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ABOUT

**BOOK**

**MARKETING**



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# 1

## The Truth About Book Marketing

**This book marketing manifesto is being offered to you as a vehicle to:**

- Open your eyes to the massive change that's happening in the world of book marketing
- Bust a lot of myths, expose scams and stop you from throwing thousands of dollars away
- Help you understand how to get the biggest advance possible or self-publish and actually make money
- Reveal how to mine the online world to sell a boatload of books, even in this economy, and
- Reclaim control over you career, income and fate of your books.

**There is nothing for sale here...**

...just a whole lot of eye-opening information offered with the intention of empowering authors and aspiring authors with the ability to sell more books in a digital world and the knowledge to avoid wasting time and money on stuff that doesn't work (FYI – If you're a publisher, there's still lots of good stuff in there for you, too).

**Check out the Table of Contents to see what's inside...**

Notice, there's a lot of information (it's actually nearly 30 pages). And, as you read on, you'll quickly see it's not fluff. There are a lot of real world examples, spending analysis for traditional marketing approaches and case studies for next generation marketing that's selling a ton of books today.

Take your time, take notes and, if it resonates, I'd be grateful if you'd **share this report** with friends who are authors and aspiring authors.

# 2

“The publishing world is in mass upheaval right now.”

## Lies, Damn Lies and Book Deals

### It's an amazing dream...

You wake up at 2:00am with an idea. A story, a vision for a book. You've been writing, journaling, maybe even blogging for years. Pen to paper, fingers to keys...it's in your blood. You're genetically compelled to craft literary magic. But, now. Oh now. You've finally got the big idea!

The one that's pouring, no tumbling at breakneck speed onto your screen at 2am, clawing and spinning to get out. This book will change the world. Change your life. It's a guaranteed slam dunk.

During a momentary pause to catch your breath, you see yourself ambling confidently into a cocktail party bursting with friends and soon-to-be admirers. “So, what do you do?” they ask. “I'm an author.” comes the beaming reply. “And, what have you written?” As you reveal your book's title, all eyebrows arch in awe... “That was YOU?!”

It's a wonderful vision. One every one of us who's compelled to write has replayed endless times, with endless variations. Problem is, these days, it's beyond a vision. Or, even a fantasy.

### For all but a few, it's an outright lie...

Being a great writer isn't enough any more. Nor is having a killer book idea. Or, even a few successes under your belt. Years ago, you could craft a great proposal, land an agent, write the manuscript, polish it, hand it over and let the publisher roll with it.

Those days are long gone, never to return. The publishing world is in mass upheaval right now. Nobody knows what the “right” format is anymore. Print, kindle, ebook. What's paid? What's free? And, even after you sell your book or retreat to self-publishing, the good old days of issuing a press release, setting up a book tour and calling on a few friends for a review are gone.

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With some 500,000 books published every year (200,000 through traditional print and another 300,000 a combo of self-published, print on demand “POD” and electronic books), the battle for attention, coverage and sales is epic...leading 99% to be huge flops. According to industry wonk, Morris Rosenthal, the average mainstream published book sells a mere 2,000 copies. And, though estimates vary widely, most self-published and POD books cap out at anywhere from a few copies to a few hundred.

In fact, a recent New York Times article revealed just how bad even the top publishers in the world are at guessing which books they sign will become bestsellers and which will bomb. Reading that made me wonder just how much of the problem is in picking the right books...or picking the right authors.

## **And, it seems publishers are asking this very same question...**

More and more, authors are being tasked with the job of not only writing books, but becoming the primary marketing vehicle. In fact, if you write nonfiction and you don't have a serious marketing plan, proven promotional chops (or the money to hire people with proven chops), deep relationships and a big fat platform, it'll be next to impossible to get anyone to sign you.

And, even if you do sell your book, advances have been plummeting and initial print runs are often slashed to under 5,000 copies, because publishers are so freaked out about not knowing how to make a book succeed these days, they don't want to risk any more than they have to (and who could blame them).

My last book's print run was cut to 7,500 two months before the pub-date, because, even though I was with a major publisher, the economy was crashing and my book's message—leave your job to build a passion-driven career—was the last thing most people wanted to hear (even though it was what they “needed” to hear) and the media wanted cover.

Fortunately, because I wasn't relying on mainstream channels and I understood the power of digital tribes, I was able to engineer a campaign that I'll detail a bit later that increased that number dramatically before release time.

## **So, what's an author to do to sell a serious chunk of books?**

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“It’s a simple numbers game. You can sell books, but you’ll very likely end up paying more to advertise than you’ll make back in royalties.”

## The Great Book Advertising Death Spiral

### What about advertising? Can you “buy” your way into giant book sales with ads?

If you’ve got very, very, VERY deep pockets, the answer is...probably yes.

Throw a few hundred thousand dollars into advertising and the small percentage of people who buy in response to the ads just may add up to a big enough number to sell a lot of books and maybe even hit one of the big print bestseller lists. In fact, I know of one book marketing consultant that won’t take on a client who has less than \$150,000-\$200,000 to spend on launch promotions, because that’s “what it takes” to promote your way into the bigs.

