



THE SALES INFORMER

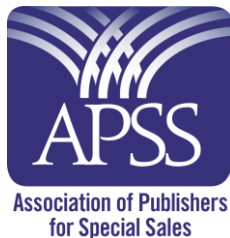
Association of Publishers for Special Sales

**A monthly e-zine dedicated to helping APSS members sell more books
to more buyers, more profitably.**

Volume 7, Issue 2, Number 69 February 2019

Here is your February 2019 issue of *The Sales Informer* ezine. We intend this to help APSS members sell more books to non-bookstore buyers. This newsletter is sent only to paid APSS members. If there were any problems with this delivery, please let me know.

APSS Update from the Executive Director - Brian Jud



Here's your chance at a \$50,000 grant in the APSS/FedEx Small Business Grant Contest

What could you do with \$15,000, \$30,000 or even \$50,000 for your small business? The APSS/FedEx Small Business Grant Contest has returned, offering even more money to 10 winners. Entries will be accepted February 19th through March 25th.

Entering is a great opportunity to gain exposure for your business and connect with your community and your fans. And winning one of the 10 grants could open up new possibilities for your business.

Start thinking about how you want to tell your story: What do you want to share about your business? And what could a grant help you accomplish? Submit your story for a chance to win one of these prize packages:

- Grand prize: One winner of \$50,000, plus \$7,500 in FedEx Office® print and business services
- Silver prize: One winner of \$30,000, plus \$5,000 in FedEx Office print and business services
- Bronze prize: Eight winners of \$15,000, plus \$1,000 in FedEx Office print and business services

Entering is easy. Write a short profile highlighting your unique story and offerings.

1. **Upload a logo and photos** that capture the spirit of your business.
2. **Create a one-minute video** about what makes your business special.
3. **Share your entry!** Remind fans to vote for your entry between February 27th and April 1st. Votes are one of the many factors considered in choosing finalists and winners and are allowed once per 24-hour period per person.

Learn more about the grant contest at <https://smallbusinessgrant.fedex.com/#/>

You don't have to enter a contest to enjoy savings of up to 31%* on FedEx® shipping: Just sign up for FedEx discounts. It's simple to enroll, and there's no cost and no minimum shipping requirement. Enroll At <https://bit.ly/2S96wUk> , or call 800-599-2902.

*Includes a bonus 5% online processing discount. Full details available at <http://www.partnership.com/micro-site/small-package/APSS>

APSS Tip for Finding Potential Non-Bookstore Buyers

Find new prospects by asking people to complete a survey. There are several ways to approach this, including a contest entry or the awarding of a free gift or discount upon completing a survey. Conferences and events targeted to your general audience can provide an opportunity to learn more about buyers. Check with your local Chamber of Commerce to find out what events are scheduled in your area. Purchase a small booth at events that fit your demographics and plan a process to gather information from visitors.

Ebook Pricing Tips – How to Assign the Right Value to Your Work By Tanisha Williams



Self-publishing gives authors complete control over the writing and marketing process of their book. While this feeling of power may bring a sense of peace during the writing phase of your project, your comfort may begin to unravel as you face numerous uncertainties about getting your masterpiece into the hands of the masses. And the first and foremost of marketing strategies to decipher will ultimately lay the foundation for your entire promotional plan – ebook pricing. How much should you charge for your book?

With ebook pricing, the waters are still a bit murky. Even successful indie authors can do little more than guess when it comes to breaking down the intricacies of assigning value to their work. Of course, as an indie you can always choose a price and change it as often as you see fit until you hit that sweet spot (where your ebooks are flying off the virtual shelves). But still, where do you begin?

How to Assign the Right Value to Your Work

If the issue of ebook pricing has left you feeling dazed and confused, don't be discouraged. Here are some suggestions on how to make an informed choice when it comes to deciding the best price point for your book.

- 1. Offer Your Book for Free.** At first glance the suggestion of a free book offering may sound strange given the topic of ebook pricing. However, if you "peel the banana back" you'll find that giving your book away can pave the way for collecting a lot of helpful data on the best ebook price points. Simply distribute a questionnaire (to those whom you've graced with a free copy) asking the following: How much money would you pay for this ebook? How would you quantify the value you've received from the contents of this book? How much have you spent on other books in this same genre? If you can obtain feedback from at least 5 to 10 individuals, you should have a good starting point for pricing your ebook.
- 2. Set Goals.** When determining ebook pricing, you should ask yourself what you want to achieve financially. Some authors hope to recoup all the money they've spent on expenses like editing and cover art in addition to making a hefty profit. Others just want to get their name out there and couldn't care less whether or not they make a dime. For them, the goal is to craft a reputation and then use that notoriety to sell their next book at a premium price. So, you should first figure out your financial goals and then set a price that helps you achieve those goals.
- 3. Consider the Medium.** What medium are you going to use to sell your books? Different mediums tend to bring different ebook pricing considerations to the table. For instance, most major self-publishing companies will take a portion of the money you make on each sale. Amazon typically gives you 70 percent of your profit on each ebook sold as long as it's priced within the range of \$2.99 and \$9.99. Other platforms may not be so generous. Simply put, you must carefully select the medium through which your book will be sold because it will have a drastic impact on your pricing. Logically speaking, a medium that

