



# BESTSELLER CHECKLIST

**46** ACTIONS

TO TURN  
YOUR IDEA  
INTO A  
**BESTSELLING  
BOOK**

# ABOUT THIS CHECKLIST

Let me begin by answering the most obvious question:

*“What is this PDF?”*

Well, you're reading a modified version of the same checklist that Steve uses whenever he publishes a Kindle book. (And when he works with Barrie, they both use a modified version to manage the process.)

Whenever an idea pops into his head, he prints this checklist and completes each action item until the book is published on Amazon. In essence, this checklist will take *you* from idea to execution.

Let's face it—publishing a book can be extremely overwhelming.

It's not just a matter of writing 20,000 words, then submitting it to Amazon. Instead, you need to complete *dozens* of steps to make it happen, and you need to be consistent in your efforts.

If you study successful entrepreneurs, you'll see they're smart about creating “systems” for their businesses. An important aspect of *any* system is breaking down the process into easy-to-complete action items.

**What you're reading now is Steve's system.** Hopefully it will become the seed to *your* system as well. While we've outlined the process that we follow, we encourage you to modify, add or even delete certain steps. The important thing is to create a process you follow on a daily basis.



# ABOUT US

You might know us already. Perhaps you don't. So let's start by introducing ourselves and going over our experiences with self-publishing.

The three of us are part of the [Authority.pub](#) website and podcast (both are being released in the next few months.)

**Steve Scott** is the author of dozens of bestselling books on self-publishing, marketing, blogging, entrepreneurship, productivity, habit creation, and more. He's a recognized leader and expert in self-publishing and the founder of a popular podcast on the topic.

**Barrie Davenport** is also an author of several bestselling books on self-confidence, mindfulness, habits, simplicity, and personal growth. She's a certified coach, thought leader, and founder of the top-ranked blog *Live Bold and Bloom*. She spent over 20 years as a marketing and public relations executive.

**Ron Clendenin** is an online and book marketing and traffic building expert. He has consulted with top authors like #1 New York Times best-selling author Phil Town, and he helps

authors, speakers and celebrities build their audience and grow their brands.

Each of us have distinct but complimentary areas of expertise that we put use to support you in all aspects of writing, publishing, marketing, and selling your books.

The one thing you'll learn from the team at [Authority.pub](#) is success with self-publishing doesn't happen because of one event.

Instead, it happens when you practice the fundamentals on a daily basis: *Focus on a single niche, find a good hook for each book, provide quality content, hire excellent cover designers, build an email list and engage with readers.*

We'll admit these strategies aren't *sexy*. But let us tell you something. . .they work better than any "Kindle Gold Rush" tactic that promises overnight success. If you continue to follow along with our self-publishing journeys (and check out our podcast), you'll see that on a long enough timeline, the fundamentals will always beat out any flash-in-a-pan gimmick.

# ABOUT YOU

## YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD THE EXPRESSION "RESULTS MAY DIFFER."

This is a spiel marketers use whenever they're promoting a particular product. It's intended as a legal loophole that describes how two people can apply a particular strategy and often get very different results.

In the case of this checklist, the results will *definitely* differ. Why?

Because success with Kindle requires you to get many things right. And even when you do the exact same thing a best-selling author does, you'll often get a vastly different result.



## OVERALL, THOUGH, THERE ARE FOUR ACTIONS WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO DO AS A SELF-PUBLISHER:

1. Target a specific niche.
2. Build an email list for that audience.
3. Focus on (at least) one platform outside of Amazon (i.e. a blog, podcast or YouTube channel).
4. Use (at least) one social media site to connect with readers, promote content from your platform and market your books.

Again, this goes back to the fundamentals. Gone are the days when you could “game” Amazon’s algorithm and sell thousands of low-quality books. Most of the people who currently do well on Amazon understand the importance of building a platform to support a specific line of books.

### SO WHAT’S THE POINT HERE?

We’re firm believers in respecting people’s time. When creating this checklist, we had to assume you’re currently building a platform or are on your way to starting one. If we provided tutorials on *how to blog*, *build an email list* or *create a social media presence*, then this checklist would turn into a 100,000-word compendium that nobody would read. To make this checklist *actionable*, we made the conscious choice to stick to a brief description for each step.

So, if you’re struggling with a specific aspect of building an author platform, we encourage you to check out our podcast, the [Authority Self-Publishing Show](#).

We go into specific detail about what it takes to build authority in any market and monetize your expertise.

Well, that’s it for the introduction. Now it’s time to dive into the checklist.

To keep things simple, we will break down this book into two sections.

The first is an introduction to the checklist that includes a description of and rationale behind each action. Not only will it tell you *what to do*, you’ll learn why each step is an important part of the book publishing process.

The next section includes a printable version of the checklist. Odds are, when you go through the process a few times, you won’t need the extra information to complete the steps. That means you can print out just the checklist and kill fewer trees.





