

*Powerhouse Marketing:*  
*Creating Your Perfect  
Custom Marketing Plan*

AuthorMBA Step-by-Step Career Guides

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**Lesson #1 – Identifying your marketing goals** ..... page 4

*Every good marketing plan begins with goals. Not general goals, either. Goals that make sure you're promoting all aspects of your career – your new releases, your in-print backlist, yourself as a writing professional – as part of a single cohesive strategy. You'll begin working on the background for your strategy here.*

**Lesson #2 – Recognizing your constraints** ..... page 10

*One of the biggest struggles for authors is balancing their marketing needs with their need to write (and live!). You'll identify your constraints in key areas like budget, time, and lifestyle to help you create a marketing plan that fits your unique situation.*

**Lesson #3 – Embracing your uniqueness**..... page 13

*Every author has different strengths, weaknesses, and personality traits. If you want to be successful in marketing, you need to design a marketing plan that capitalizes on your strengths, minimizes your weaknesses, and pays tribute to your personality. Marketing shouldn't be a chore for you. Your work here will make sure your headaches are few and your fun factor is high.*

**Lesson #4 – Rethinking your audience**..... page 18

*If you're like most authors, your primary focus is on marketing to your ultimate consumer. That's a very smart business approach. But those consumers – called your core audience – aren't the only ones who can help you succeed in your career. You'll learn about the seven primary audiences and how each can contribute to your success, plus you'll identify which audiences you have the best chance of reaching given your strengths and constraints.*

**Lesson #5 – Designing a savvy marketing strategy**..... page 24

*The first step in creating a well-rounded marketing plan is to start with the big picture. In marketing terms, we call this your Executive Summary. The Executive Summary is a 1-2 page overview of your marketing approach. You'll be defining your marketing objectives, your target audiences, your general marketing strategy, and your marketing theme or slogan.*

**Lesson #6 – Brainstorming your options**..... page 28

*Now it's time to flesh out your marketing possibilities. There are literally hundreds of different ways you can reach your target audiences, so you're limited only by your creativity. The key thing you'll keep in mind is to let your mind think as big as it wants. You'll be weighing your options later to see what best fits your strengths, weaknesses, personality, and constraints. In this section, you'll be giving your imagination free reign as you brainstorm ideas in a variety of categories.*

**Lesson #7 – Considering the pros and cons**..... page 36

*Having ideas is one thing; having smart ideas is another. How can you tell one from the other? By considering how much time, money, and headache are required from each. You'll be laying out your options on this unique worksheet to see the trade-offs and start considering what you are (and aren't) willing to do to achieve your marketing goals.*

**Lesson #8 – Creating your perfect custom marketing plan** ..... page 39

*With your ideas in place, you'll map everything out on the exclusive Powerhouse Marketing Master Planning Grid. You'll be listing your options and then comparing them to see which ones work best based on what you learned about yourself in the first few worksheets. It's an eye-opening process designed to help you prioritize your options and make sure you're taking a well-rounded approach that hits all of your target audiences.*

**Lesson #9 – Getting the most bang for your buck with ROI**..... page 44

*Your marketing plan is only as good as the results it nets you. If you have no way of knowing whether your marketing efforts are effective or not, you might as well hang up your marketing hat. Why put good money after bad? You'll learn two super simple ways to measure the results of your marketing (called Return on Investment or ROI) plus get ideas for other ways to measure your marketing effectiveness. You'll put that knowledge to use by creating ROI measurements of your own that are specific to your custom marketing plan.*

**Lesson #10 – Making the most of your marketing plan** ..... page 50

*As you complete your Powerhouse Marketing journey, you'll tweak your Executive Summary and fill out your Marketing Action Plan template. You'll walk away with a complete, customized plan you can immediately put to use. You'll also get a copy of the Powerhouse Marketing Review checklist to guide you in reviewing your plan and revising it to keep only the best of the best marketing activities. The Powerhouse Marketing Review will help you fine-tune your Powerhouse Marketing Plan to give you a proven marketing template you can use for years to come.*

### DREAMING THE BIG DREAM

If you want to make the most of your writing career, being an active participant in your overall marketing strategy is important. Leaving it up to the publisher is fine if you're a top tier author, but only a select few have that coveted spot. Getting there on your own means writing one quality book after another and making sure the right people know about your masterpieces. That's where a savvy marketing plan comes in.

Having a smart marketing plan means identifying the key players (Hint: it's not just readers), getting your work in front of them in a memorable way to encourage them to buy or promote your books, and measuring the effectiveness of your marketing efforts to make sure your money and time are well spent. A plan like that doesn't happen overnight, but it does happen. You just need to know the steps to get you there.