Granted, you’ll likely never come close to making that back in royalties, but most people who drop that kind of money on promotion aren’t in it for the royalties. They’re either in it for notoriety or to drive any number of indirect revenue streams, like speaking, consulting, TV, media and product sales.

### But...can book advertising work for the bootstrapping newbie author?

Answer, not likely.

### Let’s look at three examples, traditional print display ads, direct mail and online pay per click ads.

- **Display Ad Book Marketing:** Pay \$5,000 for a 1/8 page display ad in a magazine or newspaper with a relevant market and a distribution of 100,000. Response rates vary wildly, but let’s say you’ve got a real winner with a strong call to action and it converts at 1%, yielding 1,000 sales (FYI – the likelihood of converting even a fraction of that for a book is rare). If your royalty is \$1-2 a book, that’d leave you with \$1-\$2,000 return on your ad spend. But, you’d never see that money, because it just goes to offset your advance.

**Conclusion: Display ads = book marketing fail.**

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- **Direct Mail Book Marketing:** Now we're cooking with oil. Step one, hit the SRDS (Standard Rate Data Service), find a well-qualified list of people who are jonesing for the type of info that's in your book and have a history of buying books. Then, buy the minimum allowed 5,000 names off that list through a broker for about 20 cents a name (\$1,000). Pay a half-decent direct response copywriter and designer \$1,000-\$2,000 to put together a mail piece that's good enough to really sell (FYI, killer copy will probably run closer to \$10,000).

Print 5,000 mail pieces for 25 cents a piece and add in 25-45 cents in postage/ mailing house fees (5,000 X (25+25)) = \$2,500 on the low end). Total spend - \$4,500-\$5,500. Now, if you have an insane conversion, which in direct response, would be 4%, that would translate to 200 books sold, leaving you with \$200-\$400 in royalties on your \$4,500-\$5,500 spend.

**Conclusion: Direct mail = book marketing fail.** (FYI - It MAY be possible for certain direct-response savvy publishers to make money with direct mail, because their economics are very different than yours.)

- **Pay Per Click Book Marketing:** Pay per click ads, like the ones you see down the right side and on top of a google search results page are great for a lot of businesses. I've spent tens of thousands of dollars on them for other ventures and made back many times what I spent. Not so easy with books, though. Let's see why..

Let's start with \$1,000 to spend and choose a set of relevant keywords that people would be searching on to trigger our ads to show. We want our ad to be in #2 or #3 position, because click rates drop a lot after that. And, let's just use my book, Career Renegade, as an example to make it easier. We'll use keywords like "career change, do what you love, laid off, job hunting, self help." The first thing we discover is that these are massively competitive keywords to bid on, so to even have ads show on the first page of search results will cost anywhere from 25 cents to \$5 a click. But, for the sake of optimism, let's use the lowest possible number-25 cents.

At 25 cents a click, \$1,000 gets 4,000 clicks. But, here's the thing. You can't just send those people directly to your amazon.com or bn.com book page to order. That's called "direct linking" and google will shut you down for that. So, you have to send them to a landing page you create that then sells them on clicking a link to amazon, bn.com or any other place.

Again, let's be hyper-optimistic here and assume your landing page is so rocking, it converts a mindblowing

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20% of your 4,000 visitors, sending 800 people to your book page on amazon. Then, once on that page, a whopping 20% convert, yielding 160 sales. Total royalties are \$160 to \$320 on a spend of \$1,000.

[There actually is one potential strategy may be viable for certain full-size, hardcover books, but it takes some work to set up, it's a bit complicated and you'll have to put a lot more than \$1,000 at risk to pull it off. So, I'm not even going to go into that strategy here.]

### **Conclusion: Pay per click = book marketing fail.**

So, it's seeming that, for the average author, straight up advertising is a losing proposition. It's a simple numbers game. You can sell books, but you'll very likely end up paying more to advertise than you'll make back in royalties.

### **But, there's one other huge con to selling books through advertising...**

It's a one-shot-deal transaction. You're not building a community, a list a relationship that will let you actually know who's buying your books and be able to reach back out to them over time.

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“The old rules, it seems, are far more hit or miss than ever before... leaning more often to “miss” by a wide margin.”

## Old School Book PR: Down For the Count?

What about mainstream PR, publicists and the like?

**Won't I sell a boatload of books if I land on the Today Show, Oprah, the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal?**

Answer...it depends.

Ten years ago, a feature in any of these major market media outlets was the equivalent of a fast track to bestsellerdom. Not any more.

With the massive proliferation of the web, attention has become so diluted across all media, both on and offline, and people have become so much more distracted that, barring an appearance on Oprah, showing up in mainstream outlets is nice, but far from a guarantee of book sales.

Perennial NY Times, WSJ and USA Today bestselling author, Tim Ferris (Four Hour Workweek) has shared how a mention on a single blog actually sold more books than a segment on the top rated morning TV show. My own experience bears this out. Having seen a bigger bump in my amazon sales from the right online mention that I did from a review in two major newspapers and magazines.

