look like an amateur. I'm not trying to be mean or degrading, but Facebook profiles can really set an author way behind the competition. One common misconception is that so long as you create a Facebook Fan Page, then your personal profile is not important. This is simply not true. While it's definitely possible to keep a profile for friends/family and a Fan Page for your future readers, some readers will still check out your personal profile to learn more about you. Here is where one of three mistakes is made:

1. The profile is set to private. So the potential buyer notices and instantly assumes that the individual is arrogant. Why? Because they are an author (public figure) yet keep their profile private.
2. They keep their profile public, yet have an unprofessional bio. Even worse, they have pictures of a drunken party blasted on their Facebook wall!
3. They create a separate Facebook account. This is against Facebook Terms of Service and can get you banned. So you will have to use a single account to do everything.

It's perfectly natural to want to maintain a personal Facebook for friends and family. Here's the proper way to go about it.

First of all, you will have to write a professional bio for your profile. It doesn't have to be long if you are planning to keep your profile for

personal use (which I recommend). Make it short and to the point. Most importantly, make it professional.

Next, think of the security of your family and friends. While you may not be able to set your entire profile to private, you can set your Facebook friends list and pictures to private. There's a reason Facebook makes everything fully customizable. It's not by accident. It's so that you can maintain a single Facebook account for both personal and professional use.

Here's a breakdown of what you should do:

- Make sure your profile bio comes across as professional.
- Set your pictures to "Friends Only" so that only people you add to your Facebook friends list can see them. If you want some pictures for public use, create a separate folder for these.
- Set your wall activity to "Friends Only".
- Unless you want to get hundreds of random friend requests, set it so that only "Friends of Friends" can add you.

How to Create a Facebook Profile

This is a quick guide to signing up on Facebook for the few who don't already have one. Or even better, if you have two different phone numbers then you can set up a Facebook profile just for business use (it's not against TOS if you have different phone numbers for each account). Even if you opt to do this, you still need to follow the instructions listed above. Since you have to transform your main profile anyway, I don't recommend having two accounts. Keep things simple and stick to one. Anyway, here's how to set up a new Facebook account.

1. Visit www.facebook.com
2. Select **Sign Up**
3. Verify your Email
4. Log in and select **Edit Profile.**

5. Enter basic information and select **Save**.
6. Enter Contact Information. Note that Facebook uses the phone number to verify accounts. If two or more are using the same phone number, all accounts could possibly be banned.
7. Add a Picture. This is a must. Be sure that the picture is professional, of yourself (not an avatar), and high quality.

Step 2: Join Groups

Once you have professionalized your profile, it's time to start joining groups. Stick with just a few at a time. There are several reasons why Facebook groups are important but I feel the most notable is that you can learn from others. Seeing how other writers promote themselves will go a long way. Here are some of the advantages:

- Readers join groups to find new books to read.
- See how other writers present themselves.
- Become a prominent voice and earn the trust of potential customers.

Let's get started. First thing you need to do is find some groups to join. Use Facebook's search feature to find groups within your niche. For example, if you have written a fantasy novel, then search for fantasy reading groups. Once you find a group that falls within your area, consider the following:

- How many members does the group have? You only want to join groups with an above average volume of members (400-500).
- How often to others post? If there is a post every five minutes, then it's unlikely that anything you post will be seen.
- When was the last time someone posted? You only want to join active groups.

Posting Within Groups

Once you join a few groups, you can start using them to your advantage. There are two rules: make your post relevant to the group

and do not spam the group. In fact, you only need to post about once a week to start. Also, be consistent with your posts. Don't post once a week and then suddenly stop - only to post again two months later.

Step 3: Start your own Group

Starting your own group is a great way to boost your professional impression. Unfortunately, it's also a great way to test your patience. Getting members to join your group will take a lot of time and effort on your part.

Come up with a keyword phrase using one of the methods that was discussed all through this book. Use this keyword as the name of your group.

Creating a Group

Click on the [Create Group](#) button from your Facebook page to get started. You already have a name for it, so put that in the correct area. Be sure to include the same keyword in your description. Once you've filled out all of the information, you're done.

Adding Users

Be careful with sending out invites. Just because you're allowed to invite anyone from your list doesn't mean they all want to be invited. It's best to invite individuals from your email list (discussed in the next section) or promote your group through your website. You can add fans of your page too.

