

eMarketing For Indie Authors

by Pendelton C. Wallace



Li'l Old Me

My friend, Mikel Miller, the host of Mexico Writers on Facebook posed the following question: What successful methods are you using to market books online? I'm looking for feedback from fellow indie authors so I can reach more readers. Right now, I use Amazon exclusively for both Kindle versions and paperbacks, with discount and freebie promotions now and then. And Facebook and Twitter to connect with followers. If you want to send confidential comments, email me at mikel.miller09@yahoo.com. Thanks.

I hope I'm not expressing too much ego here, but I'm going to put myself in the "successful authors" category and give you my two-cents worth. There are many authors who are doing much better than me, but when I started marketing my books in 2012, I made a 5-year plan. I'm sticking to it and am pretty much on schedule.

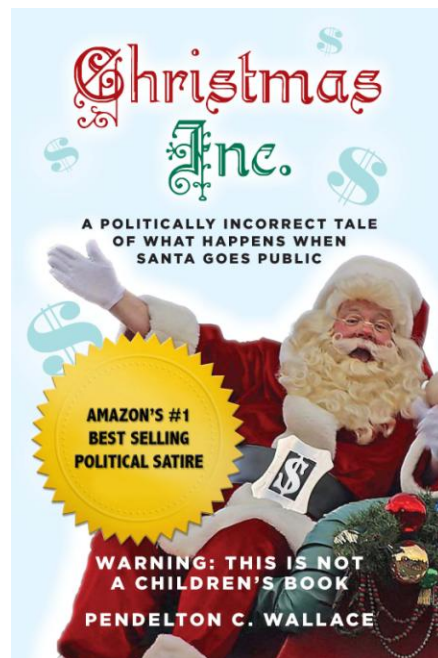
I should tell you I am not a marketing guru. I know what I know from getting knocked down a lot and spending a lot of money in the wrong places. There are lots of people who will gladly take your money and not produce much in the way of results.



Dawn and Me on the Victory

I'm lucky enough to have a live-in marketing expert. Dawn has a degree in marketing and sits by my side and helps me figure this stuff out. We're starting to see some nice results now.

I also have to beat my own drum a little. Some of my marketing magic has worked. *Christmas Inc.* was Amazon's #1 best seller in the political satire category, beating out Steven Colbert's *I am American (and so can you!)*. Both the *Inside Passage* and *Hacker for Hire* made it to Amazon's #2 bestseller spots overall. All right, now I'll park my ego at the door.



No. 1 Best Seller in Dec. 2013

Marketing is Hard Work

The first thing I want to tell you is that marketing is hard work. If you're not willing to put in the work, then you might as well stop reading now. I treat my writing as a business. I report to work in my office around eight every morning (seven days a week) and work until about noon. Then I stop, take a shower and have breakfast. Then it's back to work. I usually work until about five or six in the evening.

When I'm working on a new book, that takes priority. I slip my hour or two a day of marketing around writing. If I've completed the book, my day pretty much consists of marketing and researching the next book.

I've learned a little here and a little there, but a whole lot somewhere else. I sat down for a morning in an open-air café in La Paz, Mexico with Jinx Schwartz, one of the real heavyweights in eMarketing. She shared her secrets with me and I was off to a good start.

But, I learn everywhere and every day. Two other authors who gave me some great ideas are Mark Dawson and Alinka Rutkowska. Who says we're not in a global environment? Mark lives in the U.K. and Alinka in Russia. They, and everyone else who has helped me, have my eternal gratitude.

Sound hard to you? Yeah, I guess so, but I attack my writing business pretty much like I attacked my job when I was a software engineer. Nothing risked, nothing gained.

I worked real hard at my marketing and got my book sales into the thousands. Then I hurt my knee and had to have replacement surgery. I missed about three months of work. My sales slid. Now that I'm back on my feet I'm working extra hard to recoup those sales. The moral of the story: don't let your marketing slide.



Writing is Such Hard Work

It All Starts With Good Writing

Let's be honest here, it's easier to sell a good product. If you plan to make a career out of writing, you must produce good work. I have a whole class that I give on this, but let me just give you a few hints.

Find beta readers. When you have polished your first-draft as much as you can, send copies to beta readers. Incorporate their thoughts and ideas into your book. They'll tell you if your logic is goofy or your characters unrealistic. Be sure these people are readers who like your genre. I would never send one of my thrillers to Mama and expect a good critique.

I send emails to people on my fans list (more about this later) and ask for beta readers. I always get twenty or thirty volunteers.

Next, edit your book. I heard at a writer's conference this year that "an author who edits his/her own work has a fool for a client." I'm serious here, I try to support Indie authors and read more of their work than well-known authors. At least 30% of the books I read are first-draft quality. I hurt for those authors, they could do so much better with a little help from a professional editor. Unfortunately, a few times a year I start an Indie book and can't read past page twenty-five or thirty, they need so much help.

Take this to heart: You cannot edit your own book. By the time you've been through it ten or twelve times, you can't see the errors. You know what it's supposed to say so you read that, even though what's on the page is different.

You must have a professional cover. This is your #1 sales tool. If you don't get it right, you're doomed. If you don't have the skills to design a cover, for heaven's sake, please find a professional who can help you.

You must have an interesting story. Your readers will forgive a multitude of sins if they like your characters and story. Keep it moving, keep them interested. If they're so caught up in the story they'll forget to look for errors.

Finally, know who you write for. I have a section on Target Audience a little later in this document.