Publishers and book industry publicists are shaking their collective noggins trying to figure out what it takes to really sell books these days. The old rules, it seems, are far more hit or miss than ever before...leaning more often to “miss” by a wide margin.

**But, that's only half the mainstream PR problem....**

Even if these media outlets did spur sales, with 200,000 print books and another 300,000 self-published, POD and ebooks coming out every year, the battle to win editors' and producers' attention has become epic. And, push back against the old spamming press release blasts has been fierce, making the chance of landing any level of mainstream coverage (beyond the newspaper or TV station in the town you grew up in) without deep connections extremely unlikely.

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If you've got enough juice with your publisher to have their in-house publicists really work for you, tap it. Or, if you've got personal connections, work 'em. Most authors don't, however, leaving the obvious and often taken path. Hire a publicist who charges anywhere from \$2,000-\$15,000 a month and the only promise you get is that they'll "try their best," but never guarantee a single placement.

**You may get your money's worth...but often times, not.**

And, the amount you'll have to spend (\$6,000-\$45,000 for a 3 month minimum) compared to the level of uncertainty about it's effect on book sales is, for most authors, an untenable option.



“There’s a social media analog to this type of campaign that actually CAN yield tremendous results...”

## Email Book Marketing, Santa Claus and Amazon Bestsellers

### Email book marketing is all the rage...but is it smoke and mirrors?

A couple of years back, someone realized you could essentially game amazon to push your book’s rank to #1 in it’s category for an hour or two by getting as little as 25-100 people to all buy at once, then call yourself a “bestseller.”

It didn’t take long for this strategy to evolve into a more organized campaign that rallied hundreds of people to email their lists, telling them if they bought at a designated day and time, they could then go back to a centralized bonus page, provide their email and download “thousands” of dollars worth of bonuses.

Soon after, some folks started charging thousands to run these campaigns for authors and even a few grand to teach people how to do it themselves. Problem is...

- It’s not like hitting the big print lists – Being #1 in your category on amazon is nice, but now that it’s well known how easy it is to game your rank for a short burst of time, a single hour/day amazon rank means very little to those who matter. Event organizers, major market media and big publishers are not going to be banging down your door.
- Because you don’t need to sell that many books (and often don’t), if you pay more than a few hundred dollars, there’s a good chance you’ll still end up making far less in royalties than it took to execute the campaign.

### So, is it potentially nice for the ego? Sure. Does it get you much farther than that? Rarely.

Fair disclosure, though. If you don’t really care about your amazon rank and you’re keeping a hefty percentage of the cover price because you’re self-publishing, this may still be an interesting option as a way to simply make a bit of money. In fact, the amazon campaign is really just a modified version of the launch campaigns many internet-marketers use to sell a wide variety of ebooks and info-products.

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So, if you have relationships with people who happen to have giant lists, go ahead and ask them to mail. Do favors. Work out side deals. Barter. You may sell some books in a short burst. Or, if you're self-publishing, you may actually be able to give enough of your cover price away to affiliates to incentivize list holders to mail for you without having to pony up any of your hard earned money up front.

But, I'd think seriously before you drop a boatload of money to either pay someone else to handle what's now commonly known as an "amazon bombing" campaign or just teach you how to do it yourself.

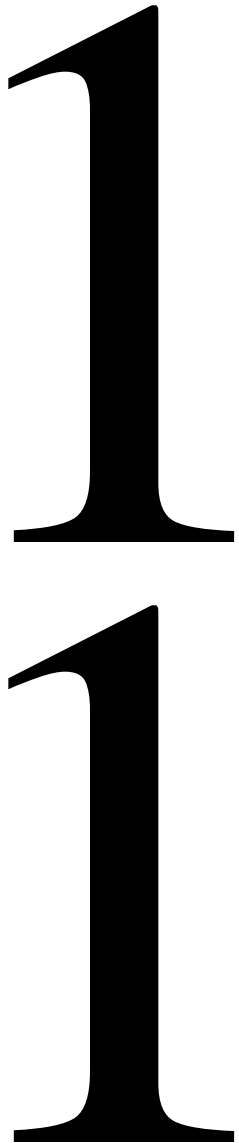
Before you even consider it, ask them to show you how much their clients have paid to run their last 10 campaigns, how many books were sold as a direct result of their efforts and what those books' amazon ranks were 6 months later. My bet is, the answer you'll get will be a whole lot of hemming and hawing and "well, ya know, it's near impossible to really calculate...blah, blah, blah."

## **Not good enough...show me the money!**

Understand, too, there's a social media analog to this type of campaign that actually CAN yield tremendous results and sustained high-level sales. Get 20 top blogs to post reviews and interviews in a very condensed period of time and magic often ensues. In part, because of the power of authentic endorsed content. But, also, because while an e-mail has a shelf life of seconds and a finite number of recipients, a blog post often stays on the front page for a week and then remains public forever, driving traffic to your book indefinitely.

