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Become a
**PROFESSIONAL
AUTHOR
COURSE**

PART TWO:

SELL STORIES EFFECTIVELY

Marketing Lesson Three:

Your Marketing Machine

Grant P. Hudson

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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 THREE: YOUR MARKETING MACHINE

Remember, a prospect is by definition, someone who needs your book. Not a book, not any book — **your** book.

In an ideal world, you would write your book and the exact people who needed to read it would appear and buy it. Newton's laws would be different: you wouldn't need a marketing machine, you'd just need distribution channels.

But sadly, in this world, writers have to **find** those people who need their messages, and then **guide** those people towards the checkout.

By now, you are probably getting the idea:

Marketing is a machine which guides prospects to what they need.

So you now have a searchlight to help you find — or even create— all the prospects you will ever need: your story's message.

Where do you place a searchlight so that it can reach out and illuminate the widest area? And how do you focus its beams effectively?



1. The Place

To help prospects find you and your book, you need to stand somewhere visible. This is what in other books is called an **author platform**. It consists of various virtual elements, including a website, a persisting social media presence, and a means of purchasing your book (for example, a listing on Amazon).

It's really that simple. Even if you have imperfect versions of all three, it is at least possible for you to get sales. Without one or more of these elements, selling becomes just about impossible.

We're going to look at each element shortly.



2. The Presenter

You need an **author avatar**.

This figure is as common in marketing as the mentor is in fiction. It possesses almost the same universal characteristics as the fictional archetype, but takes many external forms, depending on what is being marketed.

It's like in fiction: just as the vacuums of a story usually condense into the figure of the antagonist, and the message of the author becomes personified as the mentor archetype, so the mentor of a marketing campaign is a personification of the author.

'Oh no,' I can hear some writers saying. 'I don't want anything to do with marketing personally!'

Rest easy.

Course Marketing Exercise # 10:

**Visit the website
of your favourite
living author**

**How does he or she
present themselves?**

**Note down your
immediate first
impressions of the
website.**



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a wooden chess piece, likely a king or queen, against a blurred background of other chess pieces on a board. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the wood and the skin of the hand.

Just as Tolkien didn't put himself into **The Lord of the Rings** as Gandalf, or Rowling didn't appear in the guise of Dumbledore, or George Lucas didn't disguise himself as Obi-Wan Kenobi, you don't have to actually front up in marketing your book.

Gandalf, Dumbledore, Obi-Wan and the other million archetypal 'wise old figures with sticks' in fiction were **avatars** of their authors. They knew what was happening in the plot and could give the best guidance to their protagonists because they were the closest things in the story to the authors.

In marketing, you as the book's author know what the book can do for prospective readers and can give the best guidance to your prospects because you wrote it. But, just as when you write a story, you don't appear yourself — you create an **author avatar**.

***You
always
have been
in control,
but no one
told you.***

Usually, desperate to sell their books, authors position everything in their marketing around the book itself, putting a huge amount of effort into making it appear in front of as many people as possible, hoping that just by appearing it will somehow magically sell itself.

By all means, place your books in front of people — but your marketing isn't magic: it's controlled by your author avatar, i.e. You.

If there's one simple thing to learn from all this, it's this:

You are in control.

You control prospects' attention; you control their emotions; you control, in the end, their actions.

You always have been in control, but no one told you.

Prospects are largely like marbles, rolling down channels already set up by the author avatar.

I invite you to Google any famous current author right now and then visit their websites. Each one will have a picture of themselves, usually smiling, along with a brief bio and list of achievements. This isn't the 'real' person who wrote the book: it's a **public relations image** of the author. It's an **author avatar**.

Author avatars know what it is that their prospects are missing. Author avatars created the

book's message — they are its masters. In successful book marketing, prospects are guided by author avatars.

The prospect sits in the driver's seat, but the marketing car is being controlled by the avatar from the back seat.

Once you realise the importance of your book's message — and its marketing spokesperson, the author avatar — your social media posts, websites, newsletters, ads and everything else align themselves in the direction of a sale.

DEFINITION: Your author avatar is a created message spokesperson.

Authors themselves may be full of self-doubt and life's problems: they may even be very unclear on what's happening in the stories they've written. That's why they must do Part One and clarify their messages.

Once they have done that, they can develop an author avatar.