### AT THE TOP OF THE CHECKLIST, YOU'LL SEE TWO ITEMS:

1. **Working Concept:** Every book starts with a simple idea. Fortunately, you don't always need a fully fleshed-out idea to get started. Whenever you get inspired by a book topic, print out this checklist and write down an overview of what you'd like to write.
2. **Deadline:** Professional authorpreneurs (authors who are also entrepreneurs) understand the importance of self-imposed deadlines. When you start a book, set a target date for when you'd like to complete it. By having the deadline at the top of the checklist, you'll have a constant reminder to take action on a daily basis.

Now that we've gone over the preliminaries and you know why we're qualified to give you Kindle publishing tips, let's dive into the introduction to the checklist. You'll learn how to make this step-by-step process an invaluable tool in your publishing arsenal.



# INTRODUCING THE BESTSELLER CHECKLIST



## #1. THINK OF A BASIC BOOK IDEA.

Write down your next book idea two weeks *before* you plan on getting started. Typically, we like to brainstorm a follow-up book while putting the finishing touches on the current title. You'd be surprised at how often a good idea will pop into your head. Our advice? Develop the habit of writing down every thought—even if an idea seems silly at first.

[Evernote](#) is great place for maintaining ideas. Simply create a dedicated folder or “Stack” dedicated to potential Kindle book topics. Use it to record every idea that pops into your head. When it's almost time to work on that next book, open up this list and pick an idea that's worth pursuing.

## #2. GAUGE THE PROFIT POTENTIAL OF A BOOK IDEA.

LOOK ON AMAZON TO SEE IF THE IDEA HAS ANY MERIT. WE USE THE “#30,000 RULE” TO JUDGE A BOOK’S PROFIT POTENTIAL. HERE’S WHAT TO DO:



- Go to the “Kindle Store” section and enter relevant keywords.
- Find books related to your topic.
- View the product listing for one of the books.
- Scroll down to the “Product Details” section.
- Look at the “Amazon Best Sellers Rank” section to guesstimate the average sales numbers for the book. ([Here’s what this looks like.](#))
- Repeat this process multiple times with related books.
- If a couple of books have a #30,000 ranking or lower, then they *sell at least* five copies per day. This is a decent starting point for any book topic.

Now, let us be honest here—Steve no longer uses this rule all that much. The reason? The Kindle marketplace is filled with too many “me-too” books. So we like to focus on creating *unique content* for the habits market. That said, Steve did use the #30,000 rule when he first explored the profit potential of the habit niche.



### **#3. DEDICATE TWO WEEKS FOR BRAINSTORMING TALKING POINTS.**

As we suggested earlier, decide on a book idea two weeks before you plan on getting started. This gives you time to let your subconscious work through different talking points (i.e. sections, sub-topics, anecdotes and valuable resources).

Again, we recommend the Evernote app as a great tool for fleshing out ideas. Use the app to create a Notebook for each book idea. Then add new thoughts the moment they pop into your head.

## #4. IDENTIFY SEVEN TARGET KEYWORDS.

You're allowed to include seven keywords for every Kindle book. Amazon readers enter keywords into the search bar to find interesting books, so using all seven keyword slots will increase "discoverability" for your book. You also want to make sure you're targeting the *right* seven phrases.

### THERE ARE THREE GREAT TOOLS FOR FINDING KEYWORDS:



1. **Amazon's Autocomplete.** These are the suggestions that come up as you're typing a word into Amazon. As an example, when I enter the word "productivity," I see keywords such as "productivity hacks," "productivity books," "productivity ninja" and "productivity apps." While some of these are book titles, other phrases represent specific searches made by readers.
2. **Keyword Planner.** This tool is part of the [Google AdWords](#) program. While it shows the exact demand for keywords in *Google*, you will find that what's popular on Google is often popular on Amazon.
3. **Merchant Words.** We don't use [Merchant Words](#) as much as the other two. The problem with this tool (in my opinion) is it shows demand for all of Amazon—not just the Kindle store. Plus, the results often don't make much sense. So use this tool if you get stuck, but don't base an entire book idea on just these results.

Honestly, our advice is to not worry too much about keyword research. (We're aware this is contrary to what many "Kindle gurus" recommend.) Instead, focus on problems you know people are experiencing, provide great solutions to those problems and use keywords to get a little bit of extra organic traffic from Amazon.



## #5. IDENTIFY THE HOOK FOR YOUR BOOK.

The hook is intended to grab your reader's attention. It's a short, one- to two-sentence "elevator pitch" that describes a solution to the reader's problem. In business terms, it's your unique selling proposition (USP). You want to identify your hook *before* writing and then craft the entire book around solving this problem.