Welcome to Powerhouse Marketing.

The Powerhouse Marketing course was specifically designed to help authors create effective marketing plans for their work and their careers. What if you're not yet published? Never fear. Having a well-designed marketing plan for your book is a huge asset when your book does sell. No author wants to be scrambling to create a plan when he or she is facing copy edits, galleys, and working on a knock-their-socks-off option book. Why add stress to an already hectic situation? Get your plan in place now and you'll be able to hit the ground running the minute you get your release date.

Having a marketing plan in place before you sell can also help you make an excellent first impression with your editor and publicist. You'll be able to show them your plan to see where you can complement their work and show them that you're in this as a business. You're a take-charge kind of author who is willing to do your part to launch a successful career. I've never met an agent or editor yet who wasn't impressed by authors who treat their writing as a business.

Some authors think of comprehensive marketing plans as big, over-the-top strategies designed to make a splash in the market. And that's certainly true in some cases. But just as often, marketing plans are created to make sure an author's limited budget and time commitment are spent wisely. That means spending time on things that give the author *measurable results*. This is particularly true if you write for a publisher or line where the distribution is fairly standard, such as in category romance. Can you still make a marketing splash if you write category? Sure. But there may be a high-end cap of how much you can reasonably expect your marketing to accomplish with the short shelf life and consistent distribution strategy for your line. More importantly, your Powerhouse Marketing Plan will help you set a comfortable, realistic budget and ensure every penny (and every minute of your valuable time!) gives you maximum results.

Over the next nine lessons, I'll be walking you through the step-by-step process of how to rethink your whole approach to marketing starting from the ground up. Your work will include:

- **Identifying your marketing goals** – *What are you specifically trying to accomplish at this point in your career? You'll articulate your specific goals in a variety of areas critical to marketing success.*
- **Recognizing your constraints** – *What limitations do you have on your ability to market due to personal, family, health, or “real job” responsibilities? You'll lay out your constraints in advance to make sure your marketing plan is realistic from the word Go.*
- **Embracing your uniqueness** – *What are your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to your writing business? How can you design your marketing plans around your personality? You'll answer both questions and use those responses as a basis for your planning work ahead.*
- **Rethinking your audience** – *Who are all the key players you need to reach? How can they help you achieve your marketing goals, and what do you have to offer them? You'll learn about the seven primary audiences and evaluate ways to target them for maximum positive impact.*
- **Designing a savvy marketing plan** – *What is your overall marketing strategy? You'll learn how to create what's known as an Executive Summary that will keep you on track with your overall objectives and branding.*
- **Brainstorming your options** – *What are the things (big and little) that you can do to promote your books and yourself? You'll get to brainstorm exciting new ways to meet your goals instead of being forced to rely on the same-old-same-old strategies.*
- **Considering the pros and cons** – *All marketing ideas are not created equal. What do you value more – time or money? High tech or low tech? You'll learn a system for evaluating marketing ideas so you're focused on the right ideas for YOU.*
- **Creating the perfect custom marketing plan** – *What's your ultimate plan of attack? You'll make decisions about the marketing activities you'll do and put them together to create a marketing strategy that's perfectly tailored to your strengths.*
- **Getting the most bang for your buck with ROI** – *With your ideas ready to go, how do you know if they'll help you achieve your goals? You'll learn about the power of ROI (Return on Investment) and discover a variety of ways to build in automatic measurements to see exactly how effective each marketing effort truly is.*

- **Making the most of your marketing plan** – *You've got your pieces in place... now what? You'll finalize your Marketing Action Plan and learn how to continually evaluate your overall Powerhouse Marketing Plan to give you a proven template that will require minimal planning effort for new releases.*

Sound good? Then let's get started!

### **FOCUSED GOALS = SUCCESSFUL MARKETING PLANS**

No two authors have the exact same marketing goals. Even at the base level – to sell books – author marketing goals will vary based on what kind and how many books they have on the market, how large their existing reader base is, and what kind of sell through numbers his or her publisher expects. If you want to make your marketing plan super effective, you'll need to have highly focused marketing goals that consider four key areas.

#### ***1) New release goals***

Do you have a new book or series coming out? Or one that's recently hit the shelves? If so, promoting that book or series is likely to be the core of your marketing plan. Your new release goals should articulate as specifically as possible how many books you want to sell, how quickly you want to sell them, and whether your promotions will be single-book or multi-book focused.

#### ***2) Backlist goals***

If you have books on your backlist that are still in print, having a specific goal to keep those books selling is a great way to make sure you stay in print as long as you can.