Step 4: Create a Facebook Page

While your profile might be used for your personal enjoyment, your Facebook page will be used for business. Your main Facebook page will be an extension of everything you do. Make sure to take the time to not just create a professional page, but one that really stands out. I don't mean that you should get overly creative. Just be sure that your page has an engaging bio, links to your website, links to other social media outlets, and high quality pictures.

How to Create a Facebook Page

Here's a quick guide to setting up your first Facebook page. Getting started is a fairly simple process. The real challenge comes when setting up the page.

Step 1

Log into your Facebook profile.

Step 2

Search for Pages on the left toolbar. Click it.

Step 3

Select Create Page.

Step 4

Name your page. If it's your author page, simply use your name. However, if you are building this page for a product then you will want incorporate an exact keyword phrase into the name.

Step 5

Choose the type of page that best describes what you are promoting.

Step 6

Choose a category

Step 7

Follow the on-screen instructions the rest of the way.

Facebook Page Tips

Now that your first Facebook page has been set up, it's time to give it the attention it deserves. The first thing that I feel compelled to say is that you can not just copy and paste information from your profile onto your page. This will cause it to lose priority with search engines.

So take the time to rewrite and add only 100% original content to this page.

Profile Picture

Nothing screams amateur like Facebook pages without a profile picture. Even an avatar is not good enough. I wouldn't even recommend using a book cover as the profile picture (unless the page is to promote only that book). If it's an author page, then you will need a professional picture of yourself.

Photo Gallery

Setting up a professional photo gallery is ever-so-important. I can't stress enough how important this one thing can be. Facebook gives you all of the tools you need, so why not get it right? There are two rules to your Facebook photo gallery:

- Keep it organized
- Always write a description

Organizing your Photo Gallery

Facebook makes both of these extremely easy. Use photo albums to separate your pictures into categories. For example, have an album that is dedicated to book covers and another dedicated to personal pictures. If you are at a book signing and want to post those pictures, create a separate album for that. Never just randomly post photos. Eventually, you would end up with a mess of a photo gallery instead of a professional, organized gallery.

Descriptions

Always take the time to briefly describe every picture you upload, as well as albums. You only need to write one or two sentences. Also, be sure to include a keyword phrase in the description. Where relevant, include a link. Not only will your fans appreciate a description, but search engines love them! In fact, pictures and videos rule the

internet. They will always attract more traffic than any other form of media.

Drive Traffic to Your Website

This is one of the main overall goals with Facebook. It's easy to get a Facebook page to rank on Google and other search engines. Why? Because Facebook is such a huge brand. So if you write a compelling description and make it rich with keywords, then it will rank. Fill in every field that Facebook allows. Make it as easy for fans to find your website as possible.

Buying Facebook Likes

Here's where there is a lot of controversy. Opinions about buying Facebook likes range from pure hatred all the way to blind support. One side says that buying Facebook likes is cheating while the others argue that it's the only way for unknown people to gain credibility. Honestly, it's really taken out of context. I don't believe either is true. You can gain credibility without buying Facebook likes. On the other hand, those choosing to buy them have no beef from me. It's a personal choice. I don't recommend buying likes though. Here's why.

Most likes that are purchased are what I like to call "Phantom Likes." With phantom likes, you get a nice looking number added to your page. What you don't get are results. Most phantom likes are not everyday users so you really get nothing out of it. I prefer fans that I can interact with. It might take more time to get real likes, but it will be well worth the effort. The money put forth toward buying likes could be used for better campaigns. Trust me when I say that if you build a professional page and promote it as shown later in this book, people will like your page.

Unwritten Rules of Facebook

Before we wrap things up here, I feel it necessary to go through some of the unwritten rules of Facebook. These are common areas where some people tend to fall prey to mistakes.

Joining Other Groups

First of all, never join more than 5 groups (if you decide to join groups). The reason is that you really want to focus on groups and pages that you own. It might not seem that important at first but you will quickly learn that managing your time is something you really need to pay close attention to. Since you want to keep social media time to around 2 hours a week, you want to use that time in a way that benefits you the most. Focusing on your own pages and groups gives the best long-term results.

Posting

Posting too much will get on other people's nerves. On the other hand, people will forget who you are if you don't post often enough. There is a fine line. Don't panic. Here are the common amount of posts that should let you find that gray area:

Post once a week in groups that you **do not own**.