As an example, think of the hook for this checklist. Lots of information has been written about the self-publishing process, but not many authors provide direct insight into the actions they take on a regular basis. So when creating this document, Steve's hook was:

**"A multi-step checklist that authors can print out and use to go from idea to fully launched book."**

You'll quickly discover that when you spend the time necessary to identify a great hook, the actual writing process is much easier.

## #6. RESEARCH YOUR TOPIC.

The best books come from your personal experience, but you should also include as much outside information as possible to flesh out your idea. That's why it's important to do research *before* you start to write.



### HERE ARE FEW WAYS TO DO THIS:

- Get facts, figures and statistics on important concepts.
- Identify good resources to mention (books, websites, blogs, etc.).
- Reach out to thought leaders in your market and ask them a few questions.
- Go to [Help a Reporter Out \(HARO\)](#) and submit a query to find knowledgeable experts who will provide additional insight.

Readers love books filled with relevant, actionable content. By spending time on the research phase, you'll produce a book that will stand the test of time.



## **#7. DO A BOOK “BRAIN DUMP.”**

Get out a legal pad and a pen (yeah, we’re old school). Now write down every idea you’d like to include in the book. Then add your notes from Evernote and details from the research you completed in step #6.

The key here is to avoid censoring yourself. Our advice is to write down as much as possible. Don’t let your “inner editor” tell you that an idea is bad. Just get everything down on paper and trust that the content will be refined later on.



## **#8. IDENTIFY YOUR CHAPTERS.**

During the brain dump, you'll recognize a pattern of major topics you'd like to cover in depth. These will be your chapters. Focus on coming up with eight to 12 chapters to form the backbone of your book.

Grab a stack of index cards (again, we're old school) and write down each talking point on the blank, unlined side.

## #9. FLESH OUT EACH CHAPTER.

**USE A FEW MORE INDEX CARDS TO FLESH OUT EACH CHAPTER. WE RECOMMEND INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**



- Shorthand for the content you'll expand on in the first draft.
- Questions readers might have about the topic.
- Potential objections and counter-arguments to your advice.
- References to the research you did in step #6.
- Personal anecdotes from your own experiences.

While creating these index cards, cross off ideas from your brain dump list. That way, by the time you're done, every idea from the original sheet of paper has been eliminated or transferred to the stack of cards.

## #10. SORT THE INDEX CARDS INTO A LOGICAL ORDER.

**NOW YOU'LL CREATE THE FORMAL STRUCTURE OF YOUR BOOK. BASICALLY, YOU'LL TAKE THE STACK OF CARDS AND:**



- Eliminate redundant ideas covered in more than one section.
- Rip up chapters/sub-chapters that don't add value for the reader.
- Move concepts from one section to another.
- Look for information gaps that need to be fleshed out.
- Identify concepts that need examples or scenario illustrations.
- Figure out which tools and websites you'll reference.
- Reorder the index cards so they are in a logical order.

We'll admit the index card process *seems* like extra work, but it's a useful strategy for getting clarity on what readers actually want.



## #11. WRITE THE OUTLINE.

Open your favorite word processing program (some people prefer Word, while others like [Scrivener](#)) and start your outline. Simply take each index card and type what's written down. Add any thoughts that didn't occur to you while creating the index cards.

At this point, you'll have a thorough outline that's been trimmed and streamlined.



## #12. WRITE THE FIRST DRAFT.

We recommend writing a first draft using the “stream of consciousness” method. Basically, we all have two types of brains while writing—the creative brain and the editing brain. Unfortunately, it’s hard to access both at the same time.

Our advice is to write as fast as possible and don’t worry about how the content sounds or if you’re making grammatical mistakes. The important thing is to get the words on paper.

Here’s where an outline is really beneficial. Other people often experience writer’s block, but you won’t wonder what to say next because everything has been planned out ahead of time. Simply look at the next section and then write whatever pops into your head.



## #13. WRITE THE SECOND DRAFT.

This is often the longest step of the process. With a second draft, you'll take off the creative hat and put on your editor hat. Now you'll carefully edit the previous draft for flow, content and overall reading experience. The book won't be "publish ready," but you should strive to clean up the content as much as possible.

**Sidebar:** You might wonder about the right length for a Kindle book. The answer? *It really varies.*

When I began publishing Kindle books, I aimed for 13,000 to 16,000 words. Now, my goal is to hit 20,000 to 25,000 words. So what's the right length? Honestly, it should be as long as it takes to thoroughly cover a topic—without including needless fluff.



## #14. FINALIZE THE TITLE OF THE BOOK.

Take a break for a few days between the second and third drafts. During this time, you'll use the keywords (from step #4) and the hook for your book (from step #5) to craft a compelling title.

Our method is to craft a main title that creates curiosity (i.e. "Habit Stacking," "To-Do List Makeover," and "Wake Up Successful") using two or three words. Each title is easy to remember and has branding potential. Then I create a sub-title that clearly describes the benefit of what the book teaches (i.e. "How to..," "7 Steps to...," "A Simple Plan to...")

