

Publishing, Book Launch, *and* Marketing Action Plan

INTRODUCTION

This plan serves as a guide for writers looking to:

1. Understand the process of publishing a book, whether traditionally or through self-publishing.
2. Launch their book effectively.
3. Market their book to maximize sales and impact.

The advice has been distilled from insights by **Jon Gordon**, 18x bestselling author and the Gordon Publishing team. This plan not only outlines actionable steps but also explains the rationale behind each to provide deeper understanding and purpose.

I. WRITING AND PUBLISHING YOUR BOOK

1. Clarify Your "Why" and Message

Why: Your "why" is the foundation of your book's purpose and the core driver of your motivation to complete and share it. Without a clear understanding of your mission, your writing can feel aimless, and it may be harder to connect with your audience.

- **Identify your core message:** Reflect on your life experiences, passions, and expertise. What legacy or impact do you want your book to leave?
- **Be authentic:** Writing about something deeply personal or meaningful allows your genuine voice to resonate, making it more relatable and compelling for readers.



2. Write First, Pitch Later

Why: Many authors delay writing because they're preoccupied with finding a publisher or agent. However, having a completed manuscript demonstrates commitment and gives potential publishers a clear understanding of your work.

- Start writing without waiting for a publisher. Writing builds momentum and helps you clarify your ideas.
- Complete a strong draft before seeking publication opportunities. This increases your credibility and shows you're serious about your craft.
- It is also okay to utilize a writing service, ghostwriter, or editor if needed. Some people need help to get their ideas from their head and onto paper. It's better to seek assistance than to let your ideas remain unshared. Professional help can ensure that your vision is articulated effectively while maintaining your unique voice.



3. Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

Why: Each publishing route has its benefits and trade-offs. Understanding them helps you make an informed choice that aligns with your goals and resources.

- **Traditional Publishing:** Ideal for authors with established platforms or unique stories that appeal to a broad audience. Publishers provide resources for editing, design, and distribution, but authors receive lower royalty rates and less creative control.
- **Self-Publishing:** Allows full creative control and higher royalties. While it requires more upfront effort and cost, it's perfect for authors who want to build their platforms or experiment with niche audiences.
- **Hybrid Publishing:** A middle ground between traditional and self-publishing. Hybrid publishers handle the production and distribution of your book, offering the professional support of a traditional publisher. However, you may have to pay for these services upfront, and royalties are not typically provided in advance. The benefit is that you retain most or all of your profits, making this one of the most potentially lucrative options for authors who can invest in their success.



4. Create Essential Materials

Why: A professional presentation shows your dedication and helps others (publishers, influencers, readers) understand your value.

- **One-Page Overview:** Summarize your book's purpose, target audience, and your background succinctly to make it easy for others to support or promote you.
- **Website:** Your digital home should answer questions potential readers or collaborators might have and provide clear paths for action (e.g., signing up for updates, purchasing the book).



5. Build Your Platform Early

Why: Building an audience before your book is released ensures that you have people ready to buy and share your work once it's available.

- **Newsletter:** Email marketing consistently outperforms social media in driving sales. Regularly share valuable content to nurture trust and loyalty. Building an email list is crucial because email remains the highest converter to book sales and action. To grow your list, utilize strategies like:
- **Lead Magnets:** Create valuable items, such as guides, checklists, or exclusive chapters, that readers can access in exchange for their email addresses.
- **Webinars:** Host online events where you share insights related to your book's topic, offering another opportunity to capture emails.
- **Online Events:** Use live Q&A sessions, virtual book readings, or workshops to engage your audience while increasing email acquisitions.
- **Social Media:** Engage authentically to build relationships and spread awareness about your message (drive people from social to your email list).

II. LAUNCHING YOUR BOOK

1. Pre-Launch Phase (3–8 months prior)

Why: Success doesn't happen by accident. Pre-launch planning ensures you hit the ground running with a strong strategy.

- **Define Success:** Identify specific, measurable goals. Is your priority reaching bestseller status, generating leads, or making an impact? Tailor your actions to your primary goal.
- **Build a Launch Team:** A dedicated group of supporters amplifies your reach by promoting your book to their networks. This creates a ripple effect of awareness and engagement.
- **Create Pre-Order Incentives:** Incentives like exclusive access to webinars or study guides provide immediate value to readers, encouraging them to buy early and help generate buzz.
- **Outreach to Influencers:** Influencers lend credibility and visibility to your book. Sending them a personalized message and copy of your book can spark valuable endorsements.



2. Launch Week

Why: The first week is critical for visibility and momentum. Concentrated effort can maximize sales and create long-term interest.