Post up to 3 times a week on pages/groups that you **do own**.

Types of Posts

Pictures and videos are the absolute highest converting posts in all of social media. Whenever you can, post one or the other. You should use some posts just to entertain your audience while using some for promotion. It's about a 50/50 ratio. Types of posts include but are not limited to:

- **Pictures:** For writers this is normally book covers or characters from their books)
- **Videos:** Book trailers, interviews, and other videos that are related to your projects.
- **Links to your Website**
- **Link to your Products**
- **Jokes:** This is for entertainment purposes.

- **Quotes:** These can come from famous people or characters from books that you've written.

- **Reviews:** Some writers post reviews written by their readers. It's certainly worth mentioning, although I don't recommend posting a review unless it's from a reputable source (celebrity or professional reviewer).

Spread out Posts

Don't post everything all at once. Instead, limit your total posts to one or two a day. Once you get into the flow, you might feel tempted to post several times a day. This can be detrimental. I recommend you build a spreadsheet so that when you think of a great post, you have somewhere to save it. Then when you're on Facebook, you will have a place to look through and find a great post. Just never post on a whim.

Take a Break if you Get a Warning

If you follow all of the strategies mentioned in this book, then this is probably never going to happen to you. If you do get a warning from Facebook that you're posting too much, take a 3 day break.

Always Keep Track of your Main Goals

You should never do anything on Facebook without keeping your main goals in the back of your mind. What I do is leave myself little post-it notes in everyday places so that I am constantly seeing all of my goals. They become embedded in my brain and no matter what I'm working on, I know what I want to accomplish.

Recap of Facebook

By now, you should have an idea of what you want to accomplish with Facebook. So write it down. Having a written plan of action is always important because it makes keeping track of your goals much easier.

Also, you can continue to grow your Facebook presence by adding additional keywords to your content. Furthermore, be sure to add email subscription forms to your pages. Don't worry. You'll learn about building email lists shortly.

Constantly upload pictures onto your pages and groups. Be sure to avoid more personal photos. Remember that strangers will be trying to view your profile from time-to-time.

Most importantly, never stop learning. The moment you stop learning new skills is the moment you start leaning towards failure. This applies to all of your ventures in the world of writing.

YouTube

YouTube is the granddaddy of social media. The conversion rate potential of YouTube is extremely high. If you needed another reason to convince you, then you should know that it is very easy to get a video ranked on Google.

In this section, you will learn how to:

- Set up a Professional YouTube Account
- Create a Video
- Effectively Post a Video
- Drive Traffic to a Video
- Rank a Video

YouTube Goals

Why use YouTube? There are a lot of reasons but the main one we will focus on in this section is search engine ranking. YouTube is owned by Google so it has high authority with their search engine. In other words, they want content on YouTube to be ranked as high as possible. While that doesn't necessarily lead to guaranteed success, it is extremely easy to get a video on YouTube ranked onto the first page. The best news is that YouTube continues to grow in both size and popularity.

Some tend to look at YouTube as just a place for entertainment. This causes inexperienced entrepreneurs to overlook its importance in promoting their products. New writers tend to overlook video marketing in general. As a result, creating just one video will give you an edge over a vast majority of the competition. Our goal isn't going to be to make just one video. The key is to make enough videos to gain a foothold on video marketing. I feel that video marketing is one of the most powerful tools in a writer's bag. To add even more importance to this is the fact that experts have estimated the need for video marketing to grow in the coming years.

Setting up a YouTube Account

This quick tutorial will show you how to set up a YouTube account.

Step 1

The first thing to do is set up a Google Account. Many of you probably already have one. If so, then skip down to **Step 3**. If not, then go to www.google.com/accounts/ and select **Create Account**.

Step 2

Fill out the information form. Then select **Create Account**.

Step 3

Now that you have a Google Account (or perhaps you already had one) you can create a YouTube Account. Visit www.youtube.com/create_account to get started.

Step 4

Fill out the information form. Don't worry too much about details right now because I'm going to discuss this in more detail later. For now, just focus on getting your account created.

Step 5

All that's left is for you to select **Create Account**.

Create a YouTube Channel

While we are in the creation mindset, let's go ahead and get your channel created. As before, don't worry about information so much as just getting the channel created. Everything (except the url) can be changed at a later time.

Step 1

Click the drop-down menu next to your avatar and select **My Channel** from the list of different options.