#### ***3) Author goals***

Part of being in this business for the long haul means focusing on name recognition. Just like you want book cover and title recognition for each book, you want readers and other key influencers to associate your name with great books overall. You also want to present yourself as a writing professional so you're actively developing an industry reputation that serves you well.

#### ***4) Branding goals***

Branding is a savvy marketer's best friend. If you want to stand out in the crowded marketplace, you need to be able to differentiate yourself and your work. That's what branding does. Your brand helps influencers like booksellers hand sell your overall list by being able to succinctly describe to their customers the kinds of books you write. Which would you prefer: to have them searching for the right words to describe your work or to offer them an easy-to-remember, high

impact description that instantly captures what makes you unique?

If you've developed a brand or revamped an existing one, making your brand a focal point of your marketing efforts is smart business. This is particularly true if you've recently undergone a career makeover. You want to get the word out about the new and improved you!

*NOTE: If you don't have a brand or your brand needs a major facelift, I highly recommend branding consultant Jenn Stark's **Pump It Up** and **Power Branding** workshops. Check out her website at [www.knowyourbrand.com](http://www.knowyourbrand.com) for more information.*

### A QUICK NOTE ABOUT GOALS

Goal setting is a simple process. But if you want your goals to really pack a punch, you need to be as specific as possible. As you draft your goals on the following worksheet, focus on creating measurable goals (“sell XX copies” vs. “sell a lot of copies”) and incorporating time lines whenever you can (“sell XX copies of My Fabulous Book by *date*”).

As you work through the goals on the next page, keep in mind that not every author will have goals under every section. For instance, if you're a debut author, you don't need backlist goals. Consider your personal situation and make the categories fit your needs. This is your plan, so make it work for you!

**1) NEW RELEASE GOALS** – What do you want your marketing plan to accomplish for your current or upcoming release? What is your primary focus where this is concerned?

**2) BACKLIST GOALS** – What do you want your marketing plan to accomplish for your backlist titles? What is your primary focus where this is concerned?

**3) AUTHOR GOALS** – How do you want your marketing plan to impact your reputation in the industry and/or your network of supportive contacts?

**4) BRANDING GOALS** – Have you developed a new brand, changed your brand, or engaged in a career makeover? If so, what goals do you have for communicating your new brand to different audiences or promoting your new career endeavors?

# Powerhouse Marketing

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## Lesson #1 Worksheet – Marketing goals

**PRIORITIZING YOUR GOALS** – Using the chart below, list all of the goals you brainstormed on the previous page. For each goal, note the type of goal (*New Release, Backlist, etc.*), why the goal is important to you, and rank its overall importance **right now** in the greater scheme of your career (*with 1 being the most important goal overall*).

Goal	Type	Why important?	Ranking

### **RESPECT YOUR LIMITATIONS**

One of the biggest mistakes authors make is making grand plans without considering how those plans affect their overall life. That means considering both career constraints and family/lifestyle constraints. If you want a marketing plan that propels your career forward without creating unnecessary headaches, honoring your constraints is key.

Marketing constraints typically fall into three main categories: money, time, and lifestyle. All three should be addressed to make sure you're working within the boundaries of your particular circumstances.

### **BUDGET CONSTRAINTS**

If you're in this as a career, you probably want to enjoy the income you earn from it. No author I know wants to consistently spend all of his or her advance and royalty money on marketing. There's got to be a balance. One rule of thumb I frequently hear is that you should spend 50% of your first book's advance on marketing and gradually drop that down as your advances grow until it's hovering around the 25% mark. Personally, I think those are arbitrary numbers. 25% of a \$4,000 advance is a lot different than 25% of a \$100,000 or more advance. Not to mention that no two authors have the same financial picture.

A better approach is to look at how much money you need to retain for yourself *first*. Setting a marketing budget before considering finances is putting the cart before the horse. Your personal financial situation is what should initially drive your marketing decisions. If you're strapped financially, you may need every penny you can save for living expenses. If you have a lucrative full-time career with minimal personal expenses, you'll probably be willing to allot significantly more of your advance (and possibly a percentage of your royalties) to marketing your books and your name.

Based on your financial picture, choose a marketing budget that's comfortable for you. Keep in mind that this number may increase or decrease for each book as your advances grow, your financial situation changes, and your career hits different plateaus.

### **TIME CONSTRAINTS**

One common mistake that authors make is to assume that if they can't afford to spend a lot of money on marketing, they must make up the difference with their time. (It's the same mistake a lot of entrepreneurs make, by the way!) And that's true, to an extent. But just as you don't have to go overboard financially, you don't have to go overboard with your time either.

