

AN AUTHOR'S MARKETING PLAN

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Scope: This article is to help ArcheBooks Authors understand the necessity of developing an individual marketing plan for their books, and specific guidance about what to include in that plan, and how to use it to increase book sales.

PLAN TO SUCCEED

Oddly enough, the typical first-time author is under the misconception that just because their book *exists* and is *available* for sale, this fact alone is going to motivate readers to buy it. Nothing could be further from the truth.

People buy books in one of two ways:

1. They are **BROWSING** a bookstore (or surfing online), happen to see a book cover that appeals to them, pick it up, like what they see in thirty seconds or less, and then make a decision to purchase.
2. Or, they “hear” about a book from some other source, are led to believe it would interest them, and they **SEEK** it out for purchase.

In the first instance—appealing to **Browsers** in a bookstore—your best chance of having that happen during the first few months of your book’s existence is through the mechanism of scheduling and attending **Book Signings**, where you and your book are the center of attention.

However, as detailed in our companion article, “**Great Expectations (for a new Published Author)**”, the odds of your book initially sitting on a “New Releases” rack are low. And even if it did, it probably wouldn’t sit there very long—certainly not the **six to eight months** that you really need to effectively launch your new title with some credible market momentum, which is what we’re talking about here.

The old book distribution model of “**throw ‘em on the shelves and hope for the best**” has been the single greatest source of new title failure than any other factor in the publishing industry. That whole strategy is fundamentally at the mercy of “dumb luck,” i.e. that a buyer who enjoys your particular genre of writing is going to darken the door of one of the bookstores carrying your book during the first thirty days after its release and notice it. Granted for “best-seller” caliber books that are printed by the hundreds of thousands, and benefit from multimillion dollar marketing campaigns, the odds of that occurring are much higher, but they’re still banking on a potential buyer “tripping” over it and deciding that they might enjoy it, purely based upon its cover aesthetics and/or blurbs.

That’s why we believe the second method listed above—**marketing** to potential buyers who then become **Seekers**—gives your new book a greater probability of early and sustained success. And to successfully market *any* product, you need a plan, a **Marketing Plan**. Simply put: “To sell books, you have to *sell* books.” This is not to say, that method number one is excluded, oh no, far from it. Book Signings and marketing directly to book retailers will be an integral part of your plan. However, your plan will be far more than that. You’ll quickly discover that if you take the recommendations detailed herein, your book will actually sell in greater numbers than if you don’t. And greater numbers equals a larger audience base and higher royalties.

Developing and Executing a Marketing Plan isn't an option, if you truly wish to be a successful professional author. You may naively wish that your agent, publisher, wholesalers, retailers and everyone else in the world is out there working hard to make you rich and famous, and if they are, good for you—but you, and you alone, are ultimately responsible for your professional success. Refusing to take responsibility for your own success is tantamount to choosing failure, or at best being at the mercy of “dumb luck.”

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Bear in mind that the history of corporate America is littered with the decaying carcasses of many a product company who developed it with the marketing strategy of “If we build it, they will come.” Sorry, folks, they *won't* come until you convince them that they should. *To sell books, you have to sell books.*

The Professional Path – Potentially a Long and Hard Road

The main objective of this whole exercise is the creation, development, and the on-going growth of *your audience*. *Your* long-term professional success as a writer depends upon an ever-growing group of souls who enjoy your work, and want more of it on a regular basis. That group need not be infinite, but if they can one day be measured in the tens of thousands, or better yet, in the hundreds of thousands, you will enjoy a highly rewarding and lucrative professional writing career. Do the math: if 40,000 people love your stuff, and all buy one of your books every year, and you make at least \$2.00 per book, you're going to enjoy a nice \$80,000 a year job or better. Want to make six-figures? Grow that group to 50,000 or more. Want to make a million bucks? Grow that group to 500,000 or more. Indeed, that's “easier said than done.” But the fact is it won't ever *get done* until *you* see to it that it does.

Granted, if like the rest of the lucky “lottery winners” of life, one of your books becomes an overnight sensation, and a million people suddenly fall in love with you—you're set! But wouldn't you really like to believe that the “lottery winner” scenario isn't the *only* one available to you? The truth is, any customer base for a product can be intelligently planned and grown over time. That's the point here.

And when we say “over time” that element really becomes the key to getting your head around all of this. That is, if your first novel sells 2,500 copies, you may only make a few thousand dollars. But you may have made 2,500 fans, such that when your second book comes out, you are not starting from obscurity and zero fans as you did before; rather those 2,500 may buy the new one, and let's say you then reach 4,000 new ones. Now your fan base is 6,500. On your third book, you reach 8,500 new readers, so now your audience grows to 15,000. Perhaps in year number four you break 20,000 fans. If so, you're earning a respectable income of \$40,000 or more.

Four years? *It might take four years before I can do this fulltime?* Yes! It might—or longer. But did it occur to you that a good many college graduates who have also just invested four years of their life don't walk into \$40,000 a year jobs, but many of them these days end up wearing a uniform and a paper hat and say things like, “And would you like fries with that?”

If the “fickle finger of fate” fortuitously falls down from the heavens and hands you the winning lottery ticket (i.e. an overnight sensation) at any time during those four or more years—*wonderful!* But until that happens, plan on the patient and steady growth path. Don't make the mistake that many of your fellow authors across the industry have made in the past, even those with many titles published, whose success was solely at the mercy of “dumb luck,” and they didn't enjoy much of that; rather they are now the proud owners of a long list of “out of print” works, and still show up at their day job every day—five, ten, or twenty years after having their first book published. That doesn't have to be your fate. ***Plan to succeed.***

Your Marketing Plan

A good Marketing Plan is designed to help you understand/identify:

- Who your **Ideal Customer** is
- Who your **Competition** is
- How to **Reach/Communicate** with your Ideal Customer
- How to **Position** your product and its **Messaging** to most effectively communicate with your Ideal Customer and convince them to buy your product
- How to **Establish Success Metrics** to measure the effectiveness of your plan

YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER

Who did you write book for? What does the person who would most enjoy your book look like? What are their interests? Are they rich or poor, educated or not, busy or idle? All these factors and many more can play a significant role in trying to figure out who it is that would be most receptive to hearing about your book and want to buy it.