allows you to keep a larger percentage of your profits permits you to sell your book at a lower price. On the contrary, platforms that seize a sizeable portion of your profits leave you with little choice but to hike your prices in order to meet your financial goals.

4. Consider Range Pricing. You do not have to restrict yourself to one price. Regardless of the price you chose at the start, you can always make changes in response to the demand. In my opinion, however, I think it would be better to start off at a low price and move towards increase rather than the other way around. You can set lower prices during the launch of your book to increase sales and notoriety, and then slowly but steadily raise the prices as interest builds. If you start high and later cut your book's price, it can either spark excitement in deal seekers or scream "not worth it" in those looking for value triggers. All in all, range pricing can be the best of both worlds if done correctly.

5. Price More than One Book. If you are struggling to price one book, consider throwing a second book into the mix. Price each book differently, with one book having a significantly lower price than the other. The rationale here is simple: some people will feel compelled to buy the cheaper book because it will appear a lot more attractive. On the other hand, you will find people buying the more expensive one because they think its heftier price tag proves that it is better. Track the number of sales for each book and settle on a price closest to the one with the most sales. This strategy might sound silly, but some it actually works, even if you are dealing with two different editions of the same book.

There is no magic bullet when it comes to ebook pricing. And while it would be a mistake to overprice your book, underpricing or undervaluing your work can be just as critical. The best thing you can do is to run a variety of pricing tests and track your results. Ultimately your final price should provide the perfect cost-benefit for your readers while helping you meet your financial goals.

Update on Book Selling University

(Sponsored by APSS, BookLife, Bowker and Ingram Spark)



Book Selling University has courses to help you produce better books and sell more of them. Today's featured course is BSU-102 The Selling Power of Book Design, Tami Dever. See it and more at <https://bit.ly/2IAQn55>
View each course up to 5 times.

APSS Tip for Making Persuasive Sales Presentations



Write a script for each presentation. Now you have a good feel for what you want the audience to do as a result of witnessing your presentation, and a basic knowledge of the people and process as they apply to this particular presentation. Now decide what they need to know to do what you want them to do. Then create a simple script that logically and clearly develops your main points. Finally, create visual aids to support your message.

Doing that is not unlike the process lawyers use to build their cases before going to a trial. Make your pitch easy to understand, plausible, convincing, defensible, interesting and persuasive. Easier said than done? It is not easy, but you have already completed most of it.

APSS Tip for Negotiating Large-Quantity Orders



Help buyers justify the value of your proposal. When you conquer the emotional side of the buying equation, buyers still need a rational motive to buy if for no other reason than to validate their purchase to themselves or to a supervisor. Your proposal can serve this purpose so they “see everything in writing.”

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APSS Top Ten List

The Top Ten List of “Fun with Words and Letters,” from *The Book of Useless Information*, by Noel Botham

1. Certain sounds in the English language are real germ spreaders, particularly the sounds F, S, P and T
2. Of all the words in the English language, the word *set* has the most definitions
3. The letter W is the only letter in the English alphabet that has more than one syllable
4. The most-used letter in the English alphabet is *E*, and *Q* is the least used
5. The only 15-letter word that can be spelled without repeating a letter is *uncopyrightable*
6. There was no punctuation until the fifteenth century

7. In English, *four* is the only number that has the same number of letters as its value
8. *Bookkeeper* is the only word in the English language with three consecutive letters
9. You would have to count to one thousand to use the letter A to spell a whole number
10. Ten body parts are only three letters long: eye, ear, leg, arm, jaw, gum, toe, lip, hip and rib.

APSS Featured Supplier



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How Can Authors Blog with Impact?

By Brian Feinblum

First, make sure you're on a schedule. Determine how frequently you'll post and stick to it. You should blog at least weekly and likely 2-3x per week. Some do it daily. It depends on your readership, length of posts, and other factors – including your time!

Second, look to keep your content original and edgy, but give yourself a break and allow for guest-posters, the running of Q&A's, and the re-publishing of the content of others.

Third, if you're going to blog, use social media to promote it. Treat the blog as if it were a book.

