



The Resource

Vol. 1, No. 2

www.Meetup.com/Author-Books-Colorado

Savvy Authors Who
Want Their Books to
Soar Think ...

Author U

Author U stretches members to a higher level. Some will be publishers, some will not, but ALL will learn and grow.

Author U shows YOU, the author, how to be the best you think you can be . . . and then how to be even more than you thought you could be.

Learn the ropes to become a publisher yourself.

Heading to NY? Receive strategies that will hook both publisher and agent.

Continue to learn and meet terrific people and achieve success. Author U is waiting for you.

Success comes from hard work, careful planning, learning your craft, and being in the right place at the right time ... Author U shows you how.

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Penny Sansevieri

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Author U Is One Year Old!



Over 100 members and their families celebrated at AU's first annual BBQ on July 17, 2010. From 4:00 in the afternoon until the last good-bye at 10:30, guests connected, schmoozed (no agendas), and enjoyed a great time.

Looking back at the last year, we remember our first packed meeting, held in August 2009, in which we revealed the format that AU would operate within: evening meetings (dinner included) and a workshop on a specific topic. Either Judith or her partner, Katherine Carol, would lead it; and usually a guest presenter who was an expert in the topic du jour would round out the evening.

Programs included covers and branding, publishing business models, ebooks and the eworld, book marketing, social media, book titles, and video production.

Saturday BootCamps were sprinkled in every few months—half day and full day. Eric Kampmann, CEO of Midpoint Trade Books, delivered the ins and outs of book distribution; and Heather Lutze, Kim Field, Cathie Beck, Kelly Johnson, and Mike Zabinski structured a day focused on a variety of book marketing strategies.

A Holiday dinner and a summer member-and-family BBQ filled out the year.

Partnerships have been created with a variety of author and publishing vendors—Bayaud Enterprises (book delivery site in Denver), Midpoint Trade Books (discounted distribution), and DarkFire Productions (discounted ebooks).

Author U is all about author development and success—from the beginning of the process—an idea—to completion of the manuscript. And then we move on to what's next: getting an agent and publisher or self-publishing, finding the right creation and production team if self-publishing is the chosen option, forming a platform, creating the infrastructure for self- and independent book publishers, marketing, and selling books—lots of them.

Author U is all about growing, completing, accomplishing. Welcome to the journey—it's enticing, exciting, and rewarding.

Happy Birthday to Us... Judith

From Blog to Book

Penny C. Sansevieri



In the past few months, I've come in contact with numerous bloggers who are ready to take their work from blog to book. Here are some tips if you're trying to raise the bar on your blog and get it noticed by a publisher:

Blog often: If you want to get your blog noticed, you need to be blogging daily. It'll help you look articulate and increase your traffic and search engine ranking. If no one is finding you, how do you expect a publisher to?

Write great blog posts: Keep your writing strong. Not all your blog posts will be worthy of front page news, but your writing must remain consistently good. Posts should be unique, helpful, enlightening, or whatever your goal for the blog is.

Be consistent in your message: If you start a blog on dogs, don't talk about guinea pigs three posts into it. Keep it topical and on message *always*.

Educate yourself in publishing: To compete in the publishing market, you need to know the industry. Go to writers conferences, read trade publications (like *Publishers Weekly*), and dig into it. I highly recommend publishersmarketplace.com. You can register for either their free or paid *Publishers Lunch* newsletter. With a membership, you can also find editors and agents who might be interested in your topic.

Tell people you have a blog: Have a signature file on your email. Make sure your blog address is listed on your business cards.

Get a unique URL: To be a serious blogger, you need a serious domain name. Yes, you can get "sallyauthor.blogspot.com," but that's not *your* property—Google owns this. Buy a domain name and make sure your blog is hosted there.

Brand yourself: When you're ready and you have the budget, find someone who can turn your blog into a custom site.

Social network on blogs: Get to know who else is doing what you're doing and make friends. Comment on their blog posts so they know you. Go to a blog search site like Google blog search, type in your keyword, and follow the top five bloggers. See what they do, and then thank them for their knowledge by posting helpful comments on their blogs. Read my article on social networking on blogs at <http://amarketingexpert.com/ameblog/marketing/social-networking-on-blogs/>.

Market your blog: Get a Twitter page and feed your blog through your account (you can use Twitterfeed.com to do this). Consider a Facebook Fanpage and feed your blog through that, as well. Get as many access points as possible, and social networking sites are feeder sites. Use the content on these sites to help you dig into your markets and gather new readers for your blog.

