



Get published.

Build a career.

Contribute to creating a better world.

Become a
**PROFESSIONAL
AUTHOR
COURSE**

PART TWO:

SELL STORIES EFFECTIVELY

Marketing Lesson Four:

Building a Better Website

Grant P. Hudson

BECOME A PROFESSIONAL AUTHOR COURSE

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CLARENDON HOUSE
PUBLICATIONS

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How This Course Works and What to Expect by the End:

The Become a Professional Author Course is made up of three basic parts:

1. Write Stories That Work

In eight Lesson Modules, you will learn the basic structures of all successful fiction and be encouraged through practical exercises to produce stories of your own which grab, glue, guide and control readers' attention.

2. Sell Stories Effectively

In four Lesson Modules, you will discover how marketing really works and work through several practical exercises so that you will have customers who like, buy and recommend your work to others.

2. How Clarendon House Can Help You

In two Lesson Modules, you will be shown how Clarendon House lays out routes of opportunity for you to get published and acquire a readership of your own.

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO ALL THE EXERCISES TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THE MAXIMUM BENEFITS FROM THE COURSE.

MARKETING LESSON FOUR: BUILDING A BETTER WEBSITE

One of the key components of your **author platform** is your website, so here's a lesson devoted to that.

Once you have established some kind of link with prospects through word of mouth or social media, as in Lesson Three, the first thing that they will do—other than click on the links you've provided and go and buy your book—will be go to your website to learn more. When they get there, you need to confirm for them instantaneously that they are on track to get the message that they're looking for.

Just as fiction and marketing campaigns succumb to 'noise', so do websites. You may have built a website based on primitive or conventional marketing principles and this may need some adjustments.



Your website isn't a proxy shop or a library of information where you store everything about your books — it's a marketing tool.

It's part of your marketing engine, and as such it exists, like your book itself or the marketing campaign around it, **to control and guide your prospects' attention.**

Your website is probably going to be the first real impression prospects have about you, other than what they may have seen on the social media pages of your author platform.

Your website immediately needs to tell them that you have what they want and are competent enough to deliver whatever that is.

What they don't want is 'noise' that will drown out your message. So, to keep things as simple and direct as possible, here are three things your website's first page needs to have.



1. Your Message Above the 'Fold'

The term 'above the fold' comes from the newspaper industry. It meant the headlines printed above where the paper was folded in half. On a website, this refers to what appears when a visitor arrives, before they start scrolling down the page.

What appears above the fold on your website home page is vitally important to a successful marketing strategy.

As an author, this needs to be **your book's message**, stated simply, powerfully and dramatically — one short sentence to help visitors understand what you offer.

Course Marketing Exercise # 11:

Edit your website so that your book's message appears above the 'fold'.

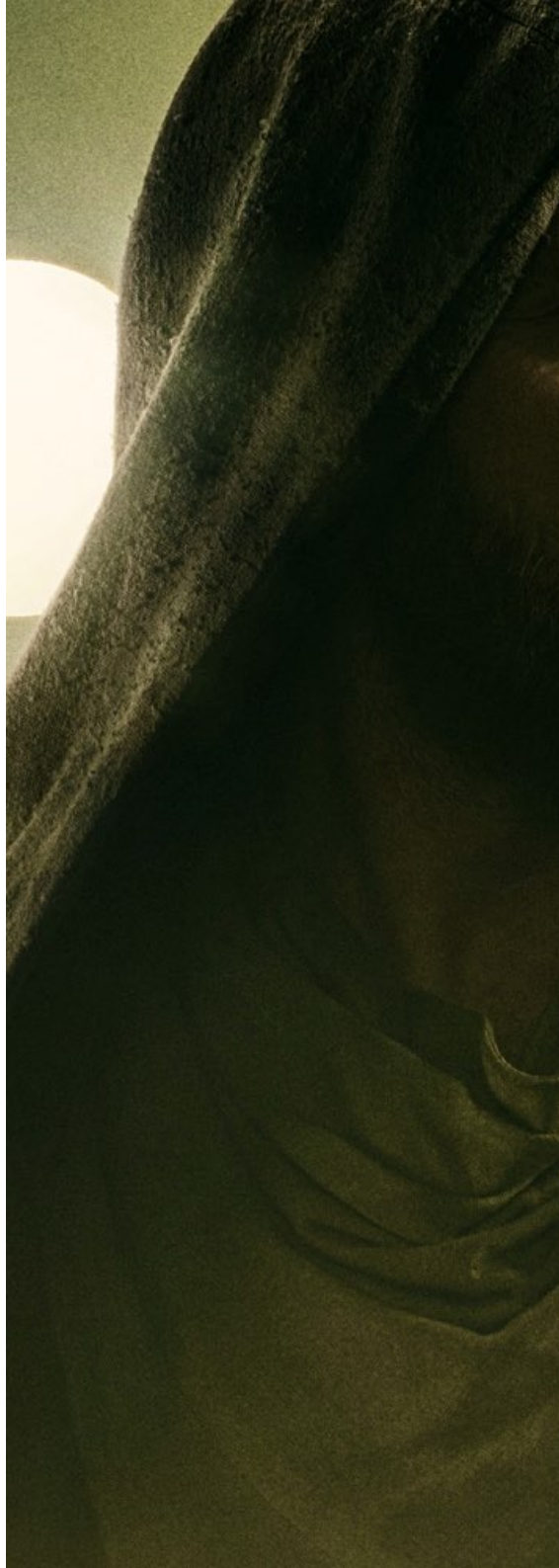
Prospective readers need to immediately see what that message is and to get the idea that you will deliver it.