Fourth, look back at your older posts and occasionally re-share them via social media. Also consider updating or expanding upon them and use the old to create new stuff.

Here are some general tips for effective blogging:

- People will click based on your headline and the lead paragraph. Make those really inviting.
- Images also increase chances of being read, so use one.
- Vary the length of your posts. They need to be at least 350-500 words and can easily range from 600-900 words. Sometimes go longer when it's important.
- Use bullet points, lists, quotes, excerpts, and charts where possible.
- Subheads break up the copy and help people skim.
- Keep the language simple and easy-flowing but the words should be relevant to the voice you want to project and consistent with the lingo used for your genre.
- Participate in the conversation – invite comments and respond to your readers.
- Invite engagement – be controversial, raise issues, ask questions, make bold statements, share deep observations, espouse your philosophy, and be forthcoming on your life's failures, fears, or challenges.
- Stay on message and post with brand consistency – don't start veering far off of what your blog is all about.
- Consider commenting on news of the day, polls, statistics, or findings released by trade associations, governments, or other authoritative bodies.
- Write about trends, predictions, or reflections of the past.
- Provide useful how-to steps to resolve a problem.

- Tell a personal story in a way others can learn from.
- Write with emotion and feeling.
- Review books of others.
- Create a hypothetical conversation.
- Share resources.
- Provide useful analysis on a contemporary issue, event, or figure.
- Write up the rules, lessons, or goals of something relevant.
- Make a confession.
- Issue a dare.
- Provide great advice.

Conclusion

Most importantly write with a filter. Your blog can be about anything but should be about something your readers expect, need or want. Be focused and determined in your writings. A blog post should pass through a prism, one in which you set the terms and conditions. The more dedicated and disciplined you are in your approach, the more effective and rewarding your blogging shall be.

You can blog with impact, if that's your intention. Step it up and write about not only what's important to you but what's of interest to others. And if you need a break, as I did, take one. You'll be a better blogger for it.

Tips for Selling to Non-Bookstore Buyers

By Guy Achtzehn



To find prospecting opportunities that associations offer, search their Web sites and contact membership chairs, staff, directors and other executives about using your book as a fundraiser or a premium to increase membership. Explore https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_industry_trade_groups_in_the_United_States for associations related to your topic, and look for the bookstore manager, program director or meeting planner who might hire you to speak to the association or become its spokesperson. Attend their local chapter meetings to network. A database of more than 85,000 non-profit organizations is accessible at <http://www.directoryofassociations.com/>

For example, if you have a book that would help real-estate agents become better at selling homes you might contact the National Association Of Realtors (www.realtor.com) to speak at their annual conference. Or, you could speak to the 50 state associations (i.e., the Illinois Association Of Realtors; <http://www.illinoisrealtor.org/>) or regional associations (i.e., the Long Island Board Of Realtors; www.mlslirealtor.com), each needing its own twist on your overall topic. There are many associations related to the real-estate industry that might also want speakers: The American Institute Of Architects (www.aia.org), Houston Association Of Realtors (www.har.com), the National Association Of Mortgage Brokers (www.namb.org), the National Association Of Home Inspectors, Inc. (www.nahi.org) the National Association of Home Builders (<http://www.nahb.org>) or state associations (i.e., the Texas Association of Builders (<http://www.texasbuilders.org>), or the National Association of Mortgage Brokers (<http://www.namb.org>). If your message were targeted primarily to women, you might seek a speaking event with the National Association of Professional Mortgage Women (<http://www.napmw.org>).

Contact Guy Achtzehn at The Promotional Bookstore, guy@msgpromo.com or (717) 846-3865. Provide your APSS membership number for a 10% discount on promotional items

Science Fiction Can Help Us Create the Real Future

By Brian Jud



When seeking creative ideas, our built-in biases can prevent us from seeing new possibilities. We only develop opportunities related to the status quo, that which is somewhat familiar.

Science fiction can help remove the creative boundaries by providing the inspiration for innovation. It helps us engage in mental time travel and allows us to dream about what may be possible. Consider some life-changing breakthroughs science fiction has envisioned or inspired: cell phones (based on Star Trek communicators), credit cards (a feature of a futuristic society in a 19th century novel by Edward Bellamy), self driving cars (foreseen by Isaac Asimov), robots (conceived by Karel Capek), ear buds (a fictional invention by Ray Bradbury), and atomic power (imagined by H. G. Wells).

Lowes visualized a new retail future with augmented reality and robotics by giving customer and technology data to a panel of science fiction writers and asked them to imagine what Lowes might look like in five or ten years.