Step 2

Select **Create Channel**.

Step 3

Before we go any further, let's *unlink* the new channel from Google+. This will allow you to change the Channel Title later on. Once again, click the drop-down menu next to your avatar (upper right hand corner) and then select **Settings**.

Step 4

Under your name, click the **Unlink from Google+**. **Click Save Settings**.

Set up your Google Profile

It's very important to make your Google profile come across as professional - a fact that is often overlooked. People will look at this profile so be sure that what they see is professional. Write a separate and creative bio for this profile (I bet you're tired of writing bios about yourself). You really only need a couple of sentences here; just enough to keep it from being total white space.

Be sure to fill out every space that is provided. Provide links to your websites and other social media where applicable. Make sure you provide a high quality profile picture. Also, put some of your keywords into the **Tags** field.

Set up your YouTube Channel

Okay. Here comes the most important thing you will do on YouTube. Setting up your channel is a delicate process and will ultimately either make or break your campaign. Here are several key aspects.

Title

It all starts with the title. Although many would argue that your title should be keyword rich, I would say that it's a toss up. If you're a fiction writer, I would recommend you focus more on creativity than SEO. Your videos will have individual tags that will rank on search engines. So as a fiction writer, you would need to use the channel to showcase your creative skills.

Avatar

I recommend you actually design a logo for use with your channel. Treat it as if you have just been given a television station and each of your videos is a new program being shown on television. Your logo needs to enhance the experience of whatever title you choose.

Background

Getting a professional background design would definitely be a plus here. Just like with the avatar, the background needs to enhance your title.

Description

Your channel's description should be creative and professional. Again, for fiction writers I would recommend creativity above SEO. Show off your creative writing abilities. Include links to your website and Facebook.

Tags

This is where you can insert your keywords.

What to Share

You have the option of displaying different tabs on your channel as well as featuring a specific tab. I would recommend that you feature your new videos.

Creating a Video

This is when the fun begins! It's time to watch your website hits and book sales grow at a fast rate. As I've said many times before, video marketing is the highest converting form of marketing known to exist. However, for a video to convert, it needs to be creative, useful, and high quality. Don't panic if you've never filmed a video before. It's not too difficult and there are numerous options open to you (some of which are fabulously easy). I want to discuss one thing before diving into the making of the video.

Deliver a Message

Every video you post must deliver a message. A big mistake that's often made is with videos that leave the viewer wondering what they should do next. Don't let your viewers down. Delivering a message will ensure you get the highest conversion rate possible. Here are a few quick tips:

- Make your message short, professional, and to the point.
- Use other popular videos as a guide.
- Keep the idea as simple as possible. Overly complicated videos tend to confuse viewers.
- You must directly tell the viewer what to do next. You can't assume they will automatically know.

Before you start trying to film a video, you need to know what your message will be and how you will deliver it. I recommend that you always write a script, even if the idea is simple. A script will serve many purposes including keeping you on the right track.

Creating a Video

This is the actual process of creating a video. At this point, you should have viewed numerous videos and have seen the types that are posted on social media.

There are a few different types of videos that writers can use for promotional purposes. I will describe each one in detail.

Book Trailers

Message: Buy This Book

Book trailers tend to have one purpose: they are used to get people to buy an author's book. It's easy to see what the message is here. This video should be creative and express the theme for the book through visualization. You can Google the phrase "*Book Trailers*" to see some examples.

You start out with a script of quotes and brief taglines that you use to convey the theme of your book. Then you can either film live action, animation, or flash through different images. Several free programs will make it a breeze to create a nice book trailer. My favorite is Daz Studio.

- Make sure the graphic or scene displayed matches the phrase or quote.
- A book trailer should convey the message in less than one minute. Any longer and it risks losing the viewer's attention.
- The music needs to match the genre of the book. In other words, you would not use heavy metal music for a romance novel.

How to Deliver your Message

This is easy with book trailers. End your video on a page with the following items:

- The words "Buy It" or "Own it Today". Something along these lines. You must tell the viewer exactly what you want them to do.
- Book Cover

- Link to where viewers can find the book. Only use links that the viewer can easily type. For example, having weird text like “10mcmillan2013” would not work. I recommend you have a page on your website that directly links to all of your books. This lets you control the url.
- Links to social media like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Interviews

Message(s): Promote a Book, Promote Social Media, Promote Website

Interviews are one of the key components of video marketing for writers. The trick to getting it right is to make it look and feel professional. Viewers want to gain insight to the person being interviewed.