Pondering Why Do I Write?

Why Do You Write?

This is the first question I ask whenever I teach a class. Why do you write? Be honest here. I have had people who write because it's a passion. "I have to write," they tell me.

Other people write as a hobby. A way to blow off steam (I'd hate to be their boss) and unwind. For me writing is a cathartic activity.

There are people who must tell a story. I put Harper Lee in this category. She had to tell *To Kill A Mocking Bird*, then didn't write anything else until this year. Of course, she released *Go Tell A*

Watchman to a thirsty audience. But you get the point. I was that way with my first book, *Blue Water & Me, Tall Tales of Adventures With My Father*. I had to get that story out. At the time, I had no thoughts of a writing career.

Other people write to satisfy their ego. This isn't a bad thing. I'm in this category myself. You have no idea what it feels like to open the box and see actual hard copy books with your name on them. Even better, you check your email one morning and find your inbox full of fan mail. I get so jacked watching my sales climb.

Finally, there are the people who write to make money. Ken Follett is in this category. He had a baby on the way and needed a little extra income. That led to a fabulous career and world renown as an author. If this is your motivation, stick to your guns.

This article is designed for people who want to sell their books. I don't care what your motivation is. Just remember, writing the book is only 50% of the process. The other 50% is getting it published. The final 50% is marketing your book. Whoa, you don't like my math? I'm sorry, I'm just tellin' the truth here.



Get to Know Your Target Market

Know Your Target Market

Just a few words about target market, then we can get to the gist of this article, learning how to sell books. I'm sorry, but these preliminaries are necessary to understand the process.

Who will read your book? Why will they like it? Where will you find them? What will they find compelling about your book? You better know the answers to these questions *before* you start writing.

I could write a couple of thousand words on this topic alone. Let me just tell you a short story to illustrate my point.

When I started writing, I had no idea who my market was. I thought my readers would be mostly male, 18-65 years old. They might have a military background or certainly had played video games as kids.

Was I wrong! I started getting critical fan mail almost immediately when I released *The Inside Passage*. This caused me to pause and rethink the whole situation. I decided to add some demographic questions to my “Contact Penn” page on my website at www.pennwallace.com. I also sent out a mailing to my fans list asking them to provide demographic information.

I was shocked! My audience looks nothing like I thought it would. It is almost evenly split, male and female. I only have three or four readers on my list under 50. Most of my readers are retired and come from all walks of life. I have a Homeland Security security manager, a retired nurse (who served in combat zones), a tractor salesman and a domestic engineer (is that politically correct enough for you?) to name just a few.

Once I learned who my readers were, I was able to tailor my subsequent books more to their likes.

8 Indie Marketing Secrets

Here's what you've been waiting for. As some of my marketing gurus say, "With a value of \$1000 each." You see what they're doing? They're building perceived value so when you discount them to only \$100 each, you think you're getting a great bargain.

You need to have at least five titles to make eMarketing work. Don't have five titles? I hope you can write fast. I've talked to dozens of traditionally published authors who say you can't quit your day job until you have five titles. They think that this is the magic number to support yourself.

Me eBook marketing gurus agree. Five seems to be the magic number. Don't lose hope though, you can get started today and work your way towards those five titles. In the best of all worlds, these five titles will be in a series. It doesn't matter if you write in Romance, Mysteries and Thrillers, Historical Fiction, or whatever. Write a series.

Lacking a series, at least write in the same genre. I had a gentleman in my class on Indie Publishing recently who said his book is a genre bender. Bad choice. Yes, you can publish it, but you will have a hard time selling it. Especially if you write subsequent unclassified books, you're asking for hard times. If that's what you want to do, okay, just don't expect best seller status.

If you're an unpublished Indie, wait until you have 3 books before you publish. This was serendipitous for me. When I met Jinx, I had two complete Ted Higuera novels, and most of the third, ready for publication. I had pitched them to numerous agents, but the fools wouldn't sign

me. I was living on my sailboat cruising down the coast of Mexico where I wasn't likely to meet any agents.

But after my life-changing meeting with Jinx, I knew just exactly what to do. I put together my 5-year marketing plan (that's coming up too) and got to work. I published my first three Ted Higuera books in 2013 and followed up with the first Catrina Flaherty Mystery. As Mikel Miller says, the best way to sell a book is to write a second book.

That brings us to the next valuable tip: ***roll out a book every three months***. Don't give your readers time to forget your name. In old-time publishing, you released a book once a year. Someone read it and really liked it. They looked for other books by you, but none were available. They had to wait a year for your next book. By the time it was released, they had found another favorite author and didn't bother to pick up your copy.

In our new, modern world, you can release a new book every three months and keep their attention. Better yet, you can blog and post updates on your website. (Don't have a blog or website? You better get one today.) I usually tell my readers where I am on the new book, I have completed the research, I've finished my beat sheet (you can download a template at <http://www.pennwallace.com/the-beat-sheet.html>), I've finished the character sketches (download a template at <http://www.pennwallace.com/charcter-sketch-template.html>), You might even want to share the character sketches with them, I've finished the outline or I'm halfway through the first draft. This builds an on-going interest in my book and helps the readers conclude that they better read all the prequels before the next book is released.

Keep writing and write fast. Your readers are only as loyal as your last book. You have to keep feeding them new books on a regular basis. Don't confuse this with releasing low quality work. Your books still need to be of professional quality, you just have to work quickly.