If your mindset is, “Well, *everyone* would love my book!” you’re in trouble. You can’t be all things to all people all the time. It just doesn’t work that way. If nothing else, you ought to know in which **Genre** your book has been classified. That’s a start. Readers who love Romance novels don’t tend to have a lot of overlap with the hardcore Science Fiction fans. There are exceptions to be sure, but in general, going after Romance fans versus going after Science Fiction fans are two unique animals. Recognize the difference.

Do some **research** on your market segment/Genre. Where do the people who most enjoy your type of writing hang out? Where are their watering holes? What magazines and television shows do they watch? Do they go to church/synagogue/mosque regularly? Do they have clubs and organizations? Do they hold trade events or conventions? Are there magazines and newsletters aimed at people in those groups? The point is, the more you know about the target profile of who it is you need to be selling to, this information will help you decide on the tools and tactics necessary to reach them and persuade them to buy your product.

Bear in mind that Identifying with Your Ideal Customer is an **ongoing process**, not a one-time event. That is, you don’t go buy a mailing list of a Science-Fiction magazine and think that it represents everyone you ever need to work with. Obtaining mailing lists is but one example of a process that you need to invest time and energy to cultivate continually, all throughout your professional career.

The Number One Priority of Customer Identification is the **Creation of a Customer List.**

Every person you come in contact with, every email you receive from a fan, every book signing you attend, make a point to collect customer data and enter that information into a Master File of some sort. This could be as simple as a mailing list or as complex as a computer database. Hint: It might merely be an Excel Spreadsheet. The goal is to have a tool whereby you can send out information to this ever-growing audience on a regular basis.

Now, of course, your Customer Database will only be a fraction of your true total buying audience. You certainly can’t succeed if every reader of your work is someone you have physically met. Yet, that list of people you have touched and contacted and loaded into your database will serve as the “core” group by

which you can begin a chain-reaction of “buzz” and “word of mouth” when you wish to communicate something important.

ArcheBooks Author Perk: [The ArcheBooks Email/FAX BLAST](#)

For ArcheBooks Publishing Authors, all you need to do to enjoy a broad-based email and/or FAX campaign is do the following:

1. Set up an Excel Spreadsheet for your Customer File
2. Label Columns as follows:
 - a. First Name
 - b. Last Name
 - c. Email Address
 - d. FAX Number
3. Input as many entries as you wish, one person per Row
4. Think of a Subject Line
5. Prepare Body Text/Graphics
6. Email a copy of your **Spreadsheet, Subject, and Body Text** to sales@archebooks.com and our marketing department will import the file into our Email and FAX broadcast system for automated distribution. Easy!

Other elements of your Customer Identification process can come in large chunks, from getting the **attendance list at a convention** you attend, **membership directories**, buying **mailing lists** from magazines and subject related organizations. You’d be amazed that with a little time, energy, and few bucks, you can get the contact information for literally thousands of potential customers of your book.

Beware of purveyors of SPAM lists. There are numerous nefarious individuals out there who will offer to sell you email lists of “millions of addresses” for seemingly reasonable amounts of money. These “millions” of innocent victims are people just like you, folks who hate getting tons of junk email everyday regarding their mortgage rates, their penis size, prescription narcotics, pirated copies of software or DVDs, or baldness cures. You hate it, they hate it. All you will achieve by using such “lists” will be your name on a “Blocked Sender” list ensuring that *nothing* you ever send to that person will ever get to them.

In fact, we heartily recommend that you carefully screen all email addresses you obtain, and try to limit them to ones that you have received mail from, or come from legitimate sources that clearly have an interest in reading your book/your genre/etc.

The next goal you have, secondary to the creation and continual maintenance of your Customer Database, is going to be a **Media Outlet Resource List**.

Media Outlets

Media Outlets are sources of public exposure that fall more into the category of “News,” and therefore are free or low cost as compared to formal Advertising.

Armed with an understanding of the type of Customers you want to reach, you now need to identify a list of **organizations** that regularly communicate with these same people, and pitch your book to them in terms of a **Special Interest** item.

It is true that most media outlets refrain from accepting news submissions directly from authors, the same way publishers like to get submissions only from Agents. It’s that “gatekeeper” function that the industry

enjoys to prevent it from being overwhelmed with input. Media Gatekeepers are the primary domain of **Publicists**. The **Public Relations (PR)** industry exists to maintain their own databases of thousands of media contacts to blast **Press Releases** and **Pitch Pieces** for stories.

If you have the financial means to afford your own personal publicist, it can be a very wise investment—although, like any professional occupation there are clearly good ones and bad ones, and everyone in between. If you explore the possibility of using a professional publicist, use common sense, get references, samples, etc. before making any commitments or giving anyone money. You'll find with just a few Internet searches lots of firms out there who are eager to help you in this regard. Do your due diligence, and watch out for scammers. If something sounds too good to be true—it usually is.

On the other hand, there are some media outlets you can contact directly, like your local media. You need to prepare Press Releases for your local newspaper and community papers. If for no other reason, having one of their own favorite sons or daughters get their book published is typically an interesting tidbit of news in most communities.

ArcheBooks Author Perk: [Sample Press Releases & PR Representation](#)

For ArcheBooks Authors, you merely need to contact sales@archebooks.com and let us know which local media outlets you'd like us to target for you, and we will do it on your behalf. For large campaigns we may employ outside PR Agencies at our discretion. But at a minimum, you will enjoy the “arm's length” third-party distinction of not having your own name submitting the Press Releases and Pitches.

ArcheBooks Publishing Authors will find a **Sample Press Release** in their **Training Guide** of their **Author Promotion Kit** for this purpose. If you are a member of a large organization of some kind, which could be anything—church, sorority, fraternity, labor union, yacht club, softball team, alumni association, a coven, whatever—see if you can get a mention in their regular periodicals as one of their own having published a book.

Announce your book's release in any genre or subject matter related groups, whether they are found in online e-zines or printed newsletters. Most online groups have a “Submit News” area. Take advantage of it. Printed newsletters usually have an editorial contact name, address, phone number and/or email address in the publication itself—which means it's a good idea to subscribe to several newsletters pertinent to your book's genre or subject matter. If you belong to any online writers groups, be sure to post a notice of your book's release.

Editorial Coverage

Editorial Coverage is an excellent mechanism for potential book buyers to find out about your book. There are many genre related organizations or subject matter groups with their own magazines or newsletters that are happy to “Review” your book. Query them and ask them if they will, offering them a free copy of your book.