Devote at least a few hours to crafting your title. Write down dozens of ideas, then mix and match your words. Go to [Thesaurus.com](https://www.thesaurus.com) and look for powerful words that describe your concepts. Keep working on these titles until you have a handful of winners.

At this point, get feedback from people you trust. Ask them (based on title only) which book they'd be more inclined to buy. You can even spend a little money to post a survey on [PickFu](https://www.pickfu.com) and get feedback from 50 to 100 people.



## #15. COMMISSION A COVER IMAGE.

Once you have a title, start looking for a graphic designer to create an eye-catching cover image.

Now, contrary to what you've been told, *people do judge books by their covers*. There's this myth going around that \$5 covers from [Fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com) sell well on Amazon.

Unfortunately, most look amateurish and end up hurting your sales instead of helping them.

Do yourself a favor and think of your cover as an *investment*. Be willing to spend the \$100 to \$300 that it takes to get a good design.



## **#16. PICK YOUR NEXT BOOK TOPIC.**

As we mentioned in step #1, you should give yourself a few weeks to mull over your next book. Start now and you'll subconsciously begin to plan out what you'll write.

Print out another copy of this checklist. Write down the working concept and set a tentative deadline for when you'll complete it. Then create a Notebook in Evernote and add your ideas throughout the next few weeks.



## **#17. POLISH THE THIRD DRAFT.**

Usually this means fixing grammatical mistakes, spotting word omissions and reading the book (out loud) to make sure the content flows. You want to get as close to “publish ready” as possible. The more you do on your own, the more time your editor will have to polish the finished product.



## #18. SEND THE BOOK TO AN EDITOR.

Getting a quality edit should be the #1 expenditure for your book business. It doesn't matter if you think you're a great writer—we all make small mistakes that are impossible to catch.

You can find a good editor on a freelance site like [Upwork](#), but once you find someone that does great work, keep using that person. He or she will often provide continuous feedback on the small mistakes you might be making. This is a great way to improve your writing skills.

## #19. FINALIZE THE BOOK COVER DESIGN.

Working with a cover designer is an ongoing process that simultaneously occurs while you're putting the finishing touches on a book. Often, an image needs a few corrections before it's ready, so you should focus on this step while working through the third draft and last rounds of edits.



### YOU CAN IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE COVER DESIGN IN THREE WAYS:

1. Shrink down the cover to 100 pixels and ask for a correction if you can't clearly see the main title. (This is important because Amazon uses small image sizes in some advertisements.)
2. Ask for feedback from friends, family and colleagues. You can even use PickFu to get feedback from strangers about this design.
3. Don't be afraid to ask for edits if something doesn't look right, but don't be one of those people who requests dozens of updates.

Ultimately, it's best to trust the recommendations of your designer. Professional designers understand colors, layout and fonts. It's okay to provide feedback, but you should also pay close attention when they make suggestions.



## **#20. REVIEW THE EDITS.**

One of the best ways to improve your writing is to go line-by-line through the corrections that your editor sends back. Do this instead of simply accepting all the changes without a second glance.

Spend time to go over each edit, find out what mistake you've made, then update the book and create a fourth draft.



## **#21. SEND TO A SECOND EDITOR (OPTIONAL).**

Sometimes it's best to have yet *another* pair of eyes on the content. Not only is this a great way to improve your writing, you'll also be more confident that those small (.1%) mistakes have been corrected.

## #22. ADD THE FRONT AND BACK MATTER.

It's important to add certain pages to the beginning and end of your book. Not only are these designed to help the reader navigate the content, they can also grow your brand by providing readers with specific "calls to action" (CTAs.)

### YOU SHOULD INCLUDE THESE ITEMS IN THE FRONT:

- A title page
- An index page
- A disclaimer/copyright statement



### A FREE BOOK OFFER (TO GROW YOUR EMAIL LIST.) AND YOU CAN INCLUDE THESE ITEMS IN THE BACK:

- Another offer for your free book
- A request for reviews
- A "More Books by" section
- Contact information (i.e. website address, email and social media accounts.)

This step should not take long because you can cut-and-paste the content from previous books, then do a few small customizations. Once this is done, you'll have a "publish- ready" book!



## **#23. SEND THE FINAL VERSION TO A BOOK FORMATTER.**

While Amazon has improved the quality of the .Mobi file, it often has a weird way of displaying characters, bullet points and hyperlinks. One solution is to hire a professional book formatter. You can easily find someone to do this through a freelancing site like [Elance.com](https://www.elance.com).

## #24. WRITE THE SALES DESCRIPTION FOR AMAZON

Open a program like Notepad and write the sales description of your book. You don't have to be professional copywriter to craft something compelling. Instead, simply break down the description into three sections:



### IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM—WHAT DO READERS STRUGGLE WITH ON A DAILY BASIS?

1. Hint at a possible solution—how do you recommend people overcome this obstacle?
2. Offer your book as the solution—what benefit does your book provide over others?