Let your readers see you and your character evolve. Ted and Chris started out as recent college graduates in *The Inside Passage*. They are now in their thirties. I like to think my writing and plotting have improved over eight books.

I get fan mail all the time from readers who are glad to see that Ted and Chris have stopped calling each other “dude” and “bro” all the time. They’ve outgrown it.

The introduction of new characters is key. I introduced Catrina Flaherty in the second Ted Higuera thriller, *Hacker for Hire*. She is now one of my most beloved characters and has two books of her own, with more on the way.

End with a cliff-hanger. In each book the last couple of scenes set up the next book. Let the reader have a sense of what’s coming and develop a thirst to read it.

I said it before and I’ll say it again, ***new book sales drive old book sales***. A new reader buys one of your books and enjoys it. Then, lo and behold, they go on your Amazon Author Page (another necessity) and find out they just read book 5 of the series. They’re going to go back and buy

books 1 through 4 so they can see how the characters and plot line evolved. By the time they've completed book 5, you've released book 6. It's a slam dunk.

Find the most effective ways to promote your book. Don't let anyone fool you. The secret to marketing success for you is different than it was for me. I've seen dozens of books and video training programs that guarantee your book will become a bestseller if you'll only send them \$1159. Bull pucky. What worked for them won't necessarily work for you. You are going to have to try lots of things, spend lots of money before you find the golden goose.

My final \$1000 tip for you is ***Anthologies***. I went to a class given by R. P. Dahlke at the San Diego State University Writers Conference. She wrapped up her presentation with the idea of doing anthologies with other authors to boost your sales. She asked me to stay over after class.

Boy, I must have been in trouble.

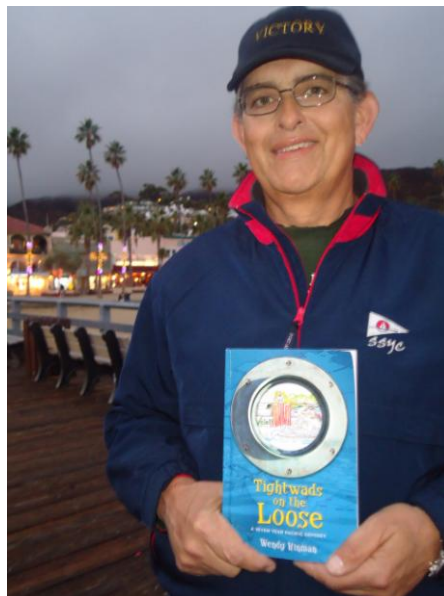
Rebecca has a series about a female San Francisco police detective who sails her boat down to Mexico after a traumatic event and gets caught up in murder investigations.

She said, "We should get together and produce an anthology of nautical themed mysteries. I know Jinx will want to go in with us. If you can find three or four more authors, we can do this."

Long story short, I found four other authors who wanted in. I also made six very good friends.

They were all more popular, better sellers than me. I got the ball rolling and everyone pitched in to produce a wonderful anthology in record time

We had a little success with the book. We sold more than 7000 copies in three months. Part of our pitch was that all proceeds were donated to the Wounded Veterans Writing Project. After expenses we wrote a check for over \$2100. Oh, by the way, my book sales went up too. I still get fan mail from people saying “I first discovered your books though *7 Seas Mysteries*,” and now they’ve read all of my books and are eagerly waiting for the next.



[Share Your Success With Others](#)

My 5-Year Plan

I mentioned my 5-year plan earlier. Here’s where you get to see what it looks like.

I used to work for a woman whose favorite saying was “Make a plan, stick to the plan, if the plan’s wrong, change the plan.” Oh, by the way she was the Vice-President of Information Technology at Starbucks, so I think she might have known what she was talking about.

I was a software engineer for twenty-five years. I am a very analytical person. When I set out to build a new software system, I designed every facet of it before we wrote the first line of code. I’m like that with my writing too. I start with a beat sheet to get the plot of the story down. The beat sheet tells me who the characters are going to be. I then write character sketches for them. Now that I know what my story’s about and who is in it, I write the outline. This is usually 15-20 pages long.

After all that work, I’m ready to write. I sit down at my keyboard and let my mind go. I see words appear on the computer screen in front of me, magically, with seemingly no input from me. I watch the story unfold just like the reader will. This is an incredibly fun process.

All of this is to say that I can’t start a project without a plan. Here is my 5-year plan for my writing business. It was first developed in 2012.

I. My 5-year Plan

- a. Publish Christmas Inc. in 2013 to create stir - check
- b. Publish five Ted Higuera books in first two years – only got 4 done, I took a side track to write 2 Catrina Flaherty Mysteries
- c. New blog entry every 2 weeks -check
- d. Roll out book every 3 months in 2014 - check
- e. Run BookBub.com promos every month – kinda check. I run them when they permit me
- f. Produce 2 Ted Higuera novels in 2015 - check

- g. Publish hard copy versions in 2015 – haven't gotten there yet
- h. Write dog story in 2015 – this has been pushed back
- i. Start another mystery series in 2016 – I'm a year early on this
- j. Publish 3 new mystery series novels by 2017

All-in-all I'm pretty much on track. I had to push the dog novel back because we decided I needed to get Five Ted Higuera novels written first.