Unless you're famous, chances are that you will have to hire someone to interview you. It doesn't have to be fancy nor extravagant. It just needs to be professional and address any questions that potential readers might ask you.

Presentation Videos

Message: Anything

Presentations are probably the easiest type of video to set up. You also have the option of either doing it yourself or outsourcing the help. Outsourcing presentation videos is extremely cost efficient and is a great way to beef up your YouTube channel early on.

You need a subject, script, and something to promote in order to get started. If you decide to do it yourself, then make a powerful, creative, and useful presentation using a program like PowerPoint. A presentation should do the following in the exact order:

1. Introduce the audience to your idea.
2. Present your idea.
3. End with a call to action.

Tutorial Videos

Message: Promoting Nonfiction Book, Promoting Blog/Website

Video tutorials are probably the number one method of promoting nonfiction books. When an individual has trouble figuring something out, they have a tendency to turn to YouTube for a video for a solution. If you make your video become the one they watch, you will gain both authority in the subject and trust. These two traits are a perfect first impression.

Like the previous videos, you will need to write some kind of script in order to plan ahead. Then use a program like JING to capture your computer screen. After that, you're ready to start filming. Here's the process:

1. Brief introduction explaining why the viewer should follow your advice.
2. Step-by-step process.
3. End with a Call to Action.

Video Description

Once you have your first video, it's time to make it so that people can find it. The way you accomplish this is to optimize it for search engines.

Title

The title does it all. It conveys the video's message while serving as the key component in optimizing it for search engines. Make sure that you use a keyword phrase in the title. If one on your list doesn't work, then use Google Keyword Generator to find a new one.

Description

This is where things get a little tricky. The reason is that there is a trick that experts use to get their videos ranked on Google. Let's get started.

First of all, take your keyword used in the title and plug it into Google Keyword Generator. Go through the list of alternatives and write down all of the ones that get more than 1,000 searches. Unlike earlier in the book, ignore the competition field for now. Once you have a list of keywords, write the description as follows:

1st Paragraph

Always place a link to whatever you are promoting at the top of the description. This drives traffic, which is the main goal of the video.

Note: When placing links in YouTube, always include “https”.

2nd Paragraph

Write a brief description of your video. It should be no longer than three sentences. Be sure to place your main keyword phrase in the content (the one you used in the title).

3rd Paragraph

Place the link from the 1st paragraph. You want your description to begin and end with a link.

4th Paragraph

Here is the trick that I referred to earlier. Remember those keywords I had you write down? This is where you put them. Place as many as possible (until you reach YouTube’s character limit). Also include your name. Separate each keyword by a comma (no space).

Tags

This is easy. Place all keywords used in the bottom of your description in this field.

Final Thoughts on YouTube

Get your first video up as quickly as possible. This is a form of marketing that will start converting early on and there’s nothing stopping you from uploading your first video. This is also a great

area to invest in. Write a few scripts that you don't have to personally be involved in and outsource them. This is an investment that will quickly pay dividends.

Here are some of the more important things that you should now know about YouTube. Write them down and always keep them in the back of your mind.

- Videos rule all of social media. This means that they provide the absolute best click-thru rates. Ultimately, YouTube will serve as a catalyst to grow all other social media platforms.
- Videos on YouTube will make the top page of Google faster than anything else.
- YouTube will become your most powerful social media platform. Therefore, it requires you to dedicate more time to it.

Things to do with Every New Video

- Link to your video from all other social media platforms at least once a month.
- Put together a checklist for each video so you can keep track of when and where you post it.
- Add each video to your website.

Common Mistakes

I'll end this section by listing common mistakes that beginners tend to make on YouTube. If you follow this guide then you will avoid these.

- Not including a call to action in video. Viewers must be told **exactly** what to do next.
- They make videos too long. In general, a video should not be longer than 1 minute (unless it's an interview).
- They do not place a link in their description.
- They leave the **Tags** field blank. Videos are indexed by text so leaving this blank gives search engines no way to rank the video.

- Message is too complicated. The message delivered from a video should be so simple that a child could figure out what it's trying to tell them.

- More than one message in a video. This directly corresponds to the above mistake. Limit the message in each video to one. Create a new video for a different message.