## **The question, of course, is...how do you make that happen?**

**More on that below...**



## **Book Tours, Megastores and Big Snores**

**Live book signing tours have been a staple of book marketing for decades.**

Here's how they work. You schedule 20 or 30 stops at booksellers in major towns or cities across the country. On the day of the signing, you sweep in past the hordes of fans segmented off behind the velvet ropes, read from your book, answer a few questions, sign a mountain of books and the occasional body part, before heading off to your private jet and the next stop.

**At least, that's how it works...if you're famous!**

If you already have some level of celebrity, you may, in fact, get a decent turnout (100+). If not, though, your turnout is likely to be anywhere from a few people to a few dozen, a few of whom will buy books.

For all but a few well known writers, celebs or weblebs, the money you or your publisher spends on the tour is many times greater than any royalties you'll generate. And, the cost will very likely far exceed even the publisher's far larger piece of each sale, which is why most publishers have stopped funding live book tours.

The real "secret" benefits are that you may be able to land some very local media coverage around the signing (and we've seen how, um, valuable that is already). And, nobody's supposed to admit this, but if you sign the full inventory of books while you're in the store, those books then cannot be returned.

**Does this mean you shouldn't do a live book tour if you're not a celeb?**

Answer is, it depends. If it's structured as an old-school "signing" tour and your sole purpose is to make money selling books, probably not. But, if your larger purpose is to begin to build relationships with readers, booksellers, collaborators, partners and evangelists that will rally to support you in ventures beyond the book... maybe yes.

Or, why not take it a step further and instead of a book signing tour, host more of a roving series of hybrid real-life/social media driven tribal gatherings that'll not only rally far more people, but present repeated opportunities

# 1 2

to spread the word way beyond your immediate group.

**Don't just show up and sign books...meet up, tweetup, Facebook it and beyond.**

Which leads us finally back to what really IS working in book promotion today...

**“For all but a few well known writers, celebs or weblebs, the money you or your publisher spends on the tour is many times greater than any royalties you’ll generate.”**

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## **Tribal Authors Take Charge Online**

### **Tribal Author Platforms are turning the publishing power model on its head...**

A few weeks ago, I was talking to a friend who's also a Top-100 blogger. He's literally been stalked by big NY publishers for the last two years to put out a book with them. We spent a half hour trying to figure out if there was any way for him to justify giving a book to a big publisher.

We ran the numbers every way we could and, in the end, realized that unless he got a hefty six-figure advance and a commitment to put out the book within 6 months, he simply couldn't justify giving it to a publisher. Because he could do it faster and make twice as much if not more by leveraging his own digital platform, relationships and marketing strategies.

### **When you can walk away from a deal because you'll make more publishing a book yourself...that's power**

The power to pre-sell enough books online to make the big-box book stores take notice and begin stocking their shelves...even if you're self-published. To go from relative obscurity to walking into your local Barnes & Noble with your mom, dad, sister, brother, lover or spouse and seeing your work turned out on the table.

Imagine being able to harness a big enough community of die-hard fans to make real money as an author and keep doing it over and over again. To have the ability to choose whether to do it yourself 3 times faster and make 3-5 times more per book or give it to a publisher...if they can come up with enough of an advance to make it worth your while.

### **That's the power of the next generation Tribal Author.**

Because it's not just about your ability to draw coverage any more. Nor is it even about the quality of your writing. There are a lot of seriously kick ass books released every year that vie for the same ink, the same lists, the same shot at capturing the heart, souls and minds of thousands of readers, and for many first time authors being able to hold out a business card that says "author."

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What it is about...is your ability to cultivate, lead, then tap, on a number of levels, a personal tribe. Can it be done offline or in some wacky hybrid mode? Sure. That's part of the what's happening with live next-gen book tours, if you set that as your prime directive.

But, when you understand how to transfer your platform and tribe-building effort online, your world as an author opens up like never before. Because you eliminate the boundaries created by geography and the time and money needed to be all over the world...all the time. In fact, we've seen online author tribes play a mission critical role in a series of book launches over the last 2 years...mine included. And, that's leading publishers to scramble to sign people who "get it."

But, what's also becoming pretty apparent is that...

## **The Tribal Author revolution cannot be outsourced.**

At, least from a book marketing and promotion standpoint.

### **Two reasons.**

- One, the single source of greatest power in any tribe is the connections members form not only with each other, but with that person who forms and leads the tribe. The author. And, the moment you swap in a marketer, manager, assistant, publicist, service, organizer or any other "entity," you dumb down that visceral connection to a level that profoundly limits what you'll be capable of. You literally cut the tribal cord. But, that's not all...
- Two, there's a second major barrier to outsourcing your online tribe-building. The most powerful Tribal Authors now operate largely in social media. There are a lot of unspoken rules that guide conversation across this massive web. And, it takes a while of lurking to learn them. One critical ethic is, "social media is innately personal and social." At least in the context we're talking about. For the most part, people want to converse with other people, not other entities who represent other people. And, when you "retain" someone to access social media "in your name," people will often be far less receptive. In fact, some become downright incensed.