I'm still on the fence about publishing hard copies of my books. *Blue Water & Me* and *Christmas Inc.* are already in hard copy, but I'm questioning the advantage of printing my mystery/thrillers. I sell more than a hundred eBooks for every hard copy I sell. I like the idea of holding a book in my hand, but this is an expensive process and doesn't produce a lot of revenue

Write a Marketing Plan

How can you know when you've gotten there if you don't know where you are going? You need to consider your goals, what is success and what is failure? Then you need to know how you are going to accomplish these goals. I suggest holding a brainstorming session with some of your writing friends.

When you write your marketing plan, make it for your whole business, not just one book. Your latest book is important to you, but remember, you have the whole enchilada to consider. How are all the pieces going to add to your books sales? This same advice holds true for your 5-year plan. My marketing plan tends to be for one year. The 5-year plan carries me into the future.

You can download my marketing plan template at <http://www.pennwallace.com/marketing-plan-template.html>.

One of the most important parts of your marketing plan is to track your sales. You need to see what causes you sales to blip. When you identify these things, then do more of these events. I keep my sales tracking in Excel spreadsheets, but there are probably better methods. If you'd like to see what my tracking spreadsheet looks like, email me at <http://www.pennwallace.com/contact-penn.html>. If I get enough interest, I'll add them to my website.

Here's a big tip: ***Be consistent across all platforms***. The look and feel of your website should match your Facebook page. What you post on Facebook should be consistent with your Twitter posts. I have recently noticed several attractive young women who post provocative pictures of themselves. Don't get me wrong, I really appreciate them, but what do they have to do with a Historical Romance novel?

I do have two friends who write erotica. Their posts are totally consistent with what they write, and I get to look at pictures of scantily clad beauties.

I recently had a friend ask me "I read your Facebook page all the time, but it doesn't sound like you. What's up with that?"



It Could Happen To You

Good question. You have to develop your writer's persona. The person that I'm pushing is the dashing Captain Pendelton Wallace, who writes cool mysteries and sails off around the globe on his 56-foot ketch. That person is not necessarily me. My Facebook page, my blog, my Twitter account and my website are all designed to sell books. If my friends want to know what I'm really up to, they're going to have to email me.

As long as I'm talking about your author's persona, you have to be able to project that person at any personal appearances you make. Fortunately, I have a degree in Theater Arts and am a pretty accomplished actor. I can stay in character for hours at a time. If you don't have this background, then start rehearsing. Today.

Your Web Site

This is your most important marketing tool (after the cover and your fan list). Why? Because it's the only marketing tool you can control. Amazon.com does some neat things to market your

books, but don't build your marketing plan around them. They can change at any time. The same for BookBub or any of the other sites, they do what they want to do, not what you need to do.

The primary focus of your marketing effort should be to drive readers to your website. Doing a promotion? Have it drop the reader on your landing page on your website. Then you can give them whatever offer you want to make, but make sure when they click on the "Buy Now" button that takes them to Amazon, you open Amazon in a different window. That way, when they buy your book and close the Amazon window, they're right back on your website.

You should have lots of interesting goodies to hold them there. Have pages for all your books, I have pages for "Penn's Adventures" and "Great Dane on Board." They were originally blog posts, but now they're buried so far down the stack that no one will ever find them. They are still some of my biggest draws on my website, so I make it easy for the reader to find them.

Keep your website fresh. Add new pages, update pages, keep a page with current information about your appearances, change the look of your site every year or so, keep your blog up to date. If a reader goes to your website and it still looks like it did a year ago, they will quickly lose interest.

I keep the top of my home page open for whatever promotion I'm running now. If a reader doesn't know about the promotion, when they go to your website, it's the first thing that hits them. Right now I have a promotion to get readers to sign up for my fan list. If they go to my

sign-up page and enter the requested information, I send them a FREE copy of *Mirror Image*. This cost me about 60 cents per reader. Their information is worth hundreds of dollars to me.

One important function of your website is to keep your readers/fans up to date on what you're doing. I mentioned this earlier so I won't beat it to death, but give your readers a reason to go to your website. Make them salivate for your new book.

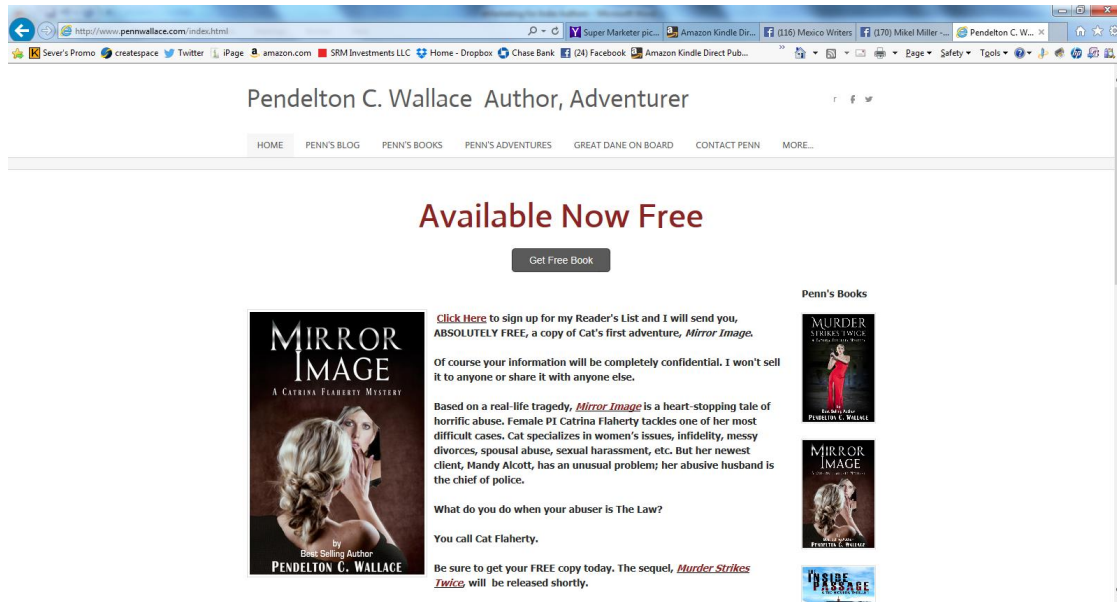
Now, here's a biggie. I have my blog on my website. Some people don't think that's a good idea, but it works for me. My website drives my book sales and the number one thing that brings people to my website is my blog. I post a new entry every two weeks. Why not more often, you ask?