### YOU CAN USE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING HTML CODES TO MAKE CERTAIN WORDS AND PHRASES STAND OUT.

#### Bolding:

`<b>The text you want bolded</b>`

#### Italics:

`<i>The text you want italicized</i>`

#### Large Headline:

`<h1>The headline text</h1>`

#### Smaller Headline:

`<h2>This is a smaller headline </h2>`

#### NUMBERED LISTS:

`<ol>`

`<li>Numbered Point #1</li>`

`<li>Numbered Point #2</li>`

`<li>Numbered Point #3</li>`

`</ol>`

#### BULLET POINTS:

`<ul>`

`<li>Numbered Point #1</li>`

`<li>Numbered Point #2</li>`

`<li>Numbered Point #3</li>`

`</ul>`

You don't have to go crazy with the HTML. Just use it to highlight a few phrases that you want to stand out in the description.



## #25. UPLOAD THE BOOK TO KDP.

Go to [Kindle Direct Publishing \(KDP\)](#) to publish your book. Get started by pasting the sales description from Notepad. Then upload your book and cover image. Next, add your author information, keywords and other important details. Finally, set the price to **\$0.99**.

If you get stuck with any part of this process, we recommend checking out the very in- depth [help section KDP](#) offers to authors.

After uploading the book and adding all the information, click the “publish” button. The book will be sent to Amazon for review, and you should be ready to start selling within about 12 hours.



## **#26. SCAN ON TWO KINDLE DEVICES.**

Buy the book and download it to two different reading platforms (I prefer the iPhone and the Kindle Paperwhite.) Scroll through the pages and identify any formatting issues. Fix them and re-submit to Amazon.



## **#27. HIRE SOMEONE TO PROOFREAD THE BOOK.**

If you have the funds, hire someone (not your editor) to look over the final, published book. We admit this might seem like overkill, but this is your last chance to catch any major mistakes. So it doesn't hurt to pay someone (or use a few beta readers) to check out the book and provide feedback on what needs to be fixed.



## #28. FORMAT THE BOOK FOR CREATSPACE.

[CreateSpace](#) is a self-publishing platform where you can create a print version of your eBook. You won't make as much money as you do with digital versions, but it's still a nice thing to offer to readers who prefer physical books.

The problem with CreateSpace is the formatting can be difficult to get right. That's why we recommend hiring someone to do it for you. As with other services, you can find great talent on sites like Elance or you can hire the same people Steve and Barrie use: [Rob and Matt from Archangel Ink](#). (They handle both their print books and audiobooks.)



## **#29. SUBMIT THE PRINT VERSION TO CREATSPACE.**

When the formatting is complete, upload the book to CreateSpace. At first, you might be intimidated by the platform, but use it a few times and you'll discover it's easy to understand.

Simply select the "Add a New Title" link and pick the "Guided" option when it asks for what setup process you prefer. From there, CreateSpace will walk you through the entire publishing process.



### #30. CREATE ADVERTISING TRACKING CODES (OPTIONAL).

All three of us are obsessive testers and trackers when it comes to our online businesses. We like to know, with 100 percent certainty, which advertising strategies actually work. That's why it's important to create individual tracking codes for each book launch.

Unfortunately, Amazon doesn't provide authors with useful metrics (like conversion rates), so you need to set up a small workaround in order to get accurate information about your book sales.

The tool we use to track links is [Amazon Associates](#), which is the center for their affiliate marketing program. Sign up for this site and you'll have access to tools to help you measure the results from your book marketing campaigns.

Unfortunately, tracking book campaigns can get a little too high-tech for some authors. I recommend reading [this blog post](#) where Steve goes over a step-by-step process for creating tracking links.

## #31. CREATE REDIRECT LINKS.

Affiliate links (especially the ones from Amazon) often have a string of gobbledygook characters. This makes it hard to create branding and consistency with your marketing campaigns. Consider this: which of the following would you click?

[http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00JQHB67O/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B00JQHB67O&linkCode=as2&tag=dghemailstacking-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00JQHB67O/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B00JQHB67O&linkCode=as2&tag=dghemailstacking-20) or <http://www.developgoodhabits.com/stacking>

Hopefully you picked the second option. With any promotion, you want to use what's called a "redirect link." This turns a long link full of random characters into a shorter link that is easy to remember, click *or* type into a Web browser.

The redirect link tool we prefer is the [Pretty Link plugin](#) which can be installed on any WordPress blog. You can use this to create a redirect link for each of the places you'll promote your book.

As an example, whenever Steve launches a book, he creates a distinct link for each of these places: First email sent to subscribers, "last chance" email sent to subscribers, Facebook, Twitter and certain spots on my blog such as the book review page, thank you page and sidebar.