Make your blog shareable: Make sure that folks can share your blog posts to sites like Twitter, Facebook, and all the social bookmarking sites. It's an easy widget to add, and most blogs come with it pre-installed.

Social bookmarking: Social bookmark all your posts. Bookmark on the major sites like Digg, Delicious, StumbleUpon, and Social Poster. You can add more to this list, but those are the majors.

Keep track of your stats: Keep a close eye on your blog traffic. Learn how to read the site analytics (which is a lot easier than it sounds).

Penny C. Sansevieri, CEO and founder of Author Marketing Experts, Inc., is a best-selling author and internationally recognized book marketing and media relations expert. To learn more about Penny's books or her promotional services, you can visit her web site at www.AMarketingExpert.com. To subscribe to her free ezine, send a blank email to: <mailto:subscribe@amarketingexpert.com>

2010 BBQ Author U

Lynn Hellerstein
Lynn McCleod
Ronnie Moore



Jane Withers
Laurie Weiss
Jonathon Weiss
Greg Meyerhoff
Phissy Salisbury

Steve Johnson
Kelly Johnson
Kevin Cullis



Member Kudos



Lynn McLeod officially launched her first book, *From Simms to Zanzibar, What they didn't tell me in High School about Success*—in Simms, Texas, at her former high school's annual graduation. Each graduating senior received a copy, and she sold an additional two cases at another signing. Book signing was done in conjunction with music concert performed by James Garrett and his Branson band (brother). The big event was heralded by the Texarkana Gazette. Lynn's bonus: she booked four speaking gigs from the Texas launch. She's now working on her Colorado launch.

Ophelia's Oracle: Discovering the Happy, Healthy Self-Aware and Confident Girl in the Mirror by **Donna DeNomme** and **Tina Proctor** received a first place COVR (Coalition of Visionary Resources) Award in the children/teen category. The award was presented at the International New Age Trade Show on June 26 to enthusiastic applause.

Lynn Hellerstein reports that three foreign publishers have requested a copy of her multi-award winning book, *See It. Say It. Do It!* for review—two from Korea and one from China.

She continues to do multiple radio interviews and receive press coverage. The icing on the book cake was that her firm, Hellerstein & Brenner Vision Center PC, was named the Gold Medal Winner of Vision Care for Kids by *Colorado Parent Family Favorites 2010*.

Lyndia Barbaccia's *Simple Wisdom for the Not So Simple Business* continues to garner book awards. She recently added the Bay Area Independent Publishers Association for Best Self-Help Book of 2010, the Best Business/Motivational book for 2010 from the International Book Awards, and the Silver Medal in the category of Relaxation and Meditation from Living Now Book Awards. In June, *Simple Wisdom* was a finalist in Spirituality and Business categories with the Indie Excellence Book Awards.

Ann Louise Ramsey reports that she is now working with RMCR (www.RockyMountainCockerRescue.org) at their rescue events and donating a significant portion of her books and Happy Dog Art greeting card sales to the organization. She's also connected with INATS (www.WildIrisMarket.com) and will soon be selling her products on their website.

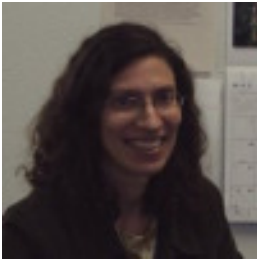
Lois Hjelmstad reports that her new book, *This Path We Share: Reflecting on 60 Years of Marriage*, won second place, Inspirational, in CIPA's 2010 EVVY Awards. It also won Bronze, Relationships/Marriage from Living Now Book Awards.

Shawn Harris is proud to announce that *Beer, Women, and Bad Decisions* is now available on Amazon, as well as for the iPhone/iPod Touch (and soon the iPad!). The book is an adult Choose Your Own Adventure-styled story where the reader can make decisions along the way.

Judith Briles is thrilled to share that *Show Me About Book Publishing*, co-written with John Kremer and Rick Frishman, is DONE and will be available in November.

Keeping Your Wholesalers Happy

Susan Bhat



Working with wholesalers can be expensive. Once you've established a relationship with one or more of them, you may be tempted to put all your efforts into selling direct, where you make more money, hold onto the contacts, and develop personal relationships with retailers. If you do that, however, you risk losing your wholesaler relationship because you will be taking all the sales.

It is wise to hang on to your wholesaler relationships for several reasons. First, you have more cache as a publisher because you are represented by more channels. Also, your customers have more options and fewer reasons to turn down your titles. Third, you have a backup plan for the customers who order only through wholesalers and refuse to buy direct. Finally, you have the option of funneling sales you don't want to do directly through your wholesalers.