ArcheBooks Author Perk: [Publisher Sponsored Review Copies](#)

For ArcheBooks Publishing Authors, we are happy to send **free Review copies** to the editors of legitimate organizations in hopes that they will provide positive and useful review information, as well as mention your book in their publications, and therefore all of their readers will then learn about it.

Formal Advertising

Quite simply, Formal Advertising is paying for the people you want to know about your book to hear about it. This is an entire topic of discussion, which we'll get to later in greater detail. Just understand that while formal advertising can be the most effective mechanism to reach your Ideal Customers, it is also the most expensive, and therefore what most people can afford to do the least.

On the other hand, there *do* exist some economical Advertising opportunities that you might not have thought of. The following one comes to us from James Shamblen, an accomplished ArcheBooks Author. He suggests:

A low cost way to advertise your book is to seek out the events of your local charity and fraternal organizations. Each of these groups sponsors fund-raising events two or three times a year; i.e. Auctions, Dinner Dances, Rodeos, and other community support functions. To advertise and support these events, the sponsoring group usually publishes a brochure that outlines the activities of the event and provides advertising pages. The cost of placing the cover of your book in one the "adv." pages is minimal. Depending on the size of the event, you can expect between 300 to 500 people to thumb through the brochure. To maximize the effect, donate one of your signed books for auction at the event.

The US Mail

Don't forget this handy resource! For mere pennies, you can mail flyers and postcards to lots of folks.

ArcheBooks Author Perk: [Flyers and Postcards](#)

For ArcheBooks Authors, your Author Promotion Kit includes Flyers and Postcards with your cover art, ordering information, etc. ready to be mailed. Use them!

Now we haven't arrived at the point in our discussion yet of "what" you say to your Ideal Customers, whether you're addressing people on your Customer List, or via Media Contacts, or with Formal Advertising. For now we're just categorizing targets by their access mechanism. Before we delve deeper into our discussion of what so say to these groups, and how, we first need to talk about your **Competition**.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

"Know thy Adversary." Literally thousands of new titles are published each year by thousands of publishers, in the US and abroad. It would be physically and economically impossible for a reader to obtain and read them all. So book buyers are making **choices**. Sometimes those choices are an impulse buy, other times it is a more premeditated act. But what's certain is that book buyers are a finite group of people. Those people have a finite amount of leisure time. That leisure time has a finite portion of it allocated to leisure activities like reading. People with leisure time for reading have a finite amount of discretionary income to spend on books—far less available money than all the authors and publishers wish for them to spend on their books.

Clearly, you will not be the only party vying for the discretionary leisure dollars of book buyers. **You have competition**. The bulk of that competition will come from the major publishing houses that pump out the endless streams of commercial fiction and do everything in their power to ensure they don't lose a cent of market share to any other publisher, large or small.

For the new author, you have one clear competitive differentiation that most of the titles from the largest publishing houses don't have—you represent **something new**. Since big houses only like to publish authors with proven track records and predictable sell-through rates, offering something new is becoming ever more rare. And therein exists your primary competitive opportunity against major houses.

Ah, but there's lots of small and medium-sized publishers offering something new, to which you compete directly. That's true. That's where being published in hardcover instead of paperback gets your book taken more seriously. Our imaginative and artistic cover art on your dust-jacket helps immeasurably. You'll find that a great number of the titles coming out of smaller publishers have one or more of the following flaws:

1. It's a Paperback, but priced like a Hardcover (i.e. over \$15)
2. It has very "plain" or unimaginative art on the cover.
3. Editing can be less than stellar.
4. Overall product quality is poor.

*So what happens
when all things
are equal?
Superior marketing
wins the prize.*

These factors will eliminate 80% of the small- to medium-sized players from serious competitive consideration. Of the remaining 20%, you're talking about good, high-quality books written by fine authors who want their books to be purchased just as much as you do. So what happens when all things are equal? Superior marketing wins the prize.

Fortunately, without a Marketing Plan of their own, many high-quality authors, published by competent publishers will fall into the "put 'em out there and hope" category, with little to no serious marketing behind them, and you will win and they will lose for the simple reason that more people will discover your book exists. But you're still not in the clear. There will be those determined few authors who are creative and work very hard to ensure that their books get the attention they believe they deserve. And in those instances, you've got a real horse race. So how do you win?

First you need a strategy. Most product strategies center around one of the following themes:

1. Superior Product
2. Different/Unique Product
3. More Economical Product (for the consumer)
4. More Profitable Product (for the retailer)

Let's talk about these strategies and especially how they apply to your ArcheBooks title.

Superior Product

This strategy is the plain and simple logic of "mine is better than yours." Unfortunately, when it comes to books, unless you are talking about manufacturing or editing quality issues, the content of the book itself renders the "quality" of the product highly subjective. As mentioned before, ArcheBooks Original Works of Fiction are introduced in hardcover deliberately to differentiate them from Paperbacks. That's a purely cultural distinction we didn't make up, we just play to our advantage—i.e. hardcover books are seen as "superior" to paperbacks. But candidly, that "physical" aspect only neutralizes a potential negative. It doesn't necessarily score any positive points. It just means you get to play against all the other hardcover competitors.

In traditional product marketing theory, you never choose the primary strategy of product superiority unless your product is clearly head-and-shoulders better than your competition. Your book doesn't have a

calf-skin cover, gilded pages, and a diamond bezel. It's made like all the other first-quality books out there, so product superiority isn't where to hang your hat.

Different/Unique Product

Ah, now here's something you have to talk about. Bear in mind that over the last several years there has been a distinct market polarization that has occurred among book retailers, not unlike what's happened to many small town retailers falling at the hands of the behemoth of Wal-Mart. That is, the major book chains: Barnes & Noble, Borders, Books-a-Million, and the like, have almost obliterated the "mom and pop" bookstores. God bless the little independents who have managed to stay alive and thrive.

Unfortunately, many small book retailers report that in order to stay alive, they've had to become the 7-11 convenience stores of books. They can only afford to carry the most active titles, and must sell those titles at extremely heavy discounts to have any hope of competing against the giants. And like Wal-Mart, the giants buy books from the major distributors or from the publishers directly in large volumes that the little guys simply can't do. Therefore, the big chains can discount more heavily, and with sheer volume sales still make plenty of money. The little guys can't, and as such, many have been forced to close their doors.