Every minute you spend on marketing is a minute you aren't able to spend on writing. Economists call this opportunity cost. Opportunity cost describes the fact that everything, even time, costs *something*. In order to buy or do one thing, you forgo the opportunity to buy or do something else. There truly is no such thing as "free time". (You knew that already, right?)

Generally speaking, time you spend being more prolific will almost always pay higher dividends than time you spend marketing because the income potential is greater in the long run. Not always, but most of the time. So that's one trade-off you make with your time. But it's not just marketing vs. production. It could just as easily be a trade-off of marketing time vs. time spent with your family or friends or reading a book for research or pleasure. Which leads us to...

### **LIFESTYLE CONSTRAINTS**

Ah, real life. This is perhaps the biggest constraint for most writers because no author exists in a vacuum. Writers live in the real world, one where grocery shopping, bill paying, and laundry are part of the package. Considering lifestyle constraints is critical if you want to create a marketing plan that allows you to balance your career and your life.

When you think about your lifestyle constraints, you need to consider some of the following categories:

- Ability to travel
- Family care
- Health challenges
- Household duties
- Job considerations
- Social life commitments
- Other responsibilities (*volunteer, church, community, etc.*)

### **KEEPING UP WITH THE TIMES**

Constraints often fluctuate over time. Finances and job situations change, children grow up and move out, aging parents may require more care... in short, *life happens*. Revisiting your constraints annually is a smart idea to make sure you are taking advantage of changes to your benefit and compensating for changes that increase your marketing limitations.

**1) BUDGET CONSTRAINTS** – How much of your advance money do you feel comfortable budgeting for your marketing efforts? How much, if any, of your royalties do you wish to contribute to your marketing?

**2) TIME CONSTRAINTS** – How much time can you comfortably budget for marketing while still giving yourself time to handle your other responsibilities? You may wish to budget a certain amount of time throughout the year or design a schedule that gears up as your release date approaches.

**3) LIFESTYLE CONSTRAINTS** – Identify all of your “real life” constraints, including ability to travel, family care, health challenges, household duties, job considerations, social commitments, and other constraints (*volunteer, church, community, etc.*).

### **PUTTING THE CUSTOM IN MARKETING**

You already know how keeping your constraints in mind can help you create a marketing plan that sets you up for success. Now we're going to take that a step further and look at the other key attributes you want to consider to make sure your custom plan is a perfect fit for you. To do that, you're going to identify your strengths, weaknesses, personality traits, and work style as they relate to the arena of marketing.

#### ***Strengths***

The ideal marketing plan capitalizes on your strengths. You'll want to start by considering your work experiences, both paid and unpaid. What experience and knowledge do you bring to the table that can give your marketing legs? If you're a former journalist, you've got in-depth knowledge of how the media machine works and contacts you can use to your advantage. If you're a teacher who writes YA, you've got built-in credibility for interviews. If you're an active church member at a large congregation and you write inspirational, you've got a built-in base of people who are likely to support you in any way they can.

You'll also want to consider your work strengths. Are you a web guru? That's a huge plus as you build your Internet presence. Are you extremely organized or detail-oriented? Brownie points again. That means you'll be better equipped to stay on top of things without having to outsource some of your marketing tasks to people who will make sure nothing falls through the cracks.

Even your hobbies and talents can be beneficial. If you're skilled in handmade crafts, you can save some money by making darling thank-you tokens for the people who help you get the word out. If you're heavily involved in online social communities, you've probably got a large network of geographically-diverse people who may be able to put you in touch with contacts in their area.

#### ***Weaknesses***

Minimizing the impact of your weaknesses is every bit as important as capitalizing on your strengths. You'll want to consider any work habits you have that may hinder your marketing efforts. Do you tend to procrastinate? Most media opportunities have tight time frames that you'll have to make sure you hit. Do you only check email periodically? That may cause problems with people trying to contact you about guest blogging or other opportunities.

Other weaknesses you may want to address include needing consensus from others before trying something new and the inability to let less than stellar reviews roll off your back. If you constantly seek consensus or approval, that's probably going to limit the things you're willing to try. Since marketing is about finding new, memorable ways to reach your audiences (again, it's about standing out from the crowd), the old guard methods may not be the best bets for you.

Likewise, clinging to bad reviews may keep you from sending out ARCs for fear of getting more unsupportive comments. That's going to crimp your style too.

### ***Personality***

Your personality is a key factor in creating a smooth sailing, minimal headache marketing plan. What personality traits do you possess that would be beneficial from a marketing standpoint? Are you outgoing? Do you love public speaking and mingling with new people? Marketing events that put you front and center may be high on your list. Are you comfortable asking for help? That's a huge plus. You might use that to your advantage to create a "one-time favor" list of people you can call upon to support specific parts of your plan.