Again, this is another area that might seem like it's a whole lot of extra work, but it's really important to get this information because it helps identify the promotional strategies that generate the highest number of sales.





## #32. ADD THE BOOK TO YOUR AUTHOR PROFILE.

Your author page acts like a mini-website on Amazon. It's where readers can learn more about you and what you have to offer. That's why it's important to make sure all your books are listed on this page.

Simply go to [Amazon's Author Central](#), find the "Books" tab and select the "Add more books" button. Then locate your newly published book and select the "This is my book" option. Give it an hour or so, and then your book will automatically appear on your author page.



### **#33. SCHEDULE YOUR LAUNCH DATE.**

Your success on Amazon often depends on the success of each book launch. When we use the term “launch,” we’re referring to the promotional campaign you execute to generate a high volume of buyers, readers and reviews in a short amount of time.

Generally speaking, you need to lay the groundwork *way before* a book is published, but this isn’t easy to do if you’re creating books on a monthly basis (like me).

#### **YOU HAVE TWO BASIC OPTIONS WHEN IT COMES TO A LAUNCH:**

1. Use Amazon’s KDP Select program and give the book away for free for up to five days.
2. Offer a special discount (I prefer to price the book at \$0.99 during a launch) and try to get as many sales as possible.

## THERE ARE POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES TO EACH STRATEGY.

With a free launch, your book will get a lot of visibility. This often translates into more reviews, purchases of other books in your catalog, and list subscribers. Unfortunately, this strategy is losing its effectiveness. The tsunami of free books that flood Amazon on a daily basis makes it really hard to stand out. That's why it's important to be strategic with building buzz around your free book.

On [Steve's blog](#), there is a guest post by Nick Loper that details the specific tactics he used to get 20,000 downloads during his free launch.

The other option is to use what's called the "\$0.99 launch." On Amazon, *success begets success*. The way Amazon's algorithm works is it increases the exposure on a book if it sees there is a high volume of sales in a short amount of time.

If the algorithm feels a certain title is a book that readers want, Amazon will promote it more in high-visibility areas such as the *Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought* tab on related books, *Hot New Releases*, *Amazon Best Seller* lists and Kindle Unlimited promotions (if you're enrolled in this program).

The major downside is that you won't get as many reviews as you would with a free launch. Frankly, it's hard work to not only convince people to buy a new book, but to also go to your book page and leave a review. Then you have to do it every time you launch a new title.

Another negative is you need to generate at least *50 sales* (on your own) to get any help from Amazon. This isn't easy to do if you're a new author without an established platform.

Picking a launch strategy is a personal decision. You need to understand both the advantages and disadvantages of each model and make a choice based on what's best for your business. That said, once you pick a launch date, you should commit to it and dedicate the time necessary to turn it into a successful event.





## #34. GET AT LEAST FIVE REVIEWS.

Most potential readers aren't interested in books without reviews. That's why you should be proactive with contacting the following people:

- Readers of previous books (your best long-term strategy is to slowly build a “street team” of people who like your books and are willing to leave reviews).
- Bloggers and authority figures in your niche.
- [Amazon's top reviewers](#) (the key here is to find people who are specifically interested in your niche).

A common practice for many authors to swap reviews or, even worse, pay for reviews. We urge you to *avoid* these practices because not only are they deceptive to readers, they could also get you in trouble with Amazon.

## #35. PROMOTE YOUR FREE OFFER (OPTIONAL).

If you're doing a free launch, then you need to work hard to spread the word. As mentioned before, this strategy is not as effective as it used to be, so it's important to stand out among the many books vying for the attention of readers.

### HERE ARE A FEW BLOG POSTS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED:



- Scott Britton has a detailed guest post on [OkDork](#) about the launch strategy that generated 40,000 downloads.
- Nick Loper also wrote a [detailed guest post](#) on my blog about his 20,000-download book launch.
- Tom Corson-Knowles has a [large list of sites](#) where you can promote a free offer.
- Sarah Arrow also has a [massive list of 72 sites](#), some that don't overlap with Tom's list.
- Also, [this Fiverr gig provider](#) can handle most of the process and help you get a few extra eyeballs on your free book.

The common thread you'll notice on all these blog posts is that a book launch requires hard work. Honestly, we feel it's better to *invest the time into building a platform that can support multiple launches* instead of one. But if you're just starting out, then a free launch is still effective if you're willing to hustle.

## #36. CONTACT YOUR PERSONAL NETWORK.

We recommend focusing on co-opetition, rather than competition. While your books will be shown next to other authors in your niche, you want to help one another instead of thinking with a scarcity mentality.



Just think about your favorite genre of books. Do you stick to one author? Or do you buy any book that seems compelling? Odds are you're probably a voracious reader of works by many different authors. So the important question to ask isn't "How can I beat Author X?" It should be "How can we join forces to grow both of our brands?"