And what's funny is that every author out there just wants to see his book on the shelf at one of those big retail chains. There's nothing wrong with that ambition. For the new author, they may indeed see their book bought by the huge chains and perpetually kept in stock some day. But that day will only come when those huge chains believe that carrying your book in high volume is a good business decision, i.e. the sustained demand for it exists, and they live to serve that demand. Besides, obsessing over chain participation, in the context of a new author, misses a wonderful market opportunity. Think about it. Your book, by definition of being new, is something that the chains don't have. It is therefore something that small to medium retailers could offer their customers as "something new and different."

A similar competitive model has occurred in the fine wine industry. What are the main differences between "Grocery Store" wine and the wine found at a wine "Specialty Shop"? Answer: Variety, Quality, and Unique finds. Grocery stores typically don't care about having a lot of wine business, per se. They just know that people want it, and will buy it elsewhere if they don't carry it. So they carry the most popular pedestrian brands that sell by the truck load. Have the grocery stores put wine shops out of business? Nope! Wine shops are flourishing by offering new and unique varieties that can only be obtained in small quantities. Indeed, it's a boutique business—but it's a far cry from the Mini-mart/Gulp-n-Go approach.

Independent bookstores and small chains that discover the angle of offering "boutique/specialty" products have an exciting new opportunity to not merely stay alive, but to thrive in the shadow of the mega-chains. You have the opportunity to help them discover how to do that. Hint: this "education" will involve using some of the other tools in your Author Promotion Kit, e.g. Posters, Bookmarks, etc.

More Economical Product (for the Consumer)

Plain and simple, if you're battling purely on price, you'll lose. Not to mention, price does not promote author or brand loyalty. To even grapple with that Tar-Baby is to concede that your product is no better or different than your competition. It's like buying batteries—they're all the same, so what's the cheapest?

Clearly, your hardcover ArcheBooks title isn't the cheapest book on the shelf. But there *are* books on the shelf that cost as much or more, and that's important to understand. The truth of the matter is, hardcovers in the United States right now have a Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) of between \$25.00 and \$30.00. Not too many of them break \$30.00 unless it is unusually large or special. Former President

Bill Clinton's three-inch thick tome had a retail price on it of \$36.00, but you could find it at COSTCO for \$18.00. And that illustrates another point: **Retailers can charge whatever they want.**

If your book has a retail price of \$27.99, you can see from your own Bookseller Flyer that the wholesale price on it is 40% off, or \$16.79. Calculate that the retailer paid a hair more for shipping and you get a good idea of what margin he has to play with. If he offers his customers a 15% discount, the book sells for \$23.79; a 20% discount, then \$22.39. It's the retailer's choice to charge full list or to apply a discount. Just be assured that your hardcover book is in the "normal" range, price-wise, for books of its type. But its very *type* is what creates consideration of the next point—**profitability** for the retailer.

More Profitable Product (for the Retailer)

Just do the basic math of deducting the sales price from the wholesale price and you should notice something wonderful—more important than any other pricing consideration. And that is, the available income (sales price less wholesale price) to the book retailer for your book is more than the entire average MSRP of a typical mass-market paperback. Most mass-market paperbacks are still priced under \$10.00. Your book has the potential to enable the retailer to *earn* \$10.00 or more off your book. That retailer has to sell several paperbacks to earn the same money he gets from selling one copy of your book.

Shelf space also is a big factor in a retailer's profitability calculations. If he can earn a minimum of three times the money off your book than from a paperback, occupying one slot on his shelf, that's a fact worth pointing out. Now granted, the argument is going to be, "Yes, but why is anyone going to buy your hardcover title as opposed to the less expensive paperback?" Answer: because the customer was intrigued by the beautiful hi-res poster he saw in the window or on the wall and the attractive book display holding the ArcheBooks titles.

Yes, more and more in the future, as ArcheBooks Publishing expands its Publisher Direct Authorized Dealer network, bookstores are going to be featuring the following book displays (called "Dumps"):



An attractive book dump is a good in-store competitive leg-up that can separate your book from all the other noise out there. This is **product featuring**. And, indeed, that helps in some finite number of bookstores, but practically speaking, ANY bookstore can order your book, whether as a special order, if they

don't stock currently it, or in bulk to stock it. So the real question becomes, "How do you get enough *consumers* asking for your book to stimulate that ordering by the retailers?"

Pump up the Volume

In Sales & Marketing there is concept referred to as "**the noise level.**" Since there is so much selling and marketing and solicitations and offers and such going on simultaneously by so many parties, to the average Joe, it all turns into a bland "white noise," much akin to static. It usually takes something uniquely head-turning and distinct to cause everyone to pause and go, "What was that?"

This is where **intelligent creativity** combined with **sheer hustle** comes into play. At the beginning of a marketing campaign you need to be thinking in terms of both quality *and* quantity. What will separate you from your competition will be **well-coordinated waves of communications, repeated continually**, louder and louder, until the culmination of it all generates a momentum that can't be stopped.

Now with all this in mind, let me pause to mention something that you might want to think twice about: **personal websites.** They're fine and dandy, but if you are under the delusion that any serious web traffic is going to come to your website without a serious marketing campaign of its own, you are greatly mistaken. If you are counting on the 400 million souls on the Internet to run to your website, just because you have one, you're in for a shock. Technically, a website is a product unto itself. And popular ones can surely help publicize a variety of products and services—but that's the gotcha—it's got to be popular in the first place. Search engines alone won't do the trick. Besides, the time and energy you spend promoting your website, you could have used to sell books.

Now what *will* work for you, and work well, are the following:

- A Constant Schedule of Book Signings
- Bookstore Visits (you don't have to have a signing to target a bookstore!)
- Radio and TV Interviews
- Editorial Coverage in Periodicals
- Favorable Reviews in the Press
- Trade Events and Subject Matter Events Attendance
- Email and Fax Broadcasts
- Postcard Campaign
- Targeted Advertising (Online and Traditional)

The real key to the idea of a coordinated campaign is that all, or most, of these elements are all happening at the same time—and don't let up until the objective is achieved. Most of your competition will do one or two of these things sequentially, but if you do many or all of them, a lot, and then some more, the chances of people encountering the "repetition of message" aspect begins to kick in. Don't forget Sales Axiom 101: ***Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em; Tell 'em; then tell 'em what you told 'em.***

Don't be afraid to "borrow" good ideas. Look out for how your competition markets its products. If something catches your eye, make a conscious effort to analyze *why* it did. Go to the bookstore, many of them, and just look around. What's eye-catching? What's compelling? Why is it compelling? Look at the Ads for books in magazines and newspapers. You may surprise yourself with a new idea of how to make more noise.