Avatars have no self-doubt: they are very clear on what's happening in

the stories they write. They have an innate understanding of their story universes which often echo a real understanding of life beyond the story. They know what the messages of the books are and how they connect with reality.

Prospects are usually instinctively drawn to author avatars and are 'programmed' by them, aware or unaware.

*Prospects are usually
instinctively drawn to
author avatars*





Your author avatar is a creation, just like the mentor archetype within the stories you write.

This public relations version of you has to have some warm elements. It must demonstrate, or at least express, that it cares about the prospects and what happens to the wider world. It must

empathise with prospects. Where possible, but not necessarily, an author avatar should appear as older and often venerable-looking. Elderly figures are accepted social templates for wisdom. However, if avatars are portrayed as children or adolescents, their image can still be used to guide prospects.

ADDITIONAL TIP: While elderly figures are traditionally seen as social templates for wisdom, what the prospect is looking for is authenticity that can be trusted.

Author avatars are message spokespeople.

They are the channel through which your marketing messages are 'programmed' into prospects. Or, to carry on an earlier analogy, they are the lens through which your searchlight beam is focused.

Authors usually shy away from the idea of 'preaching' messages at prospects. That's part of the whole 'shadiness' surrounding sales. It's a perfectly understandable attitude.

But here's the thing:

If your campaign doesn't have a message and project vacuums, it won't even be noticed.

Prospects will drift right on by, compelled by existing inertia, per Newton.

As prospects view your website, social media posts and pages, or your marketing copy, they want to sense the

presence of the 'ghost message' for which they have been looking, consciously or subconsciously.



If your campaign doesn't have a message and project vacuums, it won't even be noticed.

So create an image of yourself, something which is authentic and presentable without being too personal, something which communicates, just like the archetypes of Gandalf or Dumbledore or all the rest of these figures in fiction, that you know what you are talking about.

Then a magical thing will happen: your copy will become a cohesive, three-dimensional picture of what you're communicating; the visual images you use will be metaphors which capture what you're trying to say in your book; your campaign will 'play out' in a way which reflects your message.

Your author avatar needs simply to be persistently present, to communicate the message, and to keep on doing so in the right places, through your author platform — your website and your social media activity. And the links which connect to the actual sales page of your book need to be available easily.

Sales will occur.

However, even with i) a vulnerable prospect, ii) a vacuum drawing them along, and iii) an author avatar demonstrating empathy and competence, we can still do better.



3. The Engine

Linear vacuums, as we saw in Part One, are best summed up by the question 'What happens next?' or 'What unknown comes next?' These questions evoke an unknown future in even the most primitive stories, pulling readers along. The same principle applies in marketing. Vacuums that create the momentum of a story create the momentum of a campaign.

A chain of 'What happens next?' vacuums lead prospects' attention along a channel. You see this in sales pages everywhere. It works.

Mystery vacuums ('What's really going on?' or 'What is happening under the surface?' or 'What unknown needs to be known?') are the glue of marketing. Prospects need to be wondering from the moment they hear of a product about the nature of what's being offered to them and the gap between it and what they are looking for.