Plus, sadly, it's been my experience that more than a few people masquerading as social media book marketing

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experts or blog tour experts are actually anything but. I remember once getting a form e-mail from a blog tour “expert” that had been retained by an author friend’s publisher. The Dear Blogger email asked if I’d consider reviewing my friend’s book. Beyond the fact that form emails are considered spam by bloggers and either get deleted or publicly flamed, I’d already reviewed the book on my blog a few days before. She didn’t know, because she’d never read my blog.

And, when I asked my friend to get a list of the blogs the “expert” had landed, basic tools quickly revealed a collective readership of about 500 people. Not exactly the exposure you’re looking for from a hired blog-tour gun.

## **Does that betoken a lot more work for authors who want to be able to tap the book selling power of the tribe?**

Damn straight it does.

You don’t have to like it. It just is. But, there’s a major saving grace, something that may drive you to do the work needed to learn how to build an Author Tribe.

First, if you’re really engaged by the topic, building a tribe of passionate likeminded people is just plain fun. But, that’s not the real awakening. Fact is, ninety-five percent of all other authors and aspiring authors reading this will also loathe the idea of putting in the level of work that’s necessary to pull this off. Which makes the 5% that do the work exponentially more capable of rising above the crowd and creating bookselling magic.

## **So, let’s take a look at how a handful of people have become Tribal Authors and leveraged the power of conversations, connections and numbers to sell books.**

“Imagine being able to harness a big enough community of die-hard fans to make real money as an author and keep doing it over and over again.”

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## Case Study: Chris Brogan

Book | [Trust Agents](#)

Primary Tribes | [ChrisBrogan.com](#) | [@chrisbrogan](#) | [Facebook/trustagents](#)



Chris is a well-known blogger and social media leader with a large blog and twitter following. He's also a popular speaker and has a reputation as one of the most approachable "big names" in social media (he's also a friend, so I'm a little biased).

In late August 2009, Chris and his co-writer, Julien Smith, released their book, *Trust Agents*. As part of the pre-release, Chris began to seed his blog, twitter and Facebook fan page with a variety of innovative offers, including the opportunity to purchase copies of the book in bulk. Two or 300 copies got you Chris, in person, anywhere in the U.S. for a 1/2 day. And, after years of offering up a ton of high value content to his readers, friends and followers and engaging in conversation, he asked people to give back, just one time, by buying the book.

Had Chris not built up a substantial cross-platform online tribe, he'd have had to resort largely to old-school broadcast media or far less conversational and less sustained list marketing, making the campaign both far more costly and far less likely to have succeeded. And, had this been his opening salvo after a brief time building his online tribes, it never would have worked. Social media communities don't respond well when you ask for favors, before having offered substantial value to the community, preferably over an extended period of time.

But, Chris has given so much for so long, people not only stepped up to support the book, they stepped up to support him as a way to say thank you for giving so much and bringing us into the conversation. More recently, Chris has begun to tap his tribes as a resource to brainstorm new book marketing ideas, travel the country in hybrid social media/signing tour mode and even figure out how to marry book sales to his ability to further certain causes.

Net result: *Trust Agents* hit the NYT Bestseller list 2 days after release and the WSJ list 2 weeks after.

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## Case Study: Tamar Weinberg

Book | [The New Community Rules](#)  
Tribes | [Techipedia](#) | [Mashable](#) | nearly every social web



Tamar has been both an innovator and a fixture in the social media community for a number of years now, at various points being recognized as a top submitter and influencer on Digg.com, StumbleUpon, Reddit and many other social conversation and bookmarking tribes.

But, the thing about Tamar is, she doesn't just exist in these communities, she lives and breathes them, dives deep into their culture, nuances and rules. It's just plain fun for her. Then, she shares that knowledge and experimentation with the readers both on her blog, [Techipedia.com](#), and across a number of other top 100 blogs and websites that have included [Lifehacker.com](#), [Mashable.com](#) and others.

So, it was natural that O'Reilly tapped her to write a book on the subject that was released in July, 2009.

Once out, Tamar then leveraged her extensive network of online social tribes to drive social bookmarking, mentions and reviews that pushed traffic to the book and fueled book sales. And, this, by the way, at almost exactly the same time she gave birth to her first son.

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## Case Study: Seth Godin

Books | [Tribes](#), [Purple Cow](#), [The Dip](#) & many others

Primary Tribe | [Seth'sBlog](#)



Seth is one of the best recognized thinkers and bloggers in the world of marketing and leadership and is the author of many bestselling books, the latest being NYT bestseller, *Tribes*. He also happens to be another tireless giver, allocating a substantial amount of time to helping people and causes.

In *Tribes*, Seth speaks directly to the changing landscape of marketing and leadership, arguing growth and marketing success in the new economy isn't about interruption, but rather building powerful, devoted tribes. Obviously, I agree.

When his last book came out, Seth tapped his blogging tribe in a very unique way. He made an offer. Seth set up a private Ning community and invited a limited number of people who pre-ordered his book by a certain date into that exclusive tribe. But, he didn't blast invites all over the web or purchase display ads. He simply let his giant tribe of blog readers know about it.