I want readers to have time to read my post. If I posted every day, what I wrote today would be shoved so far down the page by Wednesday that no one would see it. I post to my blog because I want people to read it, not for my health. We'll have more about this later.

You don't have a blog? Start one today. If you're technically inclined, there are numerous companies willing to take your money for you to use their tools. If you're not technical, you will have to hire someone to help. This doesn't just go for your blog, it goes for your whole website.

I spent the better part of twenty years building websites and web-driven applications for Fortune 500 companies. I know what I'm talking about and I see a whole lot of author websites that would never get out of the design stage in my shop.

If you're really strapped, drop me a line at <http://www.pennwallace.com/contact-penn.html>. I can help you figure out what you want to do, suggest some companies or, if I have time to take away from my writing business, I might just build it for you.



Pretty Cool, huh?

Social Media

Now we get to the meat of this article. You've hung in with me all this way, so I have to give you some tasty kernels.

You've all heard of social media. Ya know, ya got this media thing, and it's all, you know, like, social. (That's my best surfer dude impression.)

In case you've been living in a cave out in the Sonora Dessert for the last ten years, social media is an array of applications available on the Internet that you can interact with on your PC, your laptop, your smart phone or your tablet. I guess now they've got watches that do this too. What next?

I'll just name a few sites. Facebook is my #1. I've been told by experts that Twitter is the most important because it's the only social media application that pushes content to the users. On all of the others, the user has to go to the application to see your posts. Google+ is another big one. There are dozens more, but I'm getting tired of typing.

Why do you use social media? I don't use it to sell my books or advertise a promotion, although it is very effective at that. I use social media to drive potential buyers to my website. That's right, folks, my website is the number one driver for book sales. If I can get someone who doesn't know me to my website, I can make a fan for life. I may have to give them a book to get them started, but the great majority of my readers will come back and buy a book or two later.

I use social media to build rapport with my readers. I use the "Bestselling Author Pendelton C. Wallace" persona to appear reachable to my fans. I show them my writing style, I establish that I'm OOT (One Of Them). I try to steer clear of religion and politics (although that's tough during a presidential election campaign). I want them to send me emails or reply to my Facebook posts so I can get to know them as people. I have dozens of friends who started out by sending me a fan mail from my "Contact Penn" page.

I also make it a point to answer all fan mail as soon as I receive it. I thank them for their interest and find some point in common that we can talk about. This immediately turns a reader into a friend.

Each and every post on Twitter or Facebook or Pinterest **MUST** have a link to your website. Remember, the whole reason for being on social media is to drive traffic to your website. In addition I ask readers to “like” or “share” my posts. When they do, that greatly increases the number of people who will see your post.



[At One of My Readings?](#)

Build a Fans List

This is the most important advice I’m going to give you today. Fan lists are *mucho* important. This is your #1 most important marketing tool. How many times have I said this? But the top three tools are all #1. These people are your advocates, they sell your work for you, they tell you when something’s wrong. They will buy everything you write, so be good to them. Send them

special gifts, make them special offers (Whenever I publish a book, I set the price at 99 cents for the first three days then do a mailing to my fan list telling them that the book is available at the “friends and family discount” for a limited time.), but most of all, make them feel like your friends.

When you get several hundred people on your list you’re home free. What’s that, you don’t have several hundred?

No problem, you have to start somewhere. I put my website up when I published *Blue Water & Me*, back in 2012. On my website I have a “Contact Penn” page. You fill out that form and send me your thoughts; you go on my fan list. It started out small, probably a dozen or so for *Blue Water & Me. Christmas Inc.* had a much larger reach (remember, it was a bestseller) and was much more controversial. That brought in a bunch of new fans.

When I ran BookBub promotions for *The Inside Passage* and *Hacker for Hire* my fan list exploded. I’ve given away more than 100,000 copies of those books and heard a lot from my readers. I put a link to my “Contact Penn” page several places in each of my books.

These people are your most important readers. They are guaranteed buyers. No matter what I publish, I can count on them to buy it. I sent out a mailing to my fan list when I published *The Inside Passage*. I had 64 people on my list at the time. The first day I sold 64 copies. The same tactic has worked for me with every book I publish.

Now that you have started a fan list, what next? First of all, be approachable. I answer every fan that signs up. Early on, one of my readers wrote back. She was so excited that I had sent her a personalized thank you. She lives in Seattle so we had a lot to talk about. She said she'd never had a "famous" author reply to her before.

She sent me some criticisms, and after learning who my readers were, I took them to heart. Now she feels like she has a vested interest in my books, she's been a beta reader a couple of times, and pushes them to everyone she knows.