You have less than two seconds before a prospect's finger clicks away. Nerve impulses travel at roughly 275 miles per hour, so from when your prospect sees the first page to when their finger clicks is lightning fast. What they see there must echo with what they are looking for so that they stay longer.

Imagine how many potential customers are lost when this doesn't occur, and instead the visitor gets 'noise'. Many authors assume that visitors will continue to read which makes them immediately dependent upon the visitors' own energy and desire to continue. Don't make that assumption — it disempowers you.

Always assume that you are in control of the prospects' attention and that it's your responsibility to guide it.





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The Tolkien Estate's home page has a quote:

'Still round the corner there may wait

A new road or a secret gate...'
which instantly hooks the visitor into the whole world of Middle-earth, accompanied by a portrait of J. R. R. Tolkien, the author (an author avatar).

The official **Star Wars** website has an enormous image of Yoda and the words 'May the Force be with you' which straight away evoke the entire universe created by George Lucas.

The idea is that prospects need to know what's in it for them **instantly**. The message must be clear and short, easy to read and not surrounded by clutter.

It's incredibly easy to overcomplicate this, which results in noise and a blurring of your message — and in losing prospects.

Maria Felipe is an author who writes about happiness. Her website shows a personal image above the fold (her author avatar), combined with a clear call to action. The text simply reads ‘Meet your inner happiness’ with a subtext ‘Learn how to free your mind and awaken to your true nature’ — her message, encapsulated. Prospects for that message will undoubtedly scroll down, drawn by vacuum power.

Peter James is the author of several very successful thrillers, two of which have been made into successful TV films, with more in production. His website similarly features an author avatar, and the text ‘Discover the

darkness that lurks around every corner in the latest instalment of Peter James’s award-winning detective series.’

In fact, a survey of top author websites reveals a strikingly similar pattern: above the fold there is an author avatar and a powerful statement of the kind of thing you can expect from their fiction — noise-free, direct, appealing to precisely the kind of prospects who might read their books.

Take a look at your website and make sure it’s obvious what you have written and what it is about. Get straight to the point. Hook the prospect. Place your message above the fold.

TIP: The above-fold part of your home page is like the first sentence in your book: it’s your ‘hook’.



2. An Obvious Call to Act

The whole point of your website is to direct prospects' attention, and to convert it into **action** (a sale). As we have already learned, attention condenses into emotion and emotion into action.

Vacuums condense attention into action.

But as soon as prospects are ready for action, the button for them to press had better be right there in front of them.

So place your 'Buy Now' button right there — above the fold, on your website's first page.

Check out every other major website on the planet: there's a button to press, in plain sight.

You can place this button at several key points:

- i) the top right of your website page
- ii) in the centre of the screen.