- **Leverage Your Network:** Mobilize your launch team and personal network to post on social media and share testimonials.
- **Host Events:** Hosting a live event (e.g., a webinar, Q&A, or book reading) adds a personal touch and energizes your audience.
- **Run Ads:** Strategic ad campaigns on platforms like Facebook or Google can reach new readers and drive them to purchase your book.
- **Media Appearances:** Pitch stories to podcasts, blogs, and local media. Tailor your pitch to each platform's audience to increase your chances of coverage.



2. Post-Launch Phase

Why: Book success isn't confined to launch week. Consistent engagement and targeted efforts extend your book's life cycle.

- **Focus on Reviews:** Positive reviews build trust and drive sales. Encourage readers to share their experiences on Amazon and Goodreads.
- **Engage Your Audience:** Share behind-the-scenes content or provide additional resources to keep readers interested.
- **Plan for Longevity:** Develop evergreen content that ties back to your book, such as blog posts, videos, or related products.



III. LONG-TERM MARKETING STRATEGY

IV. Becoming a Bestseller

Why: Pursuing legitimate bestseller lists can significantly enhance your influence and credibility. However, the true value of being a bestseller lies in what it represents: high sales volume and widespread reach. Achieving bestseller status should not be an end goal in itself but rather a byproduct of creating meaningful impact and getting your book into the hands of as many readers as possible.

Key Bestseller Lists to Consider

- **Amazon Bestseller List:**

- Amazon rankings update hourly based on sales volume within specific categories.
- You can achieve bestseller status in your category, which is a flexible and attainable goal with well-timed promotions and consistent sales.

- **New York Times Bestseller List:**

- Achieving the NYT list often requires selling 14,000+ copies in a single week for the Weekly Advice List. The threshold may vary based on competition and timing.
- NYT rankings are subjective and editorial, factoring in distribution channels and independent bookstore sales, not solely volume.

- **USA Today Bestseller List:**

- A more attainable goal for new authors, usually requiring several thousand copies sold within a week across all retailers.

Strategies to Achieve Bestseller Status

1. **Focus on Sales:** Concentrate on driving consistent volume through pre-orders, coordinated campaigns, and launch promotions.
2. **Diverse Distribution Channels:** For lists like the NYT, ensure your book is available through multiple channels, including independent bookstores and major retailers.
3. **Collaborate with Influencers:** Leverage partnerships with individuals or organizations to expand your reach and increase sales during critical windows.
4. **Leverage Pre-Orders:** Strong pre-order sales can significantly boost your chances of hitting bestseller status, as these sales are often counted in the first week's total.

Caution:

- Avoid chasing bestseller lists for the sake of the title alone. Focus instead on how the process of reaching for these goals aligns with your mission of making a difference through your book.

1. Build Evergreen Assets

Why: Evergreen resources sustain interest in your book over time and provide ongoing value.

- **Study Guides and Resources:** Many readers appreciate supplementary materials that deepen their engagement with your book.
- **Speaking Gigs:** Leverage the book as a "calling card" to secure speaking engagements where you can share your message and sell your book in bulk.
- **Workshops:** Turn your book's lessons into actionable workshops or courses to reach new audiences.

2. Amplify Through Social Proof

Why: Social proof builds credibility and attracts new readers.

- Highlight testimonials, success stories, and photos of readers with your book.
- Share endorsements from influencers or organizations.

3. Create a Content Flywheel

Why: Synergistic content creation ensures that every piece of content supports and drives interest in your book and related products.

- **Books:** Write additional books to complement your first, creating a cohesive series or body of work.
- **Courses:** Develop online courses based on your book's themes to monetize your expertise further.
- **Email Marketing:** Consistently engage your list with valuable insights, updates, and promotions.



IV. KEY METRICS TO TRACK

1. Sales

Why: Tracking sales helps you measure the effectiveness of your marketing efforts and adjust strategies as needed.

- Monitor weekly and monthly book sales to identify trends and opportunities.

2. Audience Growth

Why: Growing your audience expands your potential reach and impact.

- Track email subscribers, social media followers, and website traffic.

3. Engagement

Why: Engaged readers are more likely to become advocates who share your book.

- Track reviews and ratings on platforms like Amazon and Goodreads.
- Measure attendance at webinars, workshops, or events.

Conclusion

Success in publishing, launching, and marketing a book requires both preparation and persistence. By understanding the purpose behind each step, you can align your efforts with your broader goals and create a lasting impact. Whether you're at the beginning of your journey or seeking to scale, this detailed plan provides the tools and strategies you need for success.

PUBLISH THE BOOK THAT BUILDS YOUR PLATFORM AND MAKES AN IMPACT



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