Every page on your website should have a "contact me" button on it, twice. If the page is a long page, put a button on the top of the page and one at the bottom. When the reader has a thought, you want to make it convenient for them to send it right away.

I've already said it, but put your contact information in your books. I have live links to my "Contact Penn" page in at least five places in each book. Solicit feedback.

Here's a biggie. When someone sends you a hate mail saying that you're the worst writer that ever lived and that maybe you should go back and re-take 8th grade English, respond to their criticism. If it's specific, address the issue. If it's general, apologize and tell them you'll try to do better.

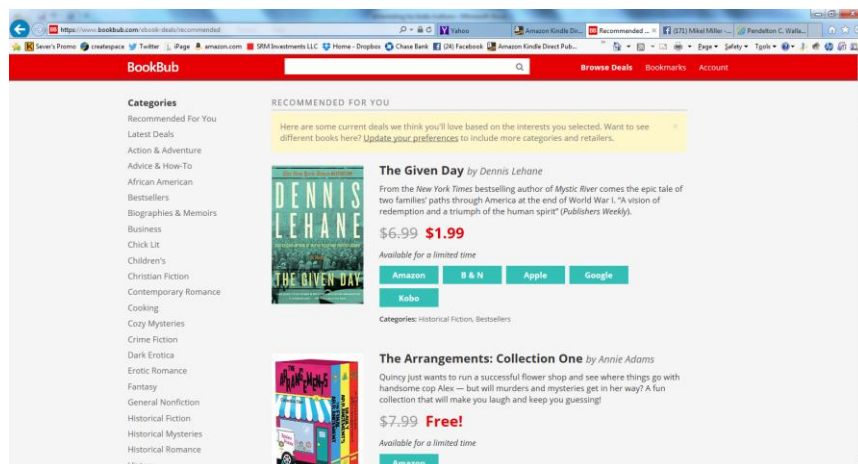
I used to be in the restaurant business (a hundred years ago) and as a manager, some of my best, most loyal, customers were people that started out with a complaint. I went out of my way to

correct the problem, gave them my business card, tell them we valued them as customers and hope that they'll come back.

Almost all the time, those people became repeat customers and got to know me and my staff by first name. Turn on the charm.

Finally, don't bombard your fans with spam. Send them personal emails with your writing news, but not more than once every month or so. You want them to remember you, not put you on their "block email address" list.

I have readers all over the world. Japan, India and Mexico to name a few. I sent out emails to my Mexican readers to see if they were all right and if Hurricane Patricia affected them where they live. They love it.



BookBub. The 800 Pound Gorilla

The Nuts and Bolts

Thank you, you've born with me (I hope) through a lot of material. Here's the nuts and bolts of eBook marketing, in no particular order.

BookBub.com is the 800 pound gorilla on the block. If you can get a title accepted by them, you can count on giving away 35-40,000 books. Why should I give away all those books? Because new books drive old book sales.

When I run a Bookbub promotion, the sales of my other books goes up by a factor of more than ten. It costs me about \$300 to run a promotion. I usually make that back on the same day. There is carryover for a Bookbub promotion. I usually see the same high sales level for the rest of the month. Then it carries over in the next month or two, slowly diminishing

Don't think this is the be-all and end-all of eBook promoting. If you can get into Bookbub, good for you. Most people can't. They would not take *Blue Water & Me* or *Christmas Inc.* They don't say why, just a form email that says your book doesn't meet their readers' interest at this time.

I got *The Inside Passage* and *Hacker for Hire* on their list and it really bumped my sales. I have no idea why they rejected *The Mexican Connection* and *Bikini Baristas*. They have their own secret algorithm for selecting books and won't share it with anyone. What stumps me is that they accepted the first two books in the series and rejected the second two. How much sense does that make?

Okay, Bookbub has rejected you. No need to go off to the corner and cry. There are other ways to market your book successfully.

I just ran my first Pyramid Marketing promotion very successfully, thank you. What the heck is Pyramid Marketing? Is it some sort of pyramid scheme?

No, I invented the name because your campaign is built in layers. You lay a wide foundation, then put another level on top of that and then another and another until you've constructed the pyramid. It probably works better if you envision a Maya or Aztec pyramid rather than an Egyptian one.

The bottom layer is running ads on at least five of the hundreds of websites that tout your books. Some are free and some cost more. As I said, if you can get into Bookbub, you're golden. They cost probably ten times what any of the other sites charge, but they deliver one hundred times the results. I haven't talked to anyone who didn't break even from a Bookbub ad.

But, as I said, there are other, less expensive, sites. I have more than one hundred and twenty on my list. If you'd like to see my list, drop me a note from my "Contact Penn" page at <http://www.pennwallace.com/contact-penn.html>. If there's enough interest, I'll clean it up and format it for general consumption.

Plan to run your promotion for five days. It doesn't matter if it's a giveaway or a price reduction. This takes a little coordinating. Select the five sites you're going to use. Set up the promotion on

Amazon, then apply to the sites. I've never been rejected by anyone other than Bookbub, the queen of the prom, but they do reserve the right to reject your book. Have a plan B ready. Choose a couple of other sites you'll apply to if one of the top five rejects your promotion.

Be really careful here. I made the mistake of scheduling a free promotion over the break in my KDP Select membership for one book. Amazon won't let you schedule a promotion past the end date of your membership. Then, when you do renew, it takes a day to get the price changed. It was a nightmare. I'll never do that again.

So, you've researched the time for your promotion on Amazon. You've selected the five sites. You've scheduled the promotion on Amazon and applied to your five sites. Now it's time to put your money where your mouth is: paid advertising.