Some other specific tips:

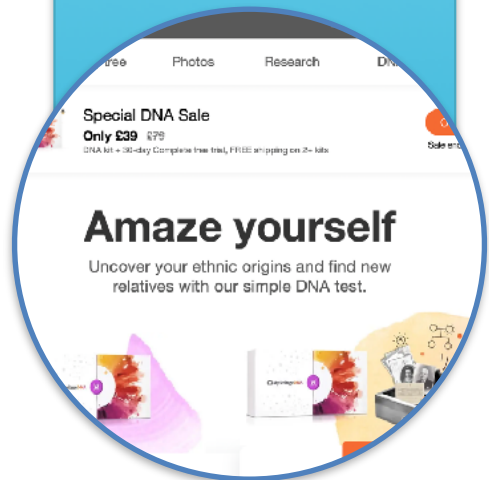
1. Your 'Buy Now' buttons should be brightly coloured so that they stand out easily and, if you have two, they should both look exactly the same. This has a better chance of registering with your prospects in the nano-seconds that all this takes.

Course Marketing Exercise # 12:

Visit three or four major websites, whether related to books or not.

Is their message clearly visible?

Do they have prominent 'call to action' buttons above the fold?



2. Have a **secondary call to action** — something that doesn't demand as much from the prospects — placed right next to the call to action. For example, offer a free pdf or some other kind of gift, which involves collecting their email addresses but doesn't cost them any money.

Those prospects whose attention hasn't quite solidified into buying are more likely to click on this as a 'back-up'. In others words, they know that they are almost closed to buy your book, and so opt for something which will keep that interest alive, won't cost them anything and will enable them to keep in touch with you (they know that, in giving you their email address, they will receive communication from you in the future).

Course Marketing Exercise # 13:

Develop some kind of enticing free, downloadable product which can be offered on your website.

This could be a map, a picture, a character bio, some kind of guide — anything which a prospective reader might want.



3. Images of Unity

Surround all of this with images which convey the unity your book's message ultimately promises: triumph, a couple together, a realisation achieved, whatever it is that best captures what your story is about.

Give them a glimpse of the emotional 'fix' they're after, in a single or handful of images.

This will create more vacuum power and urge them closer to clicking that 'Buy Now' button.

Not everybody needs to be smiling, especially if that isn't authentic to your message. But you need to communicate the sense of wholeness which your fiction will give them.



ADDITIONAL TIP: Minimise the words that appear above the fold. Website viewers don't read — they scan.

PROSPECTS

Remember, people don't read websites anymore, they only **scan** them.

Anything more than a very few words above the fold is wasted. Think on a very primitive level: 'Prospect want message; show them message; give them way of getting message.'

Here are some simple examples from best-selling books or films of messages encapsulated in a very few words, designed to entice prospects to click that 'Buy Now' button:

'Winter is coming' – **A Song of Ice and Fire**

'A world at stake. The quest for the ultimate prize. Are you ready?' – **Ready Player One**

'Winning will make you famous. Losing means certain death.' – **The Hunger Games**

Get the idea?



Message

Obvious
Call to
Action

Images of
Unity

SALE

Simple, punchy, conveying the tone and power of what your book is about, reflecting the core message or the maximum vacuum power in the novel.

Highlighting something unique, unusual or interesting about your book lets prospects know that there's a message waiting for them which they won't be able to get anywhere else, inspiring curiosity or intrigue in the reader (questions, and interesting contradictions create vacuum power). Don't be too generic or rely on vague clichés; if possible, be clever, funny or

memorable — but above all, be clear and meaningful, not vague, confusing or imprecise. Using slightly interesting or unusual words/word combinations, rather than expected phrasing, can help with this.

A poetic, dramatic or meaningful quotation from your book is particularly powerful if you can do it — see the 'Winter is coming' quote above. Prospects will recognise the phrase and its significance, thus rekindling the emotions associated with the message they're seeking.



PROSPECTS



Cut words

Use
images

Use bullet
points and
soundbites

SALE

Here are some further tips to help you:

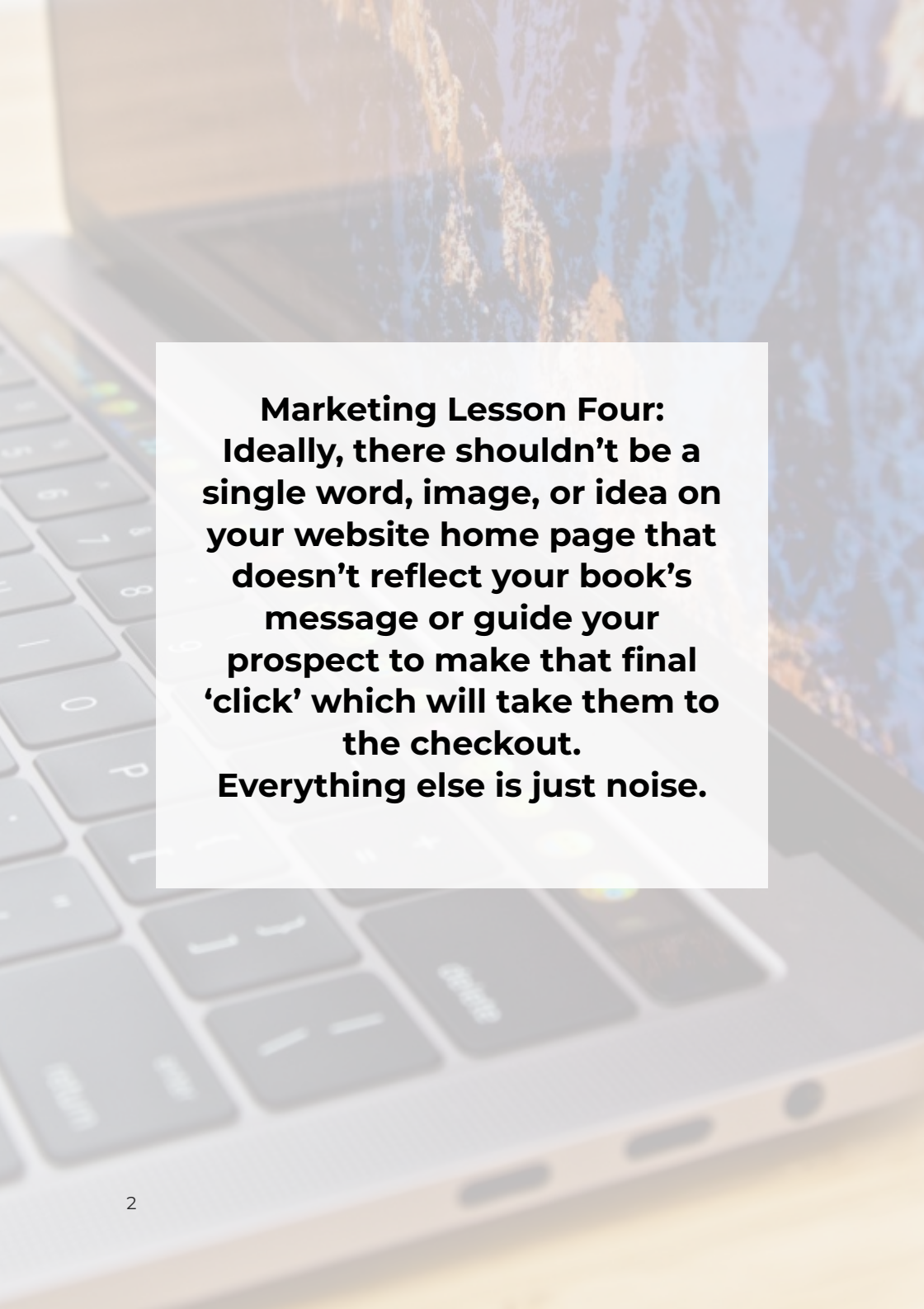
i) Cut out at least a third of the words on your website's home page.

ii) Replace some of your text with images

iii) Reduce paragraphs to three or four bullet points.

iv) Summarise sentences into bite-sized soundbites

The fewer words you use, the more likely it is that prospects will read them; the more vacuum power you use, the more attention you condense into action.



**Marketing Lesson Four:
Ideally, there shouldn't be a
single word, image, or idea on
your website home page that
doesn't reflect your book's
message or guide your
prospect to make that final
'click' which will take them to
the checkout.
Everything else is just noise.**

Marketing Lesson Four Exercise: BUILDING YOUR WEBSITE

Create a website or edit an existing one.



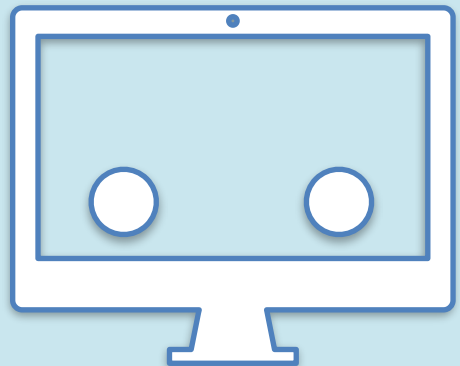
On the home page, make sure that your book's message stands out clearly and simply, above the fold.