Email List Building

Email lists are by far the most powerful form of internet marketing available to – well, pretty much anyone looking to promote online. That includes writers. I would go as far as to say that tapping into internet marketing is a must if you want future success.

An email list is simply a list of those who have subscribed to receive emails from you. I'm willing to bet that you've subscribed to another company's emails at some point in your life. Part of building the anticipation of a new book is to send out small samples during the writing process. This entices readers into wanting to buy the book when it's released. The list building process works as follows:

1. You subscribe to a list building service that is used to store your email addresses acquired by you. That allows you to send messages to them.
2. You place sign-up forms on your website, blog, and social media where individuals can sign up to receive news and updates.
3. Users sign-up using these forms.
4. You send these users emails that encourage them to purchase your books.

So let's go through each of these in more detail.

Choosing a List Building Service

Whatever you do, stay away from free services. They place their own advertisements into all of your emails. You don't want to anger your subscribers.

I've found that Aweber is without a doubt, the absolute best email list building service available. It costs \$19 a month and charges just \$1 for the first month. Trust me, \$19 a month is extremely cheap. Go ahead and visit Aweber and look through their extensive help section to learn as much as you can. Here's a link to their videos:

<http://www.aweber.com/videos.htm>

I recommend that you watch these right now so you can learn about how it all works. Go that before finishing this section because we are fixing to set up your first list. In addition, I'm going to show you how to start building your list the quickest way possible.

Start a List

If you watched the videos, I will assume you understand how to start a list. So get that out of the way now. When starting a new list, you will always need to list your goals. For your first list, I'm going to walk you through starting one that is perfect for new writers. I've personally used this list to convert thousands of sales.

So let's list our goals with this list:

1. Promote New Book
2. Promote all Upcoming Books
3. Promote Social Media
4. Promote Website

Those are our goals but we will not achieve those goals by constantly pushing our products at subscribers. We will accomplish those through creativity and showcasing our creative talents while providing subscribers with entertainment and information.

For now, just focus on starting the list and on a separate sheet of paper, write down your goals for that list. It's always important to list goals with any endeavor you take.

Create Follow Up Emails

One of the coolest features of list building is that you can automate most of the process. Follow up emails are messages that are automatically sent to new subscribers on a schedule that you outline. For example:

Message 1 will be sent to the user as soon as they sign up.

Message 2 will be sent 24 hours after they sign up.

Message 3 will be sent 48 hours after they sign up.

These are just examples. You can set the time frame for whatever you want. Let's set up some automated emails now for those who sign up: 10 to be exact.

This will be different for fiction and nonfiction books. So choose whatever category that matches your book.

Fiction

You will need to turn on your creative switch again. For our list, we are going to write a short story and send each chapter as a follow up email. This is a great way to:

1. Entertain your subscribers.
2. Showcase your writing skills.

So write an outline for your short story. Make sure it follows the same genre as your book. Remember to keep each chapter to around 1,000 words. You can be even more creative by telling short stories about the characters from your novel. Just remember to be creative and showcase your writing skills. Once you have your short story or series of stories, set up your emails in the following format:

* * * * *

Subject: Email Story Chapter 1 (or something more creative)

Insert the first chapter of your story in the body of the message.

End with a call to action and link to your latest novel. Thank them for reading and be sure to tell the reader that there are more chapters to come!

* * * * *

Follow this same outline for all messages. If there are 10 chapters, then set up 10 separate emails. Schedule them as follows:

Message 1: Immediately On Subscription

Messages 2-10 (or remainder): 2 days apart.

Nonfiction

This will vary slightly in the type of emails you will be creating. Using the same niche as your book, create ten helpful tips that readers would find helpful. Your goal is to showcase your authority on the subject your book falls under. Make a list of your ten subjects. Each one will be a separate follow up message to new subscribers.

Write an article around each topic. Be clear and concise, sticking to between 500-1,000 words. Be sure to proofread each article.

* * * * *

Subject: Topic 1

Insert the article you wrote about the topic.

End with a call to action and link to your book.

* * * * *

Follow this same outline for all messages. If there are 10 chapters, then set up 10 separate emails. Schedule them as follows:

Message 1: Immediately On Subscription

Messages 2-10 (or remainder): 2 days apart.

Setting up a Form

We have all of our messages set up so now we need to set up a place for users to subscribe to the email list. That's what forms are for.