Thousands took him up on his offer (me included), driving his amazon rank through the roof two months before release and virtually guaranteeing a giant launch week with thousands of orders stacked into amazon's system. Add in the good will he'd built through thoughtful daily posts within his online community over a period of years and large numbers of followers piled on once the book was released. *Tribes* became an instant success.

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## Case Study: Gary Vaynerchuck

Book | [Crush It](#)

Primary tribes | [@garyvee](#) | [WineLibraryTV.com](#)



Gary started out as a brick and mortar wine seller in the family business in New Jersey, growing it into a \$60+ million a year business. But, that's just the start of his tribe-building story. A few years back, he sensed the community building and marketing opportunities in the blogging and online video worlds. And he saw them as a potential vehicle to help grow the family wine business.

Gary chose video, launching [WineLibraryTV.com](#), a daily wine review show with a very different, real-world, edgy slant. The first two years saw slow needle movement, but, Gary stayed with it. He had this inner sense that it was going to be huge.

Fast forward to September 2009. Some 80-100,000 watch his online wine show every day and Gary has expanded his tribe into all aspects of social media, becoming not only Gary the Wine Guy, but Gary the entrepreneur, Gary the Social Media Titan, Gary the Motivator and Illuminator and, beyond being a devoted son, brother, husband and new dad...Gary, the future owner of the NY Jets.

He now has about 900,000 people following him on twitter and, earlier in 2009, he signed a 7-figure, 10 book deal with HarperStudio. His first book, *Crush It*, comes out in October. And, in addition to launching a standalone, social media enabled website for the book that serves as a powerful tool for his online community to evangelize it, he's regularly brainstorming ways to partner within and without his tribe to drive early book sales. Don't be surprised to see him tweeting for people to email him to talk about what it would take to get them to buy bulk orders.

Like Chris and Seth, Gary also gives tirelessly to his communities and, with his amazon rank pegged in the low to mid hundreds a month before the release date, the book is a likely slam dunk multi-list bestseller.

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## Case Study: Jonathan Fields

Book | [Career Renegade](#)

Primary tribes | [Awake@TheWheel](#) | [@jonathanfields](#)



[Quick note, this case study is a bit longer than some of the others, not because what I did bears more discussion, but simply because, well, I was there in the trenches and can share more of what went down behind the scenes]

I'm much newer to the online tribe scene than anyone else here. After leaving my post as a lawyer, I've launched, built and sold a few small health and fitness companies. Along the way, I also developed a mad passion for writing, marketing, entrepreneurship and the psychology of persuasion.

So, when I signed a book deal with Random House's Broadway Books to share how I've done what I've done, the first thing I did (yeah, even before starting to write) was pour myself into the quest to understand how people were marketing books these days and find out what was working and what was bombing.

It didn't take long to see that, without any offline celebrity or a deep pockets to fuel a massive campaign, the fastest way to build a community that would support the book was to take it online. With that, I started to blog and immerse myself in social media, while keeping an eye on (and documenting) what a lot of other authors were doing...and which online exploits were working.

I blogged for about a year before even mentioning I was writing a book and made a commitment to grow my tribe by giving 99% of the time and asking only on rare occasion. I also spent a lot of time getting to know other online tribe leaders and developing relationships with them.

Two months before my book hit the street, I got a call from my agent. The economy was crashing, I was a newbie author and my message (leave your job to do what you love) was the last thing most people wanted to hear when they were desperate to hold onto the job they had, no matter how lifesucking it was. In addition to that, the entire publishing industry had hit rock bottom with imprints, divisions and big publishers folding left and right. So, the decision was made to cut my opening print run to 7,500 copies.

# 2 1

I was freaked out. Momentarily devastated. It would be impossible to come close to making any big bestseller list with so few copies in print. But my sole question to my publisher was, “what do I need to do to get you to raise the run?” Their answer, “pre-sell more books.”

There was very little time, though. And the economy continued to spiral. So, I started to brainstorm a way to do two things. One, tap my modest, but devoted tribe and relationships to pre-sell books. And, two, do something that would shift the bigger conversation around the economy from one of despair to one of hope and action.

With that, I wrote *The Fire Fly Manifesto*, and released it into the world, seeding it across social media. It caught fire as I worked behind the scenes to let people know about it, without violating any of the “unwritten” rules.

*Career Renegade* started that day with an amazon rank of around 1.5 million. It wasn’t even available for nearly two months. It ended around 1,400. The next day, my publisher called to tell me they were upping the print run.

As the release date came closer, I launched a separate website to create a very clean marketing funnel that would integrate strong calls to action, without breaking any of the silent rules of online tribe-building and social media.

Then, I reached out to my broader online author tribe and extended family of eFriends and was blown away by how they embraced the book and helped evangelize it. And, while I’ve not hit the big bestseller lists, considering the timing, my topic and madness that was going down around the release date, it’s done well, holding #1 in it’s category on amazon for the better part of the first 2 months, staying in the low hundreds overall for weeks, low thousands for months and now consistently outselling 97% of all books sold on amazon.