That's right, back when I was in the restaurant business we used to say "It takes money to make money." It may hurt to think about spending the bucks, but in three months when Amazon pays your royalties, it will feel better.

The best advertiser I've found, and I've tried them all, is Facebook. I ran two different ad campaigns on Facebook Ads at the same time. I wouldn't recommend it. It's like trying to ride two horses at the same time. I couldn't keep things straight and managed to fall off and scrape my little tutu.

You can tailor your Facebook ad to the locations and demographics you want. You can even select the viewers' special interest. I always set a campaign total for the ads and when the money is gone, I stop running the ads. You also set up the dates when the ad is going to run. I'm not going to go into all the details of how a Facebook Ad campaign should be run. Mark Dawson did a fabulous webinar and he has an expanded tutorial available for sale. Google him.

It was the first time I tried Facebook Ads and I'm impressed with the result. I've given away tens of thousands of books and my sales have increased by 500%. It's worth considering.

Here's the next tip. Build your Facebook friends list. You may not know that when you send out a post, it only goes to 20-30% of your friends. I've written a blog post on that. You can read it at <http://www.pennwallace.com/penns-blog.html>. You'll have to scroll way down the page to find it. It's called "How Many People Read Your Facebook Posts." When I get time, I'll create a page of its own and put it in my "Writers Stuff" folder.

It only makes sense that the more friends you have, the more people will see your posts. ¿Si?

That may get your post out to a hundred or two hundred people. Need a larger audience? Have I got a deal for you?

Facebook has this wonderful feature called groups. Join as many as you can. Join writers groups, of course, to communicate and share information with other writers. Join groups who are interested in topics that are addressed in your books. For example, I have groups in technology and hacking on my list, since that's what my main character does. If your hero is a teacher who

solves murders, join teachers groups. If your hero is a Twelfth Century knight, join historical groups.

When I send out a Facebook blast, it has the potential of reaching 2,000,000 people. That's right, two million with six zeros. Of course, it probably reaches far fewer people than that. So what? If only twenty percent of the potential viewers see it, that's still 400,000 people. If you learn to play the game, you can increase that number substantially. I'm guessing that 600,000 to 800,000 see my Facebook blasts.

Now you have published your book and sales are lagging. You need more reviews. This is an amazing tool. When I see a book promotion, even for free, I go to the Amazon page. The first thing I look at is the description. If it interests me, I scroll down the page. I see the book was released in 2011. I also see that it's number 3,257,943 on the best seller list. A bit further down the page I see that there are only four reviews. I'm not going to waste my time on this book, even though it's free.

So how do you get reviews? Here's another \$1000 tip. Send out Advanced Review Copies (ARCs). I sent out a personal email to everyone on my fan list. I tell them I'm about to publish *Murder Strikes Twice* and I give them a brief description of the book.

Here's the call to action: I will send you a FREE copy, if you'll promise to post a review on the day it goes live. I tell them not to respond if they can't *guarantee* that they will post the review on time. I had twenty-four people sign up for *Bikini Baristas*. I had twenty-two reviews posted

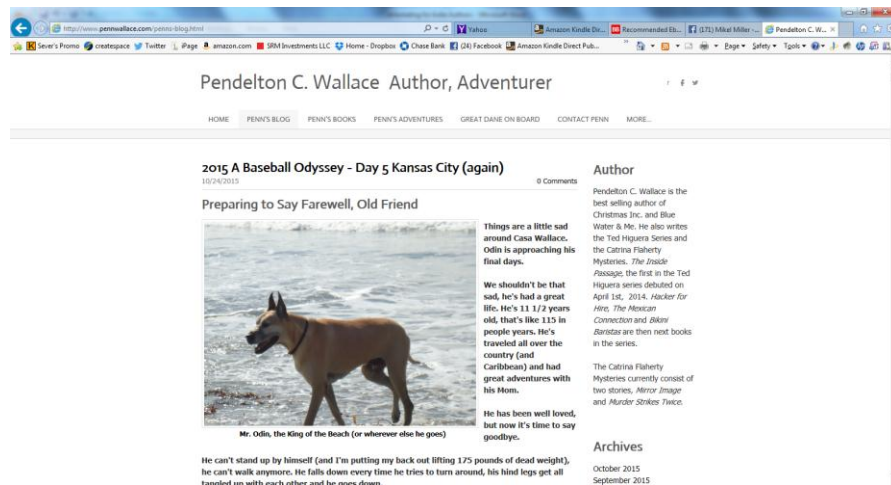
on day one. The other two trickled in later. For *Murder Strikes Twice* I have more than thirty sign ups. I fully expect to have thirty reviews on day one. Remember, these are my super fans. They want me to succeed and write more books. They're thrilled to help.

The books been published and your ARC people have all posted their reviews. What happens next? This is where your fan list comes in. I send out a personalized email to everyone on the list asking begging then to write a review for me. I send an email blast to everyone on my personal contact list asking them to write a review. I do a Facebook Blast, searching for helpful soles who will post a review.

You can always do a free giveaway. Promise your readers that if they will sign up for your fan list, you'll send them a free copy of your book, with the provision that they will write a review. I always emphasize that I want an honest review. If you think it's a three, post it. If you think my book is less than a three, please send me your review to my personal email. I want your input, but don't necessarily want it published for all the world to see.