PROSPECTS

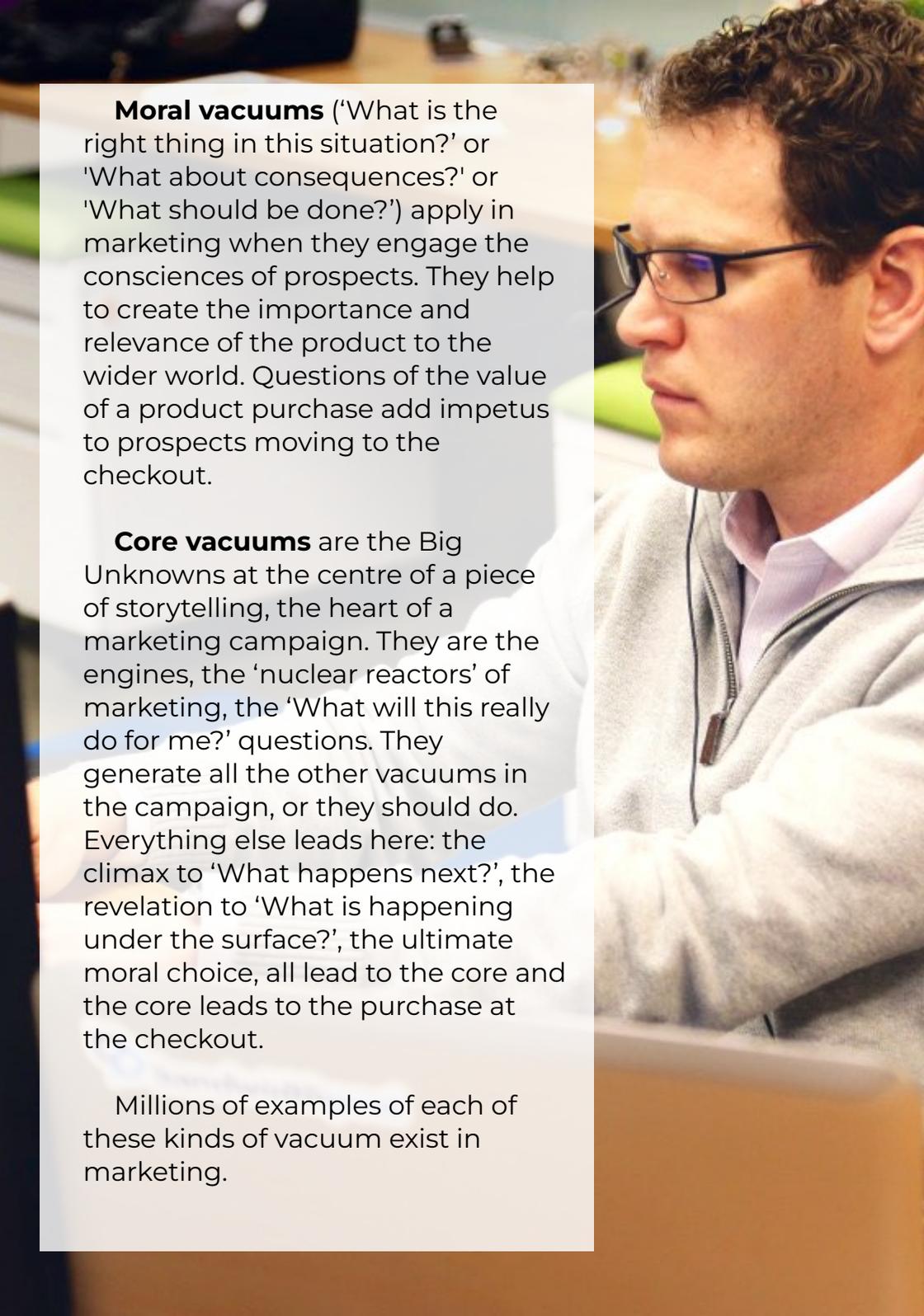
'What happens next?'

'What's happening under the surface?'

'What about consequences?'

'What will this really do for me?'