HOW TO REACH AND COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER

Most of the mechanisms of sales and marketing we've already touched on briefly in the competitive discussion, but now we're going to look at each one in greater depth. But before we do, we need to discuss some practical realities. First of all, we recognize the fact that not all of the mechanisms we're about to discuss are even possible or practical for some authors, for a variety of perfectly good reasons. But we do want to discuss this "universe" of tools, so you are familiar with them all, and may have opportunity to incorporate more and more of them over time, as you grow in experience and confidence.

So please don't feel overwhelmed by what you're about to read. That's not our intention. Rather, we want to present to you a full spectrum of the tools and resources that are available to you, and how they are intended to work synergistically together. Obviously, the more of them that you can master, the better the results you can expect and the faster you will achieve your long-term professional goals.

In general, you're going to find the following tactical elements divided into two basic categories:

1. Administrative stuff you can do from home that requires no Confrontation of Strangers; and
2. Activities that require you to Confront Strangers with the power to reject you and say "No"

Needless to say, Category #1 is the easier of the two. And for some authors, individual personality- and temperament-wise, anything remotely resembling Category #2 is an occasion for bladder incontinence. We understand that! In reality, there are Authors who will only ever be comfortable with Category #1 activities; some go-getters who can do both Category #1 and Category #2 activities; and those brave souls who start out as Category #1, but over time learn to tackle Category #2, and subsequently learn to be comfortable in those activities. All of those situations will help sell your books. What won't help your books is the author who refuses to do the activities in either category. As noted before, the author who adopts the attitude of, "I just want to write stories and cash checks," is at the mercy of Dumb Luck.

So we'll note which category in the following discussion each of these activities apply to for your reference. It is our hope that you will make an attempt to at least "try" them all, and best case to "master" them all. Any of them will help. We shall also list for you a suggested "minimum" number of particular activities as a goal. It's up to you to follow this guideline, increase it, or decrease it. It's *your* Marketing Plan. Our suggestions are what we feel will give you an excellent shot for success.

You will also find that the most work needs to be done at the beginning, to **build** your audience. Once it's built, your efforts shift to maintaining it and developing it, which may or may not entail the same level of direct marketing activity. There is such a thing as **market momentum**. If you cultivate it, you don't ever want to lose it, but it's not the same as starting from scratch. Think of it like being on a diet or starting an exercise program. The worst part is always on the front-end.

OK, let's talk about penetrating the market, and building your audience.

A Constant Schedule of Book Signings

Cat-2. Try to set yourself a goal of scheduling a **minimum of two books signings per month**. If you can get more, wonderful. Read your **Author Promotion Kit** for how to prepare for one, and what to do at the event itself. If the store is enjoying any decent traffic at all, stay at the event until you've sold the majority of the books ordered for the event. Sell them all, if you can. But if there are a few leftovers, be sure to autograph them, and place an "Autographed Copy" sticker on them to help the retailer sell them after you're gone.

The main value of Book Signings is making you and your book **the center of attention** in a store for a specific period of time. If executed properly, you'll get the attention of virtually all book buyers at that store at that time. If you sell lots of books, you will make a friend out of the retailer, and therefore increase the likelihood of an invitation to come back and do it again. Be sure to help them with your posters; have your bookmarks made up, the works. Not all Book Signings are the same, and if you make yours a success, retailers remember things like that.

Bookstore Visits

Cat-2. You don't have to schedule a formal book signing event to stop by a bookstore, introduce yourself, and ask them to carry your book. The key to doing this is to give them an **Introduction Kit**. Your Introduction Kit will consist of your Book's **Flyer, Poster, Printed Reviews, a few Bookmarks, and a Dust-Jacket sample**. The Dust-Jacket Sample can be a small reproduction of it from your own color printer on an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper, or you can actually take your PDF file (downloadable free from our website) and have it printed at Kinko's full size. If you want to spend the money, you could even optionally include a sample copy of your book (which could also be an eBook version burned onto a CD!). At a minimum have a copy of your book with you to show them what it looks like first-hand.

The idea of this event is to give them a **professional business introduction** to your book—inclusive of **leave-behind collateral material** that will intrigue them and make them want to offer such a product in their store. Offer them a book signing; but if they decline, make sure they at least have your Intro Kit.

Emphasize the fact that your book is **100% returnable**, and be sure you are familiar with our **Return Policy** (on the Booksellers page of the website) so you can discuss it if asked. Tell them how to order your book by having them call 1-800-358-8101 or emailing sales@archebooks.com. To build credibility, we suggest that you can also print a copy of our entire title **Catalog** (also found on the Booksellers Page of our website) and give it to them. This is also a kind service that benefits the rest of your fellow Arche-Books Authors, who hopefully are returning the favor which is to your benefit. If the Bookseller you meet has the means to access the Internet, show him our website, the **Bookseller's Page**, and your book's description page—making a point to show him the free downloadable resources in the **Press Kit** section to help promote your book's sales in his store (Poster, Announcement Flyer, Book Signing Flyer, etc.).

Who says you can't Rep your own book? You obviously care about it more than anyone else in the world, and are best equipped to tell someone why it's great. Do it! If you're up to it, try to shoot for a goal of **visiting a minimum of four bookstores a week**, and go during the week, if you can, reserving your weekends for Signings. If you can do more than four visits a week, great. I can assure you that direct "sales calls" will be infinitely more effective than phone calls in terms of generating excitement, and stimulating Book Signing engagements.

Radio and TV Interviews

Cat-2. Getting on Oprah and the late night talk shows is typically going to come from the assistance of a professional publicist, who has the contacts to make it happen. So don't set your expectations on that level or nothing. There are many publicity opportunities in broadcast media you can avail yourself to directly, or again, have our marketing department tee it up on your behalf.

The key to getting on the radio and TV is a strong "**Pitch**" to a **Program Producer**. It's the Producer's job to find new topics and guests for informative and/or entertaining programs. You just need to help them understand that your book is what they've been looking for to fill a slot in an upcoming program. Doing that, short of hiring a publicist, requires you to do some more **homework**. Remember, if you get the opportunity to speak to a decision maker, make sure you have properly **prepared yourself**. Develop

a brief but compelling story, one that encourages an interested listener to ask questions. They hear hundreds of pitches, so if you are prepared, that gives you a positive leg up.

Target your local media first—Radio and TV. Your goal is to find out who the producer is of a particular program that interviews authors about their books. Once you know who that is, you need to contact them via telephone, FAX, email, letter—whatever it takes, to give them your Pitch.