In each of my books I put a statement asking begging for the reader to post a review. If you want to see an example, pick up any of my books. I'm also trying something new. Starting with *Bikini Baristas*, I ran a contest. If you post a review in the first two weeks that the book is available, I'll enter you into a drawing for a fabulous prize. I pick two winners. Currently I'm giving away four mystery/thrillers by little known authors that I admire. How can you beat that? It's win-win-win.

I get reviews and new names on my fans list, the reader gets cool books, and my friends get their book in front of new readers.



My Blog

One Last Word About Blogs

I can't overemphasize how important blogs are. This is where you sell your books. People who read your blog out of curiosity are introduced to the wonderful world of your imagination.

Make sure all posts advertising your blog have at least two links to your website. Make it easy for them to get there.

This is where you introduce your readers to the “real” you, at least the you that you want them to know. Become One of Them. Express your opinions but be careful, there are a lot of people out there that disagree with you.

Write your blog to your target market, not your friends. If your readership is eighty year-old church ladies, hold off on the profanity.

Tie your blog topics to your books. (I regularly violate this rule.) Maybe you'll post a scene from the new book you're working on and request feedback. Don't hard sell your books, but put links on your blog posts to the book's page on your website.

Many people disagree with me, but I think that you should not post to your blog too frequently. I've already discussed this. The exception to this rule would be if you have a life changing event to talk about. You've just won the Pulitzer Prize, you got engaged, you have a new puppy in the house. If it's important and you think your readers will be interested, by all means, post it.

John Locke said in his marketing book, *How I Sold 1 Million eBooks in Five Months*, that you want loyalty transfer. Find a public figure that represents what you write about and blog about them. The people who love them will instantly become friends with you.

Write from the heart. Let your readers know what you are feeling, who you are. This will drive people to your website.

Here's my biggest blog tip: write about a dog. Odin is our 170 pound Great Dane. He lived with us on our boat as we sailed down the coast to Mexico. I constantly had people asking me "How can you live on a boat with such a big dog?" I got tired of answering them. I started blogging

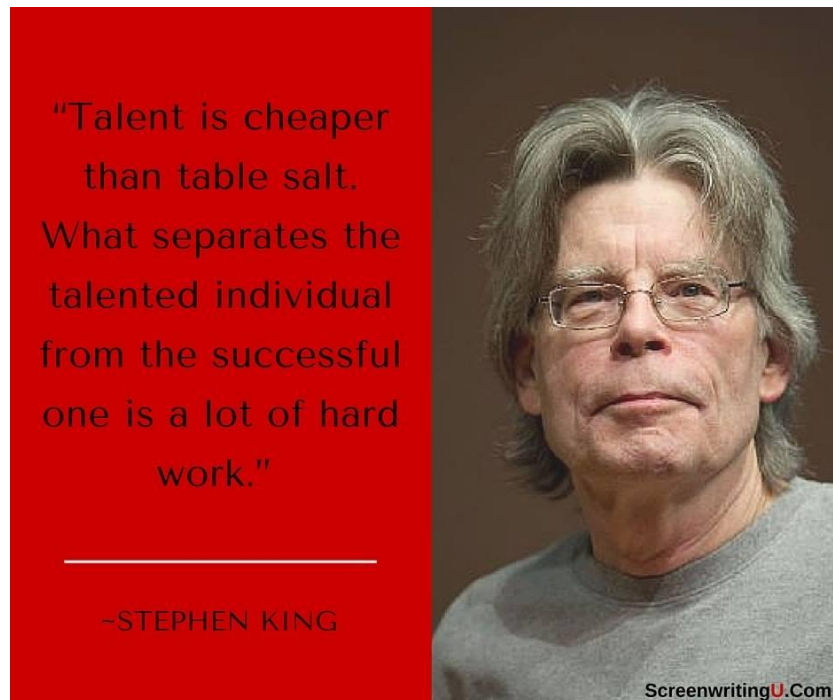
about living on a boat with Odin . Then when people asked me, I handed them a business card and said, “You can read all about it on my blog.”

I wrote the first two articles, then something strange happened. Odin took umbrage at some of the things I said. He took over writing the blog and my readership skyrocketed.

Before the Great Dane on Board series, I have a couple hundred people a day check out my blog. After Odin took control, my readership mushroomed to 8,000 to 9,000.

Write about a dog.

Here’s the final note on blogs. Once you’ve built a readership, don’t let it slip away. I’m guilty. From the 8 or 9,000 people reading, I let it slide to 4 or 5,000 people. Now I’m working hard to get my readers back. It’s coming along, but slowly.



Never Give Up

I have a Winston Churchill story I tell to my classes. You aren't going to get to hear it. The point of the story is NEVER GIVE UP. You try something that doesn't work. Try something else. You run into an obstacle, either go over, around or through it.

Don't let anyone tell you your work isn't good enough. Work hard and improve. Your books aren't selling, get help. NEVER GIVE UP. You're too good for that.

The hardest part about marketing for most folks (including me) is that you have to blow your own horn, no one else will. This was hard for me to accept. Like most of you, I was raised to be modest and that self-praise was bad. Forget about it. If you don't promote yourself, you're condemning yourself to failure. You can't wait for your market to find you. You have to aggressively search for them.

It all comes down to where we started: hard work and elbow grease. How hard are you willing to work to become successful. Don't ever stop trying. When you get knocked down, pick yourself back up, say "thank you, sir" and get back to work.

You control your own fate. No one else is going to do it for you. Believe in yourself. It's all a matter of how hard you want to work.