



Marketing Mistakes A-Level Authors Make

In today's publishing industry, it is common for 80% of a publisher's book sales to come from less than 20% of their authors. These "A-level" authors are treasured for their book's ability to sell 100,000 – 1,000,000 copies or more. Plus, their platforms are so strong that their presence at a book-signing or speaking event can quickly draw hundreds of readers. Thus, publishers tend to devote more marketing dollars and resources to these writers. Who can blame them? A-level authors represent a safer bet to produce much-needed revenue, especially in a difficult economy.

The surprising reality, however, is the amount of marketing mistakes that some A-level authors continue to make. Sure, they've sold a lot of books. But, they could generate even larger sales if their oversights didn't hold them back. By making a few simple improvements, these authors could sell an extra 25,000 – 100,000 copies.

So, if you're a top author, take a moment to examine if you might be limiting yourself. For new authors, pay attention and consider some of the mistakes to avoid in the future. And, if you're a publisher, make sure your top guns aren't wasting opportunities to boost book sales.

Mistake #1: Falling behind on new technology.

As our society transforms into an Internet-based culture, it's imperative for authors to use new technology to reach readers. Fortunately, it's never been easier to setup a website and use social networking tools to influence large groups of people. But, I'm shocked at how many A-level authors fail to maximize these resources.

For example, I recently spoke with two publishing houses who admitted that some of their best-selling authors didn't have a website! That's a major mistake. In addition, I've viewed many A-level author websites that haven't changed in over a year. They look like static, boring brochures.

There are some authors who prefer to avoid technology or hide from their public. But, an A-level author who lacks a web presence is like a pro tennis player who plays with an antique wooden racket. At the minimum, every author needs a website that allows readers to experience the power of their books and provide ways to spread buzz. Even if the author isn't personally involved, a third-party can manage the system.

Don't shun technology. Instead, use it to your benefit. If you already have a large platform, then maintaining a website, blog, or FaceBook page will only make you more efficient. These new tools are a great way to capture readers at their emotional peak, generate national word-of-mouth, and empower fans to help market your books.

Mistake #2: Believing that "It's all about Me."

Authors who sell over 100,000 copies should be proud of their success. Becoming a bestseller is a rare achievement that most writers only dream about. But, the marketing style of many A-level authors comes across as "it's all about me."

For instance, I recently visited over five big-time author websites whose Home page was actually the Store page for their books! From the beginning, their marketing seems to imply, "I don't care about you. Just hurry up and buy my book." Other examples include bestselling authors who plug their books throughout an entire speech. The audience wonders if they're stuck in an infomercial.

Spread Your Message Like Wildfire

You can't sell books if you don't let readers know that they exist. But, you can't endear readers to your message and grow a larger platform if you don't meet their needs first. The main issue that concerns most people is "How can you help me?" To establish the value that you offer your audience, consider these two questions:

- How is the condition of my audience improved?
- What tangible results do my readers experience?

The key to effective book marketing is showing how you meet people's needs, even if you write fiction. Therefore, your marketing efforts should be reader-focused, rather than self-focused. Examine all of your promotional materials, such as websites, bios, blogs, and brochures. Do they express a selfless desire to help others? Or, do they convey a sense of self-importance?

When A-level authors achieve success, some mistakenly believe that people are flocking to their personality. In most cases, however, the real attraction is to the message that changed the readers' lives. When authors stop focusing on value, they start churning out fluff that leaves people disappointed. Over time, this mistake erodes trust and respect with their audience.

Mistake #3: Stagnating in the Success Trap.

If an author sells a million books, it can be easy for them to think that they've reached their peak. But, this mindset can lead one to stagnate. In the corporate world, leaders are expected to expand their knowledge and increase their skills. Yet, in the publishing world, many A-level authors are treated with awe and rarely challenged.

Worldwide management consultant, Alan Weiss, explains the success trap by saying, "To grow, you must fail periodically so that you are continually aware of opportunities for improvement and for expanding your envelope. This discipline not only will provide for internal stimulation, but it will influence how the external world views you."

When top authors get stuck in success, they can end up out of sync with their audience. An example is a recent parenting book by a well-known male author who presumed that most mothers weren't working outside of the home. Or, if they worked, their jobs were mostly administrative roles. Plus, his parenting advice never touched on remarriage and how to handle raising stepchildren. This author's material is so out of touch with current society that he risks losing credibility and growth potential.

Other examples include A-level authors who fail to improve their public speaking skills. They don't use fresh illustrations or recent experiences. Their messages lack creativity and original content. The lack of self-evaluation prevents these thought-leaders from speaking at larger events that could dramatically impact book sales. It's easier than ever before to learn new talents. An author's platform usually starts to diminish when complacency takes hold.

In a tough economy, A-level authors are the fortunate few who can still touch thousands of readers and sell large numbers of books. They're in the best position to thrive and keep their publisher growing. So, don't let simple mistakes undermine platform potential. Utilize new technology, stay focused on reader needs, and avoid the success trap. Enjoy the benefits of a bestseller status, and use it to the full advantage.



Rob Eagar is the founder of WildFire Marketing and helps authors and publishers sell more books through innovative marketing strategies. For more information, call **1-800-267-2045** or visit: **www.StartaWildFire.com**

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