Your Pitch will determine whether you get a Yes or No. For non-fiction, Pitches tend to be a little easier than fiction, because most non-fiction deals with a particular topic that's easily defined and articulated. A book about gardening is just that. "Dear Producer of the morning show, I have recently had my gardening book published, entitled (Title), and tips in it like... (something cool) ...would be of interest to your viewers." That's not hard to grasp. Fiction, on the other hand is a little trickier.

Fiction needs a strong **Hook**. A hook is an element of your book that is especially unique or intriguing, something that can be easily tied to a topic of interest. For example, ArcheBooks Author Sara Williams' novel *The Don Juan Con* is a suspense-thriller that deals with "Sweetheart Swindlers," con men who get women to fall in love with them and agree to marry, only to loot their bank accounts. This is a real crime that Sara researched during her days as a journalist. She has blurbs from Detectives about it on the cover. Sara's pitch to get interviewed on Radio and TV (which she's done) centers around the topic of the crime, its importance in educating women to be on the lookout for these kind of criminals, etc., not the fact that she had a novel published.

So when you go about constructing your Pitch about your book, think of it in terms of a producer looking for **strong topic ideas** to book guests for their shows. In other words, even though your appearance is designed to help you sell books, they really don't care about that. You're there to help them entertain and intrigue their viewers/listeners and increase their ratings, and therefore allow them to charge more for advertising time. You solve *their* problem first, they in turn help you solve yours—that's how it works.

I encourage all ArcheBooks Authors to do additional research and investigation regarding putting strong Pitches together. Please contact Ralph Wolf, our COO and EVP of Sales and Operations for assistance, if you need it. In general shoot for:

1. **A Strong Hook.** What fascinating topic does your book explore—in four words or less?
2. **Compelling Log Line.** Tell me in 25 words or less what your book is all about?
3. **Market Applicability.** Why are the viewers/listeners of the program you're pitching going to like hearing about your book?
4. **Credibility.** What reviews, blurbs, endorsements, etc. do you have to offer to lend credibility to your talent as a writer and this book in particular?
5. **Contact and Availability** information.

Along with your pitch, make all your Introduction Kit materials available to them as well. And remember, for radio interviews, those interviews can often be conducted by **telephone**, so you can target radio stations all over the country, not just those in your physical town. You never have to leave the house!

Set yourself a goal of Pitching a minimum of **eight (8) radio stations a month** and scheduling at least **one (1) radio interview per month**. Pitch all of your local TV stations, specifically the producers of local talk shows or morning shows that feature authors from time to time. Set a goal of scheduling at least **one local TV interview** within the first six months of your book's release. If you get the TV interview, ask them for a copy of the tape, or at a minimum have all your family and friends video tape or TIVO it.

Should you enjoy a successful TV interview in your local market, you can use that tape as part of your Pitch Package to TV producers in other markets that you can conveniently travel to. The same holds true for the radio interviews. You can use tapes of your radio interviews as part of your Pitches to TV program producers.

Editorial Coverage in Periodicals

Cat-1. Once again, this involves **market research**. You must identify what periodicals appeal to your Ideal Customer. Once you've done that, you need to send a **Query Letter to the Editor**, announcing the publication of your book, offering them a free review copy, and requesting a Review. Include some of the promotional materials from your Author Promotion Kit. Many magazine editors in genre related magazines are receptive to email queries. You will either get a Yes or a No. For all the Yeses, send the contact information to sales@archebooks.com, and we'll take it from there on your behalf. Set your self a goal of targeting a **minimum of four (4) genre or subject matter related periodicals to Query for a Review**.

Favorable Reviews in the Press

Cat-1½ (the ½ is because you can a lot this by mail or email). This exercise is somewhere in between sending out a Press Release and Pitching an Editor or Producer. In essence, you are Pitching either a news editor or reporter. A professional publicist can help a great deal here, if for no other reason than in terms of the sheer number of media outlets they can hit quickly. But you can do a lot of this yourself.

Start with your local papers. With them you have the “home town kid done good” angle to work with. If they agree to review your book, let us know and we'll send them one. Also send them your Pitch material and see if you can also score an interview out of it. Print interviews work just like radio and TV interviews. They ask questions, you answer them. The finished product may look like a formal Q&A or the journalist may use your answers to write up a straight narrative. You'll have little to no say in that. But if a good piece comes out on you and/or your book, you need to do two things with it:

1. Send a copy to publisher@archebooks.com and sales@archebooks.com. We can scan it if you can't, so you can also mail it to us if you can email it. We'll post it on the website under your book's description page under a Reviews button. Several of our titles already feature this button and a review page where you can see several examples. Check out *The Don Juan Con* by Sara Williams or *Banana Bay* by Cindy Cody.
2. Use it as part of your Pitch Kit to other media outlets and as part of your Intro Kit to Booksellers.

Set yourself a goal of **Querying all your local papers within the first two months** of your book's release. And when we say “local papers” that isn't limited to the one or two major dailies in your town. That includes the smaller community papers and other daily papers from nearby cities and towns. Your rule of thumb should be: If you can drive to it in less than two hours, it's local to you! If you live in the sprawl of southern California, make that three to four hours.

Trade Events and Subject Matter Events Attendance

Cat-2. Start going to shows! Every Genre we offer has its own unique conventions and trade events, some big, some small. As a professional author, these events are part of your profession. Your purpose in attending these events is to **increase your visibility** and to **sell books**.