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## Case Study: Pamela Slim

Book | [Escape From Cubicle Nation](#)

Tribe | [EscapeFromCubicleNation.com](#)



After an extensive career in the corporate and consulting world, Pam Slim was done with the culture, the travel and the lack of control over her career. And, as her family grew, she wanted to be able to build a virtual business that would give her more control and the ability to be present with them.

So, she studied to become a Martha Beck coach, then launched a blog that shared her thoughts on the intersection between family, lifestyle and the quest to move from corporate life to self employment. After building a thriving blog and “remote” coaching practice, entirely from that blog, Pam landed a deal to write *Escape From Cubicle Nation*, the book in 2008.

She poured herself into the process of writing, but realized, too, that her blog tribe could be tapped not only as a powerful tool to help promote the book, but a trusted resource to help actually write it. So, she recruited a “mini-tribe” within the bigger tribe to be her book confidants, resources, brainstormers and accountability partners. Pure genius.

By the time the book was released in Spring 2009, this sub-tribe then made the transition from private support crew to public evangelists and, along with her bigger blog tribe and relationships, helped spread the word both on and offline and fueled robust sales for months.

Pam also coordinated her online tribe marketing with a hybrid live book tour that blended workshops with a variety of partners, many of whom and their own digital tribes, tweetups that were announced and promoted on twitter and local social media and mainstream media outreach.

# 2 3

## Case Study: Darren Rowse

Book | [Pro Blogger](#)

Primary tribes | [ProBlogger.net](#) | [Digital Photography School](#) | [@probblogger](#)



Darren runs ProBlogger.net, the best known blog for those looking to become pro-bloggers. It's filled with articles on how to launch, grow and market your blog. Darren has also immersed himself in a handful other social media communities, especially twitter, and is involved in a number of related ventures and blogs.

Translation, Darren knows how to build online communities.

With his online tribe growing in 2008, Darren landed a book deal with Wiley. Together with well-known blogger and tech-consultant, Chris Garrett, he wrote Pro Blogger. Shortly before the book's release, both Darren and Chris leveraged their online tribes with special offers to drive pre-orders, then stoked sales once the book was released by sharing

ideas from the book, setting up a special daily email blog-building program and rallying others in their extended tribes to help support the book.

They also placed ads on each of their blogs, capitalizing on a strong flow of new daily visitors and building on the "social proof" created by their reputations.

More than a year after it's release, Pro Blogger still sells very well on amazon (ranked in the low thousands). And, along with his online accomplishments, the book has helped build Darren's online tribe and position him well to speak.

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## Case Study: Tim Ferriss

Book | [Four Hour Workweek](#)

Primary tribes | [Four Hour Workweek blog](#) | [@tferriss](#)



A lot of people point to Tim as the guy who broke the news that the blogosphere is a mission critical book marketing tool. Tim took a different approach to building his online author tribe. When Tim signed his book deal, he didn't have much time to build his tribe. Nor had he spent much time in the blogosphere.

But, he's an aggressive and extremely innovative marketer who "got" the power of the online world, through his other business ventures. So, Tim basically jumped on a bunch of planes and threw himself into some of the biggest tech/online conferences in the country with the goal of meeting and befriending a number of top bloggers and online influencers, then leveraging the power of their tribes to not only build his own tribe, but sell a lot of books.

During that process, he also was able to grab enough of their attention to effectively "test" which of the big ideas in the book would make for the best viral "memes" in the blogging community, so he'd be better positioned to run with his most buzzworthy content. This let him key in on and work the messages that would resonate with the tight tech blogger niche.

By the time the book launched, Tim had build a polished website and started blogging in earnest. But the thing that really launched the Four Hour Workweek into the stratosphere (mega-bestseller on every print list) was the way he pulled and developed his core "memes" and worked a small tribe of heavy hitting online influencers to kickstart them.

Interestingly, too. Tim's book caught fire before twitter was a big enough vehicle to play a significant role in the launch. And, even though Tim is closing in on 60,000 followers, he follows back fewer than 200 and uses twitter not so much for conversation, but as a broadcast medium. And, while this diverges from the common conversational ethic, it works for him on two levels. One, he is a proponent of minimizing the quantity of digital

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noise that makes it to his eyes and ears. And, he's established enough that, like many of other celebs and web-celebs, people will still follow him to keep up with his always provocative adventures in lifestyle design. Tim, it seems, revels in being the exception to the rule.

He's currently working on a new book that sounds like it's going to raise a lot of eyebrows. Keep an eye on how he brings it to market. You'll learn a lot.