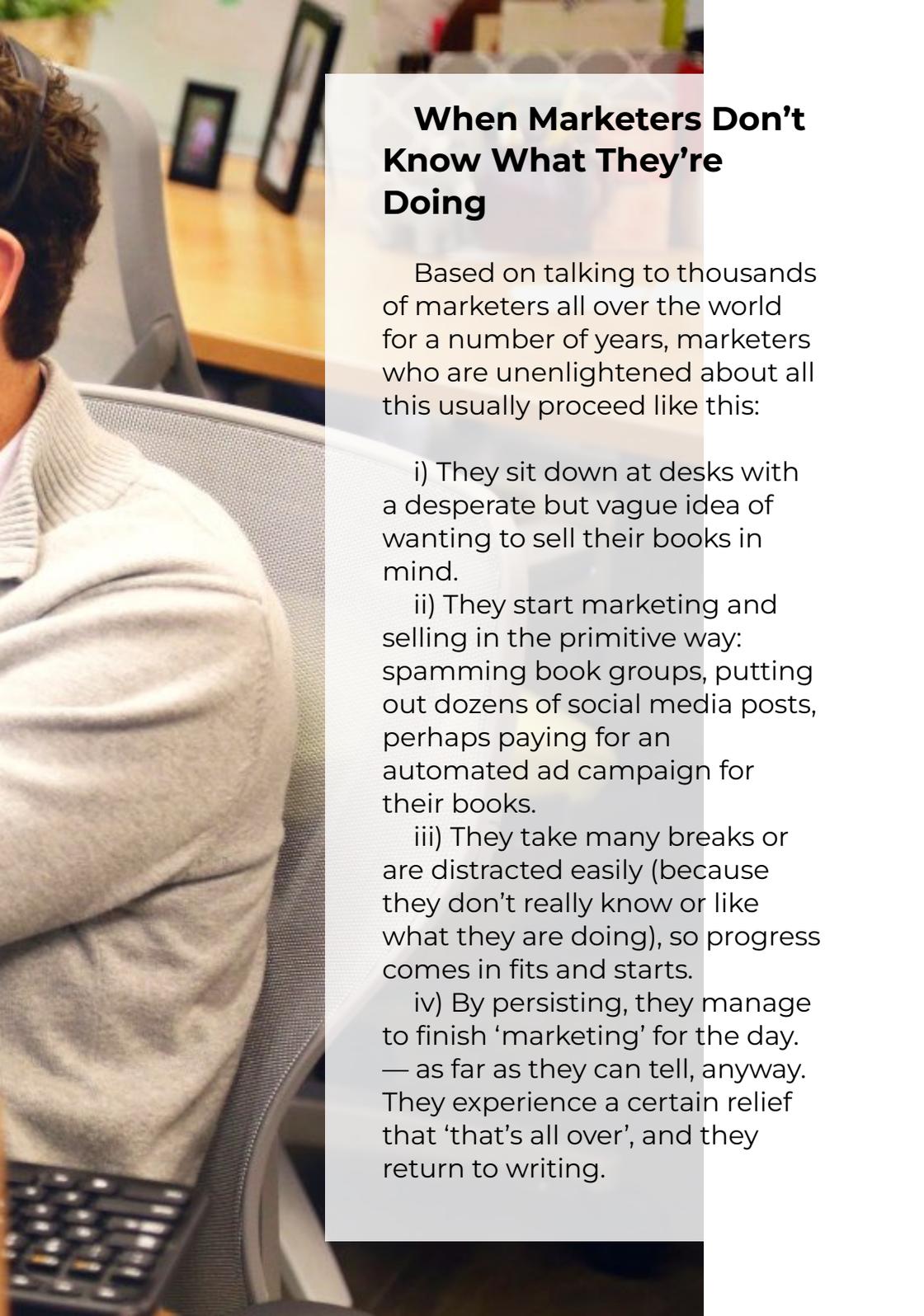
SALE

A man with curly brown hair, wearing glasses and a grey zip-up hoodie over a light-colored collared shirt, is shown in profile from the chest up. He is looking towards the left of the frame. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an office or meeting environment with a wooden desk and some greenery.

Moral vacuums ('What is the right thing in this situation?' or 'What about consequences?' or 'What should be done?') apply in marketing when they engage the consciences of prospects. They help to create the importance and relevance of the product to the wider world. Questions of the value of a product purchase add impetus to prospects moving to the checkout.

Core vacuums are the Big Unknowns at the centre of a piece of storytelling, the heart of a marketing campaign. They are the engines, the 'nuclear reactors' of marketing, the 'What will this really do for me?' questions. They generate all the other vacuums in the campaign, or they should do. Everything else leads here: the climax to 'What happens next?', the revelation to 'What is happening under the surface?', the ultimate moral choice, all lead to the core and the core leads to the purchase at the checkout.

Millions of examples of each of these kinds of vacuum exist in marketing.