As a result of the project, Lowes became the first retailer to deploy fully autonomous robots for customer service and inventory, create some of the first 3D printing services, and helped place a 3D printer on the International Space Station. It also created exosuits (external robotic skeletons) for employees unloading trucks and came up with the first augmented reality phone for planning remodeling work.

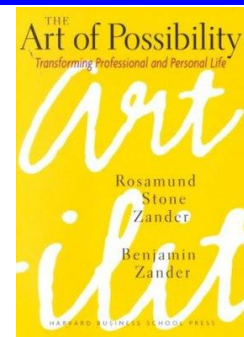
Do you think there are few ways to sell science fiction in places other than bookstores? Use the imagination that created your story to help you sell it.

Brian Jud is the Executive Director of APSS and the author of How to Make Real Money Selling Books. His company offers commission-based sales of books to buyers in non-bookstore markets. For more information contact Brian at P. O. Box 715, Avon, CT 06001-0715; (860) 675-1344; Fax (860) 673-7650; brianjud@bookmarketing.com or www.premiumbookcompany.com @bookmarketing on Twitter

Read It and Reap

An APSS Recommendation for a Book That Can Help You and Your Business Succeed

The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life, by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander. This is not your typical "how to book," the authors are not your typical goal setters. Ben is a conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra and wife Roz has a private practice in family therapy. It's not a simple easy read but I highly recommend it to you - to study, take notes and use accordingly.

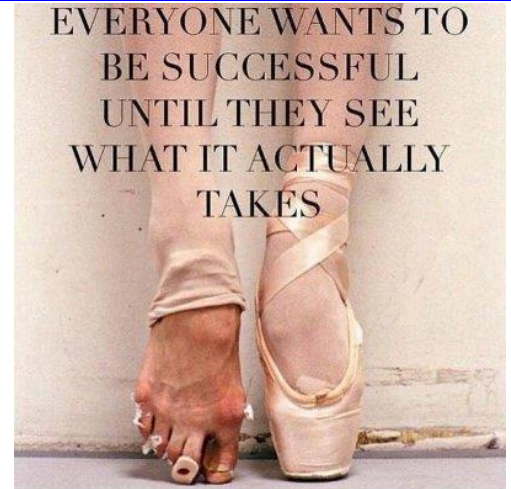


What's the Big Idea?

Many independent publishers try to sell their books only through the typical distribution network. Their efforts consist primarily of securing distributors and wholesalers to funnel books to retailers who put them on their shelves. There they stay, nestled among their competitors for a quick and easy comparison of benefits and price. The entire purchasing course of action may take 10 minutes since the purchase risk is low. If the book does not meet expectations it is returned, and eventually makes its way back to the author.

Unaware that this traditional system is totally different from the process for selling books to non-retail, buyers, publishers expect a similarly short selling cycle in the promotional products industry (PPI). But that is not the case. In the PPI, independent sales people sell -- on a commission-only basis -- a wide variety of products as premiums and ad specialties. In order to grow their businesses they must seek a continuous source of new prospects. The sales people learn their prospects' needs, propose solutions, make multiple presentations, negotiate the terms of each sale and service the

EVERYONE WANTS TO
BE SUCCESSFUL
UNTIL THEY SEE
WHAT IT ACTUALLY
TAKES



business once the order is placed. This takes considerable time, if for no other reason than the buyer's risk of making the wrong decision is considerably higher since the purchases are not returnable. Give the process time to work -- a long time. It's a marathon, not a sprint.

Answers to Your Questions About Non-Bookstore Marketing

(If you have a question about selling books to non-bookstore buyer, send it to BrianJud@Bookmarketing.com and he will answer it here)

"I have heard you say that publishers don't make more money by publishing more books, but by selling more books. What do you mean?" Albert Booker

Great question, Albert. A common practice of introducing new titles two or three times every year relegates your prior frontlist titles into ambiguity. Perhaps a more effective strategy would be to balance your product line so a healthy list of solid performers infuses cash that can be used to develop and promote a lean, yet strong frontlist. The essence of strategic positioning is in performing unique activities or performing similar tasks in different ways.

- Value-based positioning is founded on the choice of product or service rather than on customer segments. Firms publishing only math textbooks for colleges would illustrate this position as they demonstrate their excellence in one sub-segment of the academic market.
- Need-based positioning arises when you address the needs of a complete segment. A firm practicing this would serve most or all the requirements of a particular group of customers. For example, a firm publishing a complete line of textbooks for vocational schools meets these criteria.
- Access-based positioning (i.e., segmenting customers who may be categorized in different ways) is a function of your customers' geography or size. A publisher of titles about bicycling trails in New England demonstrates this. Serving a small rather than a large geographic segment may be the best way to organize your marketing, order processing and after-sale service.