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## Case Study: Leo Babauta

Book | [The Power of Less](#)

Primary tribes | [Zenhabits.net](#) | [@zen\\_habits](#)

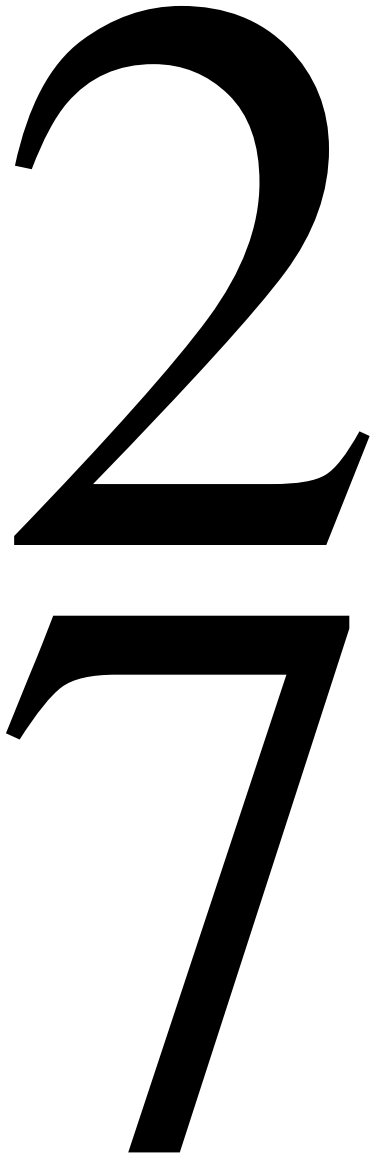


Guam-based father of 6, Leo Babauta, spent more than 15 years as a local newspaper writer, before easing his way into the world of online tribes. Starting [ZenHabits.net](#) in 2007, his writing style, focus, personal story and commitment to provide tremendous value led to explosive growth. (fair disclosure, like a number of others on this list, Leo's a friend).

Barely 3 years in, his blog boasts over 130,000 subscribers and millions of views a month. And, he has a rapidly growing twitter following, too.

So when it came time to launch his book, [The Power of Less](#), at the end of 2008, Leo was in a great position to tap into his broad tribes and drive strong book sales.

He did this, in part, by letting blog readers and twitter followers know about the book and recruiting his extended tribe of bloggers to help share the word. But, having already launched an ebook a year or so before, Leo also drew on his experience launching info-products to coordinate a series of "value-added" content items that primed both his tribe and the broader market for the book's release.



## Bringing it Home: Tribal Author Power

**Simple fact...the landscape of book marketing has forever changed.**

Each year, more than 500,000 new books vie for the attention (and money) of publishers and readers. And, as we've now seen, the old approach to getting signed then selling books is dead and buried. Left the building. Even when you land the traditionally coveted big media hits, they often fall way short of expectations when it comes to sales. Because...

**Attention is going digital at breakneck speed.**

So, what's the answer? As you've seen from all of the authors above, a growing element of your power as an author lies in your ability to cultivate an inner tribe of deep fans and evangelists and an outer tribe of acquaintances, friends and influencers online.

Get tribal on the web and you will wield immensely more power in every part of the process, from getting signed to naming your advance then marketing your book. Or, even self-publishing not because you have to... but because you can't justify giving up a huge chunk of money to a publisher when you know your book's success lies entirely within your sphere of Tribal Author influence.

**Authors who understand this will be exceptionally well positioned** and motivated to build worldwide tribes, relationships and deep webs across social media. Those who don't will be increasingly left to fend for themselves in a jungle they understand less and less.

Mark Twain famously said, "the rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated." So, too, have the rumors of publishing's demise and the ability of authors to make real money along the way.

**Yes, mainstream publishers are feeling pain. A lot of it.** But, Despite opinions to the contrary, there has never been a time of greater opportunity for authors to level the playing field. To take control of your destiny...if you're willing to step up and do the work needed to become a Tribal Author.

**Question is—are you ready to own your future?**

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## What Now?

**Step 1: Share This Report** – If you've found value in this report, please share it with your friends.

**Step 2: Become a Tribal Author** - Visit [TribalAuthor.com](http://TribalAuthor.com), become part of the tribe and benefit from regular updates with breaking case-studies, tactics, strategies and resources



**About the Author | Jonathan Fields** – Lawyer turned serial entrepreneur, marketer, social media sponge and author of **Career Renegade: How To Make A Great Living Doing What You Love**, Fields is obsessed with the process of creation and idea dissemination. His book is a veritable handbook for online tribe-building as a marketing vehicle for businesses, authors and creative pros.

Jonathan also blogs about how to get a life, be creative, market businesses and books and be an engaged dad and husband at [JonathanFields.com](http://JonathanFields.com), runs entrepreneurship catalyst and marketing group, Career Renegade, Inc and speaks nationally on small business, creativity, online marketing and book marketing.

His adventures have been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, People, Business Week, Fast Company, Adweek, NBC, CNBC, Fox Business, Miami Herald, Fine Living, Entrepreneur, Self, Vogue, Fitness, Elle and thousands of other magazines, newspapers, radio shows and websites. Fields has also been featured in numerous leading social media and marketing books, including Twitter Power, Tactical Transparency, Escape From Cubicle Nation, E-Riches 2.0 and Word Wide Rave and was recently named by Business Week as one of the 20 people every entrepreneur must follow on twitter.

When not working, you can find him dancing around his living room with his wife and daughter.

Occasionally, he sleeps.