This is accomplished by:

1. **Get on Author Panels.** This isn't hard to do. When you register for a convention, identify yourself as a published author and indicate your desire to be on panels. Most convention organizers are always scraping to get enough volunteers. Volunteer for as many panels as you can, but pick topics relevant to your experience and your book. This one activity alone positions you to the convention attendees as "an expert." We suggest you read fellow ArcheBooks Author Virginia G. McMorro's article on our website in the **Author's Corner** about participating on a panel for more tips.
2. **Hand out Trinkets and Toys.** One of the more enjoyable opportunities you have at trade events is to give out bookmarks, tee-shirt, coffee mugs, bumper stickers, hats, or whatever promo items you thought to have made before the show and brought with you.
3. **Your eBook on a CD** is a great giveaway. Do it! You can even find inexpensive software programs at Staples/Office Depot that will print your cover art JPEG on a CD label and on a cover slip of a jewel case. Use your imagination! Have fun with it.
4. **Attend Parties.** Most conventions at least have a **Hospitality Suite** where attendees congregate for libations and fellowship. Press the flesh, meet and greet, talk about your book.
5. **Wear your Badge.** At most of the larger conventions published authors get credentials that visibly indicate they're a published author. This is literally wearing a sign around your neck telling all the aspiring writers (who are also readers and book buyers) that you're someone "famous," who at a minimum has achieved something they still want to achieve, and therefore you are someone they want to meet and talk to.
6. **Bring Books.** Make sure you have a stock of books for every event. Not dozens and dozens necessarily, but several. Hand them out strategically. We suggest you start in the book dealer's room, targeting the booksellers. Always have a copy of your book with you at all times, so when you steer the topic of conversation to your writing, you're ready to show it off.
7. **MOST IMPORTANT: Contact All Event Booksellers in Advance.** Most trade shows list the participating Booksellers on their websites or event materials well in advance of the event. If not, contact the event coordinator and specifically ask them for this information. When you have it, contact those book dealers and let them know that you plan to attend the event, and if they'll order copies of your book, you'll be there in the dealer's room to autograph them and ensure they all get sold. In fact, tell them that as you talk up your book during the event, you're going to send attendees to those dealers to get your book from them. This is how you **SELL** your books during an event. The stock you bring with you is for strategic free samples and illustration purposes only. You may find that a dealer who you were unable to contact prior to the event is willing to take some of your stock off your hands at the normal wholesale price and resell at the event. Help him/her out!

Choose your events wisely. Many convention and trade events promise a lot more than they deliver. Make a point to talk to people who have attended the event in the past and try to get a good idea of what to expect before you go. Some events are too small to be worth your time and expense, others may be too big to get noticed in all the chaos. Do your homework.

Specifically target genre related convention events, but don't confine event participation purely to genre related conventions. Good events could be a State Fair in your town, a Charity Bazaar, a Community Carnival—any well-attended events that will be excited to have you as a special guest and let you talk up your book. Set yourself a goal to attend **at least one (1) major trade event per year, and at least three (3) regional ones.**

Email and Fax Broadcasts

Cat-1. This topic was covered earlier. The deal is simple. You prepare the target list, we blast out the emails and faxes on your behalf. Set yourself a goal of setting up your **Customer List file in Excel with at least 100 names on it within the first month** after your book is released.

Postcard Campaign

Cat-1. One of the tools in your Author Promotion Kit is your **Post Card**. Go to Kinko's (or equivalent) and have at least 250 of them printed. Set yourself a goal of mailing out **at least 50 per month** for the first five months. Mail them to everyone you know, and work on a mailing list to liquidate all the rest. When your out of postcards, print more and repeat.

Targeted Advertising (Online and Traditional)

Cat-1. First of all, please note that ArcheBooks Publishing is doing a lot of advertising on your behalf. In addition to all the tools and resources of the website, your book gets an Ad in *Ingram Advance Magazine* that goes to over **20,000 bookstores**. The lead time on that Ad is four months, so it's coming out in the magazine four months after your book comes out—which creates your window of opportunity to cultivate as much early buzz as possible. ArcheBooks also does periodical and other targeted advertising on behalf of specific titles and genres, as appropriate. In some instances we hire professional PR and Ad agencies to conduct formal campaigns. But there's a lot you can also do on your own.

Don't think of paid advertising purely in terms of Radio or TV spots. Those are the most expensive form of paid Advertising, and unless you have bags of discretionary cash, it might not be a very fruitful investment. So consider some advertising alternatives.

- As James Shamblen recommended earlier, look at advertising in the program of a charity or civic event.
- Become a Sponsor of a Play at your local Community Theater. Small theaters survive on the donations and small Ads they sell in the programs that are given to all the theater patrons. A small \$50-\$100 Ad in a Play Program could easily be seen by a couple of thousand people over the course of a show's run.
- Look into the "pre-movie slideshow" Ads at your local megaplex theater.
- Genre related websites sell Ad space. Check their rate cards for prices and see if any are attractive and fit your budget.
- Find out what Ad programs are available on your local radio stations. You might be pleasantly surprised, depending on your market, to discover that it's not as steep as you might have thought. Talk to their sales people. They exist to sell Ad time, and can also offer you the resources to record 15 or 30 second spots, etc. But don't even consider buying radio Ad time until after you've attempted to get them to interview you for free!
- Surprise, surprise, but Amazon.com and Barnes&Noble.com both sell Paid Placement programs. And your book is for sale on both of those sites. Check their rate cards for programs and packages. They change all the time.

Set yourself a goal to establish your own **Advertising budget**. Set that money aside, then go investigate all the Advertising possibilities available to you and find at least one of them that fits your budget. Then buy your Ad! Don't be afraid of advertising. When you have a household item to sell, you don't

think twice about calling the newspaper and placing a Classified Ad. You check their rates, pick a program that you feel comfortable with, budget-wise, and you place your Ad. There's not a whole lot more magic going on here than that to actually do the same for your book. On the other hand, what your Ad looks like and says is *critical!*

Therefore, as an ArcheBooks Policy, all ArcheBooks Authors must run Ad copy by the marketing department for approval prior to submission to any media outlet. This isn't merely a safety check to ensure you don't say or do something that will get us both in deep trouble (though we certainly do that!) rather it's also our opportunity to help you make your Ad as strong as we can. Work with us. We want to work with you on your Ad.

POSITIONING & MESSAGING

Product Positioning and Messaging is truly an Art form, not a science. The magic words and images that influence people to buy things is what the Art of Sales & Marketing exists to do. You may not feel like a very talented sales person or marketing professional. Thankfully, for ArcheBooks Authors you are only being asked to execute your plan, and not necessarily have to come up with all the magic yourself. We do most of that for you, and strongly encourage you to stay on-message with the themes and images we create for you.

When your book debuts, it will be complete with Cover Art, dust-jacket blurbs and descriptions, as well as all the verbiage and tools on the website. **All this is done for you.** And it is expected that you will take this material and creatively mold and massage it into all the various forms you need to carry out the execution of your marketing plan. However, that molding and massaging *will* need to be done by *you*—because many elements of your communications are going to be situation dependent.

But at a minimum you are going to need to arm yourself with a good **Query Letter** and **30-Second Pitch**, as was discussed earlier, i.e. Queries and Pitches that you're comfortable with and feel confident using. You will need to work out a **good opening verbal pitch** for phone calls, book store visits, and interviews. If you haven't done it before, getting your Pitch down can be a little frustrating at first. And you may find yourself experimenting with some pitches, which you modify over time or change completely, once you start to see what works and what doesn't. But that's the secret—learning by doing.