How do you keep your wholesaler happy?

The number one thing wholesalers want is sales. If you can drive sales to them, they'll be happy with you, no matter how troublesome any other areas might be. Of course, it's important to have quality control, undamaged and correct product arriving in a timely fashion, and good recordkeeping; but these are all secondary to sales.

List your wholesalers in your catalogs, on your website, and on any marketing you are doing to retailers. This helps funnel sales to them and makes it easy for customers to determine who carries your product/book(s). Getting the word out is important; doing this will probably create the most sales for your wholesalers.

Let your wholesalers know when you are sending out information and to whom. Some wholesalers have sales reps and are happy to follow up on leads you give them. Sometimes it takes another contact in order to close the sale.

Send steady sales to wholesalers, not just events where there might be big returns. It's discouraging to have only a few big sales and big returns from the customers because it seems as if your book doesn't have good staying power.

Know who your contacts are at the wholesalers and what your options are. If you're coming up on a deadline at the wholesaler (a review after 90 days or after 365 days to see what the sales have been and if they want to continue on, for example), give them a call or email to check in. Do you have leads for them? Do you have publicity coming up? Try to maintain some visibility with them because they are constantly reviewing titles to see what needs to be returned. Titles with no activity and no word from the publisher often get bumped first.

Ask whether your wholesaler has programs you might participate in that make sense for your titles. Coop plans, catalogs, newsletters, etc., are all opportunities for you to support the relationship and make yourself visible and important to the wholesaler. The more important you are to them, the more they'll remember your books and think of you for other opportunities such as taking books to trade shows.

As with everything in life (and sales), communication is the key.

***Susan Bhat** is the General Manager and Buyer for Books West, a small Western Regional wholesaler in Denver, Colorado. She has also worked for independent and chain bookstores as a buyer and merchandiser, has served on the MPIBA Board, and is a current member of their Advisory Council.*

Printing Your Books: What Is the Next Technology?

Tom Campbell



In the early part of this decade, digital printing was frowned upon by bookstores and mainstream publishers as inferior technology for vanity publishers. Today, everyone from main stream publishers to bookstores with their Espresso machines has embraced digital print engines. The current trend is strongly based on a simple financial model. Print what you can sell and keep inventory to a minimum. In practice, you make money by not wasting money on inventory that doesn't move. So now that we have decided digital printing is fine for the customers, what's next?

Inkjet is the answer. More and more printers like Adibooks and King Printing Company, Inc., are installing their own inkjet systems from companies such as Kodak, Hewlett Packard, and Screen. The offset class quality, productivity, and price give the publisher the ability to manage total cost, which includes the cost of ownership with inventory. Inkjet provides cost effective 1-4 color text printing on multiple substrates. From novels to children's books, all can be printed using the latest inkjet technology.

For years, the industry has purchased their printing based on a margin model. The more printing you purchased, the lower the unit price per book. Unfortunately, that model created dead inventory if the book did not sell or you had multiple titles that did not sell. Often this type of inventory was scrapped or stored in a space that costs money, adding even more expense to the original investment. To measure where you stand financially, you need to know how many times your inventory turns per year. The formula:

$$\text{Inventory Turnover} = \frac{\text{Cost of Goods Sold}}{\text{Average Inventory}}$$

For many publishers this calculation is less than 1 (one) or not at all, meaning they are not recouping their investment in inventory.

The answer is investment in short run printing. It provides competitive costs to maintain reasonable margins. Strategic buying of the quantity you can sell by utilizing new digital printing models allows publishers to achieve those goals. Printers should be offering publishers total solutions, not just lower prices with more quantity. If you cannot turn your inventory at least two times per year, you should consider alternative strategies.

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The Next Author U Meeting

Thursday, September 16, with **Orval Ray Wilson—Social Media Book Marketing for Authors**. You can sign up on the website.

Advanced Book Marketing Summit

All members are encouraged to attend this event featuring **Dan Poynter, Brian Jud, and Judith Briles on August 21**

SIGN UP NOW!

www.Meetup.com/author-books-colorado

www.MastersOfBookMarketing.com

The Technology and Tips Toolbox

by Kelly Johnson



As a former high school teacher, I love learning. In fact, I “geek out” when I find new tools and resources that help me, my clients, and my colleagues to be more productive with our time and to run our businesses more efficiently.