Obviously, the time to build your personal network *isn't* during a book launch. Your network should grow organically as you connect with bloggers, authors and other influencers in your market.

That said, if you've established a few solid connections and you feel a new book is right for their audiences, then contact them to see if they'd share the information.

The key here is quality over quantity. Instead of harassing people with one offer after another, it's better to reach out to people whose audiences are most similar to your target market.



## #37. LEVERAGE OTHER PEOPLE'S PLATFORMS.

In many cases, the best way to spread the word about a book is to schedule a series of guest posts and podcast interviews on other platforms. You won't directly promote the book. Instead, you'll provide value to the other person's audience and use the opportunity to enhance your reputation as an expert in your niche. Then if listeners or readers like what you say, then they'll check out your book.

Ideally, you want to create and record these pieces of content in the weeks leading up to the launch. That way, the content will magnetically draw people to your book during those critical first few days.

Finally, an alternative to this strategy is to write guest posts and/or do podcast interviews on an ongoing basis. Instead of promoting a particular title, you simply talk about your books as an overall brand.

Think of it in terms of promoting a blog. You might provide compelling information to a new audience, mention a free offer and then briefly talk about how each of your books will help readers solve specific problems.



### **#38. RAISE YOUR PRICE DURING THE LAUNCH (OPTIONAL).**

If you're launching a book for free, then increase your book price to \$2.99 sometime during the launch. This increases the "perceived value" when readers see the price drop on the listing page.



## **#39. LAUNCH YOUR BOOK.**

Most book launches last anywhere from three to 14 days. During the launch period, you should promote the offer in as many places as possible. This includes emails to list subscribers, social media posts, blog posts, podcast interviews and YouTube videos.

As I mentioned before, our #1 marketing strategy is to build email lists, so we recommend you doing the same thing.



## **#40. INTERACT WITH READERS.**

During the launch, you'll get a lot of questions, comments, emails and reviews. It's extremely important to quickly follow up with every touchpoint. These readers are supporting your work, so it's your job to thank them and provide as much help as possible.



## #41. CREATE FOLLOW-UP CAMPAIGNS.

Near the end of a launch, create a few “last chance” offers that are posted to social media and your email list. The idea here is readers only have a limited time to grab your book at its low price (or for free).

You might be hesitant about being too pushy with people. But think of it this way—if you know a book price will be higher in a few days, then you’re providing value because readers can grab it before it goes up.

Also, you’d be surprised at how many sales (or downloads) are generated in those final few hours. As an example, Steve frequently generates 30 percent of his total launch sales in those last few days. So you’ll leave a lot of money on the table if you don’t follow up at least once with your audience.



## #42. RAISE YOUR BOOK PRICE.

When the launch is complete, it's time to increase the book price to its normal rate.

This could be \$2.99, \$3.99, \$4.99 or even up to \$9.99. (We prefer \$2.99 for a number of reasons.) What's important is to follow through with your promise that the price will rise on a specific date.

The important consideration here is your reputation as an author. Generally speaking, you want to set the expectation that when you say something will happen on a specific date, it will *actually* happen. Ultimately, this mindset will lead to more long-term sales because readers will know that when you say a book is at a lower price for a limited time, you really mean it.

## #43. EVALUATE YOUR LAUNCH CAMPAIGN.

Every book launch is a learning experience. Sometimes things will go well and other times you'll make mistakes. Honestly, no matter how many times we've done a book launch, we realize that we could have done something better. The good news is you can use these lessons to improve the performance of your next book. That's why it's important to spend a few hours analyzing the success of your launch campaign.



### HERE ARE FEW WAYS TO DO THIS:

1. Look at clicks and conversions (using Amazon Associates links). What generated the most sales? How can you get more of that type of traffic?
2. How many reviews did you get? What techniques helped you get the highest number of reviews?
3. What do readers like and *not like* about your book?
4. On what platform did you spend the most time talking to readers? (Email? Facebook? Twitter?) How can you leverage this platform to get more reader feedback?
5. Did you use any paid advertisements? Was it worth the expense?
6. What could be improved on for the next book in terms of quality?

These are all important questions to ask after a launch. It's very rare that an author can build a business from one book. Instead, you need to treat book publishing like a catalog business by consistently publishing new titles and using each launch to increase the reach of your brand.

## #44. CREATE AN AUDIO VERSION.

Audiobooks is an emerging market for many authors. (Steve's audiobooks comprise about 10 to 15 percent of my total book revenue.) The best part is if you use the platform at [ACX.com](https://www.acx.com), your audiobook will sync up to your author page and be shown side-by-side with the eBook and print versions.



### YOU HAVE THREE OPTIONS WITH THIS PLATFORM:

1. Record the audio yourself.
2. Pay for voice talent to record it.
3. Offer a revenue split to a voice artist.

We recommend *investing* in a voice talent because that means you will keep the full share of the royalty payout from ACX. But if you're strapped for cash, then you can post an offer on ACX to see if a voice artist is interested in doing a royalty split.