You'll also need to keep in mind any personality traits that may be a problem in your marketing efforts. If you fear being in the spotlight, that's going to make in-store book signings lower on your list of desired marketing options. If you have a tendency to spark controversy – and you don't want to ruffle the feathers of those you'd like to buy your book – you may want to steer clear of guest blogging opportunities and other online appearances where it's hard for people to judge the tone of your message.

### ***Work Style***

If you want to create a successful plan, you need to know your working style. Honoring your personality and your work style are the two best ways to minimize the headaches associated with marketing your work and yourself. For work style, that means knowing whether you work best as a multi-tasker or when completing one project before moving on to the next. New releases often mean juggling a variety of marketing tasks at once. If too much juggling stresses you out, you might be better off assigning specific days of the week for different marketing activities.

How about high tech vs. high touch? Both can be business strengths. In this case, we're more concerned with how that impacts the way you work. If you're high tech and mobile, that may mean you're able to accomplish marketing tasks on the fly with a mobile connection. If you're high touch, that may mean a phone or a stack of note cards and stamps are bigger assets to you than access to email. There's no right or wrong here, just food for thought as you're identifying what resources you need and how best to stay in touch with your marketing contacts.

What about big picture vs. detail-oriented? If you're a big picture person, you may be in a perfect position to come up with something completely unique and brilliant for your marketing strategy, but need help getting the details in order. If you're detail-oriented, you may go gangbusters when it's time to get down to business, but need help brainstorming creative ways to reach your target audiences. Most people have both abilities to some degree, but nearly everyone naturally leans in one direction or the other. Knowing where you lean means knowing what to handle yourself and what to get help with to keep things flowing smoothly.

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## Lesson #3 Worksheet – Embracing your uniqueness

### *Strengths to Showcase*

1) List your past work experiences that can help you in your marketing efforts. *(e.g. a former journalist, a teacher who writes YA, a church volunteer who writes inspirationals)*

2) List your work strengths that can help you in your marketing efforts. *(e.g. tech savvy, detail-oriented, extremely organized)*

3) List your talents and hobbies that can help you in your marketing efforts. *(e.g. skilled in handmade crafts, heavy involvement in online communities)*

4) List your personality traits that can help you in your marketing efforts. *(e.g. outgoing, enjoy public speaking, not afraid to ask for help)*

5) List any other strengths that can help you in your marketing efforts. *(e.g. familiarity with a geographic area, a spouse who works in an industry you write about)*

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## Lesson #3 Worksheet – Embracing your uniqueness

### *Weaknesses to Minimize*

1) List your work habits that may hinder your marketing efforts. *(e.g. not organized, lacking a task management system, irregular email checking)*

2) List your personality traits that may hinder your marketing efforts. *(e.g. fear of being in the spotlight, tendency to spark controversy if you don't write controversial books)*

3) List any other weaknesses that may hinder your marketing efforts. *(e.g. tendency to need consensus from others before trying something new, inability to let poor reviews roll off your back)*

# Powerhouse Marketing

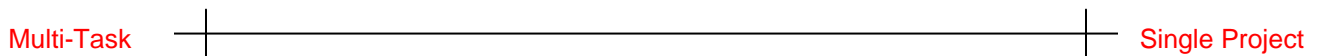
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## Lesson #3 Worksheet – Embracing your uniqueness

### *Work Style to Embrace*

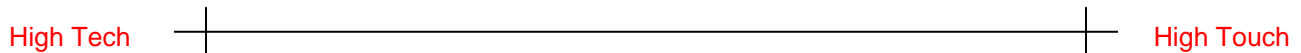
#### **Multi-Task or Single Project?**

When you've got a list of things to do, how do you like to handle them? Do you prefer to work on a variety of things to keep your day interesting or do you like to focus on one thing at a time, completing each item before you move on to the next? Plot your answer on the spectrum below.



#### **High Tech or High Touch?**

Are you the kind of person who likes to stay in touch by email or do you love sitting down to write a note of thanks and mailing it the old-fashioned way? High tech can be high touch if it's used effectively, but most people have a decided lean either toward or away from technology. Plot your tendency on the spectrum below.



#### **Big Picture or Detail-Oriented?**

When it comes to seeing the big picture of your career, does it come naturally? Can you wrap your head around the big ideas and overall directions easily or does it sometimes seem overwhelming? When it comes to details, do you love the challenge of making sure everything is just perfect or do you get bogged down with too many details to face? Plot your answer on the spectrum below.