Want even better news? WordPress widgets make it extremely easy to integrate these forms onto your website. So all you need are two ingredients:

1. Catchy Form Design
2. Incentive for Becoming a Subscriber

Aweber makes it easy to design a catchy form by offering thousands of templates and free design tools. So go ahead and create a form that matches the theme of your website.

Let's move onto incentives. Most people tend to give away something of value to subscribers to get them to sign up for their lists. For this list, we are going to do the same. Offering a free giveaway is often the best way to land new subscribers.

For fiction, I often create a short novella prelude or some other connection to whatever book I'm currently promoting. Nonfiction would work basically the same. Write some kind of helpful book that focuses on a single tip within the niche your book is about. So go ahead and create a free product to give away.

Get Subscribers

Once your forms are up and incentives in place, you can kick back and watch your list slowly grow. It will take time but this will be your most powerful form of marketing for all future endeavors. However, I'm going to show you a trick to get this list kick-started – and no, I'm not talking about buying email lists.

There are companies that specialize in list building. They are known simply as list builders. These sites work on a point-based system as follows:

1. Users get points for reading emails.

2. Users can then use points for sending out emails of their own to thousands of individuals.

This might sound too good to be true but list builders really tend to convert nicely. I've ran several campaigns using different services and through link tracking, found that subscribers gained through these list builders convert just a tad bit lower than those gained through a website or social media. Therefore, it's definitely worth the time to sign up for a couple of these list builders and tap into this vast ocean of potential subscribers.

List Joe

Although there are hundreds of potential list builders to choose from, List Joe is perhaps the most powerful of all. So let's start here. You can always add more later.

Here's a step-by-step look at the process:

Step 1

The first thing you should do is set up an email address just for use with List Joe. Since your inbox will get flooded with emails, this is the best way to keep everything in order.

Step 2

Visit [The List Joe](#) and click **Sign Up**. Fill out all required information and then verify your email. Once this is all done, you have officially set up an account. So just wait until you get some emails and read them to get credits.

For now, read through the website and play around with it. Learn how it all works. The basic concept is that you read emails, collect credits, and then use those credits to send emails to their extensive list of people.

Create a Landing Page

Before you start sending emails through The List Joe, create a landing page. You will only have the person's attention for around 10 seconds. Therefore, it's important to hook them with a tagline right from the start.

A landing page is like a net. In other words, it's designed to convert views into subscribers. This is done through planning. Remember, for our method we are only getting the viewer for about 10 seconds. So in this case, we really have to get creative. Focus on these three factors for our email subscriber landing page:

- **Headline**
- **Call to Action**
- **Offer**

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

Headline

Notice that most ads you see online feature a very creative and catchy tagline? This is by design and might not be for the reason you think. They do this to grab your attention in the few seconds you see the advertisement. So it seems that you will need to use this same tactic in order to get viewers to subscribe to your emails.

At its simplest, a headline should tell the viewer what the page is about. At its most creative, it will compel them to continue reading. It should do this in around 3 seconds. I know, many of you think this is impossible. It's not only possible, but easier than you might believe.

If you're good with photo software like Photoshop, then create a headline logo. These tend to convert higher than normal font. If you don't have Photoshop and don't want to drop \$80 for it, you can always get GIMP. It's free and while it doesn't boast some of the more powerful features of Photoshop, it is great for creating logos (and even book covers). You can get GIMP here:

www.gimp.org

Call to Action

Even if you place a noticeable email subscriber form on your page for all to see, you still have to tell them what you want them to do. Never assume they know. Use the exact words, “Sign Up” or “Get your Free EBook by Signing Up”. It must be clear what you want them to do.

This is a very powerful area of your landing page. Test out different colors and fonts, as well as the placement of your form. Change phrases to sound less aggressive and maintain a friendly voice. In other words, never say things like “Sign Up Now!”.

Offer

This is the gift you will be giving your visitors in exchange for getting them to subscribe to your email list. Although this can be many things, for the purpose of our example this will be a book you have written specifically for the purpose of getting subscribers. Furthermore, you are offering even more bonuses through emails. Feel free to mention these as well.

You have caught the reader’s attention through your outline if their eyes have made it this far down the page. So here’s where you pull them the rest of the way in. Slogans that show the reader how they are getting a valuable product for free tend to convert the best. For example:

“A \$49 Value!”