...writing the book is only half the job. The other half is to again apply your creative juices and talents to create and wield the "Tools of Persuasion" that are needed to compel an ever growing group of people to read and enjoy your work.

What's key to remember here is that your creativity as a writer—as an artist—is being called upon to fulfill the "other half of the writing profession," which is **persuading people to read your books**. It took one measure of your creative talent to create the book in the first place. But recognize clearly that writing the book is only half the job. The other half is to again apply your creative juices and talents to create and wield the "Tools of Persuasion" that are needed to compel an ever growing group of people to read and enjoy your work. These two elements of creativity *must* work together in concert. And *you* are an integral part of that process.

Look at the challenge of getting a good review, or a popular radio interview, or a top panel seat at a major convention with the same determination you used to submit your work to Agents and Editors in hopes of getting it published in the first place. When you queried Editors and Agents in the past, it was to convince them to read your stuff, in hopes they would like it and thus help you achieve your goal of becoming published. This process is in the same vein, except now you're not selling your book in order get it into print,

you are selling it to your Ideal Customer, News Editors, and Media Producers—basically a whole new audience. And to do so, recognize that you have the obligation to speak *their* language, and persuade them to buy what you’re now selling. But also recognize that **as an ArcheBooks Author, you are not alone**, and have *lots* of help—help that is exceedingly rare for authors in general. Take advantage of it!

Hey, you *will* make mistakes! That’s OK. That’s part of the process, too. You will not be warmly received by everyone. Some bookstore people, producers, interviewers, news editors, reporters, etc. can really be jerks, stupid, or both. Others you will find delightful and helpful. You therefore must learn to play the game by a law of averages. That is, if 20% of your attempts are effective, then you start to get an idea of how many places you have to hit to achieve your goals. Notice that “I want everyone on the face of the earth to love me and my book” is NOT one of your goals. The trick is to find out the subset of humanity who *will* love your book and then communicate to *them*.

YOUR ACTION PLAN AND METRICS

As we noted before, all of these elements may not be physically possible, practical, or even desirable for everyone. That’s OK. It’s a “model plan” designed to show you what’s possible, and an attempt to encourage you to try some of these elements if you either weren’t aware of them in the past, or didn’t fully understand how to do so. So with all that in mind, let’s summarize what we’ve discussed.

Well, we’ve talked about a lot of potential tools and methods to get out there and push your book, build your audience, and develop your career as a professional author. But knowledge alone accomplishes nothing without action. You have to go **do it**. Below is a summary of all the goals outlined in the preceding pages. Now is the time to sit down and use this list as a checklist to create a schedule of planned activity on a **Calendar** and then go execute your plan.

- **Identify and Understand my Ideal Customer through Research**
- **Investigate my Competition through Research**
- **Assemble all my Promotional Materials and Kits**
- **Set up my Marketing Plan Execution Calendar**
- **Two (2) Book Signings per month**
- **Four (4) Bookstore Visits per week**
- **Eight (8) Radio Station Pitches per month**
- **One (1) Radio Interview per month**
- **One (1) Local TV Interview in the 1st six months**
- **Query a minimum of four (4) Periodicals for a Review**
- **Query all your Local Newspapers within the first two (2) months**
- **Attend at least one (1) major trade event per year**
- **Attend at least three (3) regional trade events per year**
- **Set up your Customer File List of at least 100 names in the first month**
- **Get Postcards Printed and mail 50 per month for 5 months**
- **Investigate one Ad Opportunity and place an Ad**

This list represents our *suggested* recommendations. It's up to you how many of these things you actually do, and in what quantities, or what new ideas you might add. The point is that **you have a plan**. Within that plan is a list of **THINGS TO DO**. Beside each of those things is a **Date**, a point fixed in time, when it's going to happen. Then you execute your plan.

Success Metrics

A plan isn't really a plan if it isn't "bounded in time," which means it has quantifiable **milestones** and **metrics**. With the exception of the Research noted in the first two items (which should have a deadline!), all the rest of the items should involve **specific quantities of actions or events**. That's what your plan needs. And once your quantities are defined, then you have something to measure against. It's hard to know if your plan is working if there's no way to **measure** it. Ultimately, your efforts will be measured in terms of book sales, but you need something more granular than that to know if what you're doing is helping, hurting, or irrelevant. Therefore, for each item on your plan, you must define a **success metric**.

The success metric needs to be something you can physically observe and measure, to know whether your plan's tactical element is working or not. Some of these will be easier than others. For example, if your goal is to schedule two book signings a month, and also to visit four stores a week, you are going to know very quickly if you're succeeding in getting those Book Signing events on the Calendar. What you may discover is that for every ten stores you visit, you get a Signing scheduled. If you're only doing four visits a week, or sixteen visits a month, you may not hit your goal of scheduling two Signings a month. Thus, you may see the need to increase bookstore visits to five per week, so you get ten every two weeks, and out of those ten you get a Signing and achieve your monthly goal.

How many of your bookstore visits result in book **orders**? A follow-up visit might be the metric you need to find that out. That is, **keep a log** of your bookstore visits, and schedule a follow up visit some number of days or weeks or months in future to stop back by and see if they have your book.

Every element of your plan should have a success metric assigned to it, and you are responsible to ensure that all your efforts get measured and adjustments are made to your plan to compensate for what's working and what's not. As you roll out your plan for the first six months you are going to have a lot of data points about your efforts that you didn't have when you started. From that data, your plan gets refined again, and you keep executing. As your successful efforts begin to translate into increased book sales and royalties, you will discover more resources to do more and make your plan even stronger.

When we discussed earlier the possibility of it taking four or more years to build your audience to a level where you could work fulltime as a writer, understand that this is a goal—bounded in time. That's not just a lofty aspiration or naïve hope. No, it can be a **target** for you to figure out how to get there from here, plotting, strategizing, planning, executing, measuring, adjusting, improving, until the job is done.

And when you achieve that goal, what you will discover is that you haven't "arrived" at a place where you just kick back and don't work anymore. No, you'll have achieved a new life, where half of it is consumed with creating amazing new stories and the other half working to help more and more people find out about them and enjoy them. That's a great profession, and potentially a most rewarding one—if you **plan to succeed**.