If you're interested in audiobooks, then checking out the same service that Steve uses: [Archangel Ink](https://www.archangelink.com).



## #45. TAKE A (SMALL) BREAK.

### CONGRATULATIONS!

You've worked hard completing the previous 44 steps. Now is the time to celebrate—even if the book hasn't hit the sales numbers you expected.

### OUR ADVICE?

Take a few days off. Spend time with your family. Go out to a nice dinner. Do a fun activity. No matter how you feel about the success (or lack thereof) of a new book, it's important to celebrate the effort you've put into it. So enjoy a little time off and be happy you've done something most people only *wished* they could do.



## **#46. START WORKING ON YOUR NEXT BOOK.**

Remember, it's a catalog business. So after enjoying yourself for a few days, get back to work.

'Nuff said.

# GETTING STARTED WITH THE KINDLE PUBLISHING CHECKLIST



You just read a 6,000+ word description of our Kindle publishing checklist. Hopefully it explained the logic behind the steps and why each is an important part of the publishing process. Try to complete this checklist whenever you have a new book idea.

That said, after doing it a few times, you won't need the detailed explanations behind each action item because you will have internalized the process. So to keep things simple, we've included a printable version that starts on the next page.

This is the same 46-point checklist that you just read—without the verbal diarrhea.

To maximize the effectiveness of this strategy, add this checklist to a three-ring binder for your book projects (yup, once again we're showing our old-school tendencies.)

Whenever you have a great book idea, print out this checklist and then work your way through the process.

You'll find that this system is a great way to break down the challenging process of writing a book into doable chunks. All you have to do is focus on that next step and using the checklist to prompt you into taking action.



# CONNECT WITH US

If you have a question about any of the actions, we'd love to hear from you on our [AuthorityPub Facebook Group page](#). We'd love to have you join us in this active community of people who have a passion for writing books and self-publishing.



# THE COURSE

Want to earn a full-time income selling your books? The Authority Pub Academy course teaches you the complete step-by-step method for writing, publishing, marketing, and building a business around your books. Learn more about the Authority Pub Academy Course [here](#).

# BESTSELLING CHECKLIST



<b>#1.</b> Think of a basic book idea.....	8
<b>#2.</b> Gauge the profit potential of a book idea.....	9
<b>#3.</b> Dedicate two weeks for brainstorming talking points.....	10
<b>#4.</b> Identify seven target keywords.....	11
<b>#5.</b> Identify the hook for your book.....	12
<b>#6.</b> Research your topic.....	13
<b>#7.</b> Do a book “brain dump.”.....	14
<b>#8.</b> Identify your chapters.....	15
<b>#9.</b> Flesh out each chapter.....	16
<b>#10.</b> Sort the index cards into a logical order.....	17
<b>#11.</b> Write the outline.....	18
<b>#12.</b> Write the first draft.....	19
<b>#13.</b> Write the second draft.....	20
<b>#14.</b> Finalize the title of the book.....	21
<b>#15.</b> Commission a cover image.....	22
<b>#16.</b> Pick your next book topic.....	23
<b>#17.</b> Polish the third draft.....	24
<b>#18.</b> Send the book to an editor.....	25
<b>#19.</b> Finalize the book cover design.....	26
<b>#20.</b> Review the edits.....	27
<b>#21.</b> Send to a second editor (optional).....	28
<b>#22.</b> Add the front and back matter.....	29
<b>#23.</b> Send the final version to a book formatter.....	30
<b>#24.</b> Write the sales description for Amazon.....	31
<b>#25.</b> Upload the book to KDP.....	32
<b>#26.</b> Scan on two Kindle devices.....	33
<b>#27.</b> Hire someone to proofread the book.....	34
<b>#28.</b> Format the book for CreateSpace.....	35
<b>#29.</b> Submit the print version to CreateSpace.....	36
<b>#30.</b> Create advertising tracking codes (optional).....	37
<b>#31.</b> Create redirect links.....	38
<b>#32.</b> Add the book to your author profile.....	39
<b>#33.</b> Schedule your launch date.....	40
<b>#34.</b> Get at least five reviews.....	42
<b>#35.</b> Promote your free offer (optional).....	43
<b>#36.</b> Contact your personal network.....	44
<b>#37.</b> Leverage other people’s platforms.....	45
<b>#38.</b> Raise your price during the launch (optional).....	46
<b>#39.</b> Launch your book.....	47
<b>#40.</b> Interact with readers.....	48
<b>#41.</b> Create follow-up campaigns.....	49
<b>#42.</b> Raise your book price.....	50
<b>#43.</b> Evaluate your launch campaign.....	51
<b>#44.</b> Create an audio version.....	52
<b>#45.</b> Take a (small) break.....	53
<b>#46.</b> Start working on your next book.....	54