Free offers always make a subscriber feel unique. Everyone loves getting free stuff!

Writing a Press Release

Our next step is often overlooked yet can be one of the most powerful marketing tool in your arsenal. However, in order for a press release to be at its best, you will need to build up to your book’s release. Use your website, email list, and social media to build up anticipation. Here’s a look at the steps involved in writing a successful press release.

Step 1

The header should include a call to action along with your tagline.

Step 2

Write an introduction that hooks the reader. You need to grab their attention with the first sentence. Then describe your book in a little detail. Maybe point out some of key characters. You can bet that the reader will judge this book based on the first paragraph of your press release so make it count!

Step 3

Follow up paragraphs should be well organized and no more than two paragraphs. It's okay to just use your synopsis here. Just remember that a press release is a single page.

Step 4

End your press release with another call to action and the release date of your book, where the reader can find it, and why they should buy it.

Step 5

Fully edit the press release. Use the same method you used for editing your book. After two editing runs, proofread the release one final time. Nothing will put readers off like a press release with spelling and grammar mistakes.

Step 6

Once you have your press release, distribute it through as many outlets as possible. Post it on Facebook, on your website, and send it out to your email list. You can even go a step further and purchase local newspaper ads for it. Heck, even send it to your local media outlets. They may interview you. Local authors are usually beloved in their community. If you live in a small town, then you will gain a lot of readers by reaching out to your local community.

Excerpts

Unless you're Stephen King, readers are not likely to buy your book without first previewing it. Heck! Readers are even unlikely to buy Stephen King books without previewing them first! Readers love samples. Excerpts are your first chance to showcase your writing talents to readers, letting them know what to expect from your book.

Post Excerpts on your Website

Your website is the hub where you filter all traffic to. Therefore, it needs to be the first place you set up your excerpts. By now you should know your way around WordPress. So set up a place for excerpts for your new book. Include at least two separate samples:

- First chapter (plus prelude is applicable)
- A compelling moment somewhere in the middle

The second excerpt is the most important – mainly because readers will get to preview your book's first chapter from the site where they buy it. So the second excerpt is the bonus for potential readers. It shows them a side that they will only get by visiting your website.

Goodreads

At last count, Goodreads had over 16 million registered readers. That makes it a great place for promoting your book. So go ahead and sign up for an author account:

<http://www.goodreads.com/author/program>

As with all of your profiles to date, be sure to include a bio, picture, and link to your website. Then claim your book under your account. You can then add excerpts from your books directly onto Goodreads and get instant exposure.

Some other sites that work the same as Goodreads are:

[Wattpad](#)

[Bookdaily](#)

There is plenty for you to get started with. You don't want to overwhelm yourself with too many options.

Social Media

As mentioned earlier, social media is powerful. Be sure to share excerpts through your fan page. You can use the Notes feature but if you want to come across as even more professional, try out some apps like Scribd.

Final Thoughts

The whole purpose of this book has been to teach an all important lesson. That lesson is that the more opportunities you create, the larger your chances for success. The path to becoming a professional writer should include other multiple projects that are generating money. Remember, the main goal is to transform all of your income into passive income.

Learning to take control is the largest step you can possibly take. Never fall victim to circumstances that are out of your control. The only thing in this world that you are in full control of is yourself. If you allow yourself to fall into the habit of depending on other factors to improve your life then you're not going to ever be able to move forward.

Remember to always set goals for each new endeavor before starting it. Goals help maintain our focus. Without goals to lead us, we can easily lose our direction and get lost. This is especially true when you have several projects going all at once. Goals help to focus our energy and motivation. When we are not exactly sure what to do next, it takes focus away from your work in order to figure out what you should work on next. If it's already planned, then that focus will constantly be on your work.

Another powerful benefit of having goals is that they will boost your self-esteem. When we feel as though we're working hard and getting nowhere, it can depress us. Goals allow us to see our progress and as a result, make us happy.

Finally, let's end this book on some really good news. That news is that so long as you consistently keep releasing new books and building your content, your success will compound. It's a long-term investment that you are in full control of.

Never stop reinvesting your money into content. You can even find a freelancer to ghostwrite books for you. The more quality books you

can release, the more successful you will be. Long-term business relationships can go a long way. Having content created on a continuous basis will continue to compound your success. Never stop. Always set goals, consistently create new content, and take control of your own life. Doing so will lead you on a path to continuous success.