One of the areas in which my clients request assistance is with their websites and blogs. Their comments range from “I hear the word HTML and my palms start to sweat” to “I have created my own web pages and am familiar with coding.” One specific need that comes up often is the addition of forms on sites. Forms are required for a variety of reasons, including contact forms, feedback forms, order forms, questionnaires, etc. We want to capture our site visitors’ information and feedback—those details are gold!

Are you interested in adding a form(s) to your site without having to know coding or learn a new software program? Check out these two services:

MyContactForm—<http://www.mycontactform.com/>

MyContactForm has an online wizard that takes you step-by-step in building a custom form for your site. Each step prompts you for the information needed to develop the form. Once it is created, you (or your webmaster or virtual assistant) will copy and paste the code provided by the system onto your site.

MyContactForm offers two types of accounts: Standard User (free) and Premium Member (\$29.99 per year—yep, you read that right—per year!)

Both accounts offer an unlimited number of questions you may place on your forms and an unlimited number of forms you may create. In addition, the Premium Member account includes these additional features: contact management system, file attachments, hosted forms, exporting form submitted data, CAPTCHA, and the ability to have a submitted form sent simultaneously to 5 different emails.

Wufoo—<http://wufoo.com/>

Wufoo is an HTML form builder that allows people to build online forms such as a contact form, mailing list form, survey, workshop registration form, online order form, and quizzes without having to know or write any code. The form builder walks you through each step of creating your forms.

Wufoo provides the code for you (or your webmaster or virtual assistant) to place the form on your site, or you may email a link to your form. All account options allow you to upgrade, downgrade, or cancel at any time.

The Gratis (free) account lets you create 3 forms with up to 10 fields and have 100 entries/month. The paid accounts vary in price and features and start at \$14.95/month.

Check these out and see which one best fits your business needs. With either of these services, you will be a pro at creating forms for your site in no time.

***Kelly Johnson** specializes in working with authors to manage the technical, creative, and administrative projects for their businesses and book projects. She’s an article writing coach, does blog and website maintenance, knows how to implement an online shopping strategy, and is the principal of Cornerstone Virtual Assistance. She can be reached at KJohnson@VACornerstone.com and her website is www.VACornerstone.com.*

Save the Dates ...

Friday, August 20 and
Saturday, August 21

*The Published Authors
Book Marketing Summit*
is coming ...

Dan Poynter

(*The Self-Publisher's Manual*)

Brian Jud

(*Beyond the Bookstore*)

Judith Briles

(*Show Me About Book
Publishing*—November release)

Plan an extensive day that is focused on marketing and selling your book. Cost will be \$129 and includes workbook, breaks, and lunch.

How would you like to pick Dan Poynter's amazing publishing brain? Or probe all the ways you can develop niche markets, drill into them, and create special sales? Brian Jud will tell you how. If you have a book, you can sell thousands of copies by speaking about it. Judith Briles will show you how to craft a talk, identify the markets that will work best, and how to contact with the people that pay speakers.

Full details of the Summit can be found at

www.MastersOfBookMarketing.com

BONUS! Dinner with the Book Masters on Friday, **August 20** Limited to 27.

Reserve your spot NOW

www.MastersOfBookMarketing.com

Questions: Call Judith at
303-885-2207



BookSmarts

Authors need guidance in their writing...and they need refreshers along the way. Here are a few staples that belong in your personal library.

The Elements of Style by Strunk and White is equivalent to having salt and pepper on the table—it's the basics—you need it.

On Writing Well by William Zinsser is a must have—write what you want to say so your reader understands what you are saying—just get it.

Chicago Manual of Style, is a necessity—you need some “authority” to fall back on—use the one most publishers do. (The sixteenth edition is just now coming out.)

The Elements of Copywriting by Gary Blake and Robert Bly. Perfect for promotional writing (media releases, book pitches).

Create Your Writer's Life by Cynthia Morris helps you get unstuck (if you are)—a great guide to writing easier, it offers motivation and structure to create a writing environment that works for your style—not just a formula.

The Writer's Journey by Christopher Vogler should be a companion for every fiction writer. Benefiting from an insider's look at how writers utilize mythic structure to generate powerful narratives. The writer, meaning you, will come away with step-by-step guidelines for creating plots and realistic characters.

Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing by Mignon Fogarty is much more than a grammar guide—Judith likes the “quick and dirty tricks” part. After all, we authors need all the help we can get—and if it's quick, by golly, so much the better. Rather than struggle with where to insert commas, let Grammar Girl kick it up. She shows you how to be a better, more engaging writer. What's not to like about that? Tips for tweeting and blogs are included. The Book Shepherds insist that their clients get, and use, *Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing*.