Fold

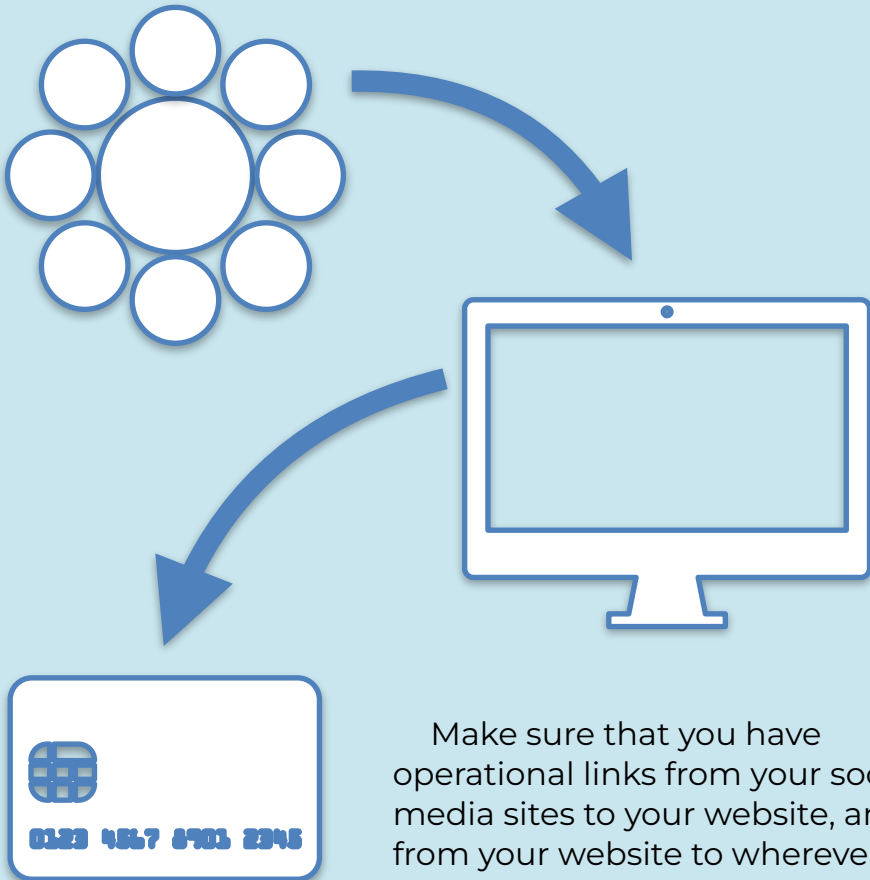


Place an obvious Call to Action and a Secondary Call to Action also above the fold.

These should be some form of 'Buy Now' buttons.



Have images of Unity which echo your book's message, prominently displayed.



Make sure that you have operational links from your social media sites to your website, and from your website to wherever your book can be purchased.

MONITOR YOUR MARKETING MACHINE

- 1. Social media activity leads to website visits.**
- 2. Website visits lead to sales.**
- 3. Meanwhile, you are writing more to fuel the demand.**

**This is the Marketing Mantra in operation:
Attract generally; attract specifically; engage fully;
provide more.**

CONCLUSION TO PART TWO

Marketing as it is done right now is full of noise.

Current marketing practice is based on hunting: hunting prospects, hoping to find them in the vast jungles of the real world. Hunting is tremendously wasteful and risks hunter exhaustion.

Workable, advanced marketing is based on farming: cultivating prospects and giving them

what they need. Farming is economic, efficient and accumulates resources.

Marketing is one of the most powerful forces for good that humanity possesses because, used properly, it can link people with what they need, swiftly, effectively and persistently. This book was written to make it as easy as possible to market your books and achieve sales.

The simplicity is this:

If you clarify your message, prospects will listen and become customers.



**Your next
module:**

**BECOME A
PROFESSIONAL
AUTHOR
COURSE
PART THREE:
HOW CLARENDON HOUSE
CAN HELP YOU**

Lesson One:
It's Hard To Be A Loner

Grant P Hudson