When Marketers Don't Know What They're Doing

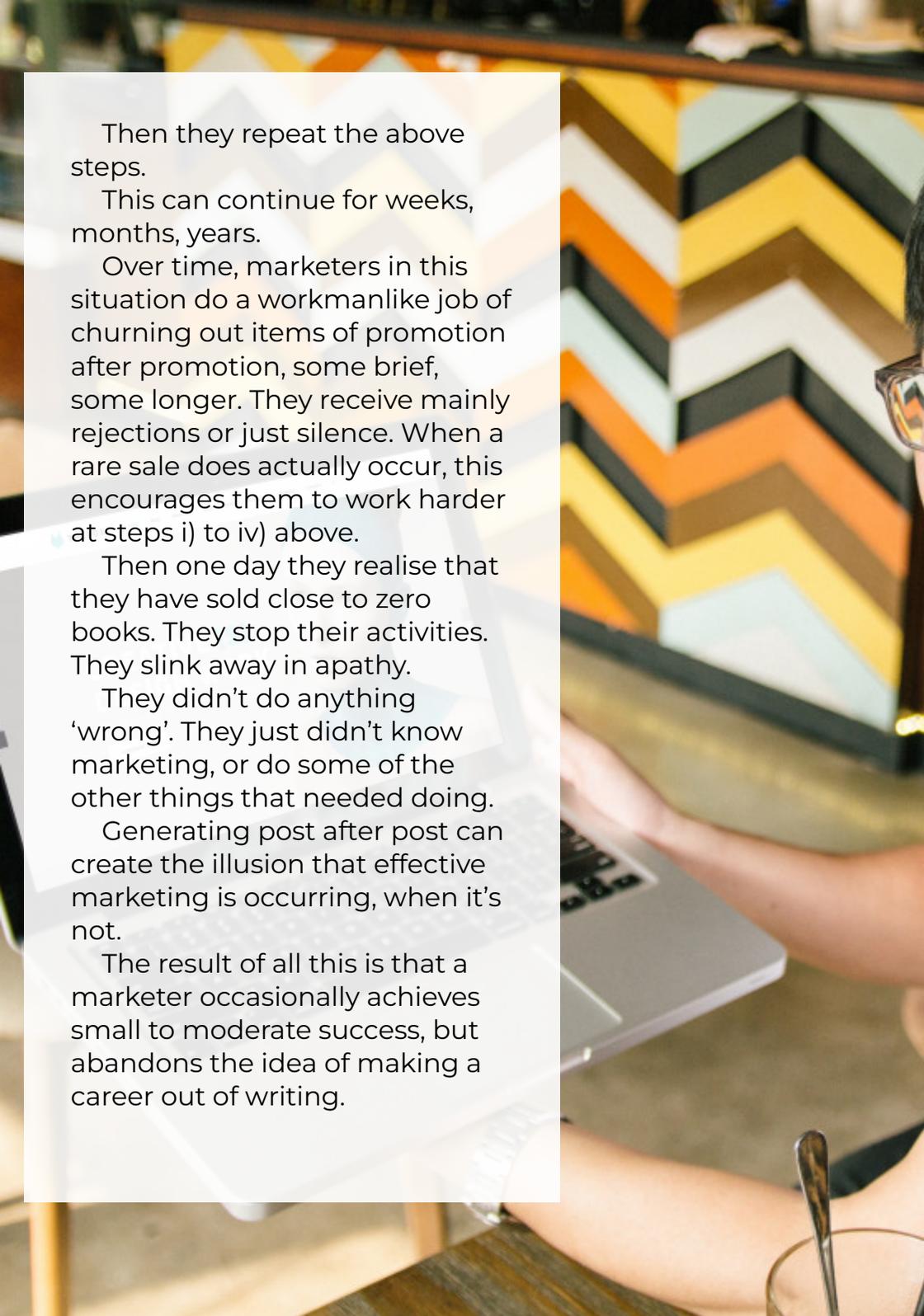
Based on talking to thousands of marketers all over the world for a number of years, marketers who are unenlightened about all this usually proceed like this:

i) They sit down at desks with a desperate but vague idea of wanting to sell their books in mind.

ii) They start marketing and selling in the primitive way: spamming book groups, putting out dozens of social media posts, perhaps paying for an automated ad campaign for their books.

iii) They take many breaks or are distracted easily (because they don't really know or like what they are doing), so progress comes in fits and starts.

iv) By persisting, they manage to finish 'marketing' for the day. — as far as they can tell, anyway. They experience a certain relief that 'that's all over', and they return to writing.

A person with glasses is sitting at a table in a cafe, working on a laptop. The background features a wall with a colorful zigzag pattern in shades of yellow, orange, brown, and grey. The person is wearing a dark top and has a spoon in a glass on the table in front of them.

Then they repeat the above steps.

This can continue for weeks, months, years.

Over time, marketers in this situation do a workmanlike job of churning out items of promotion after promotion, some brief, some longer. They receive mainly rejections or just silence. When a rare sale does actually occur, this encourages them to work harder at steps i) to iv) above.

Then one day they realise that they have sold close to zero books. They stop their activities. They slink away in apathy.

They didn't do anything 'wrong'. They just didn't know marketing, or do some of the other things that needed doing.

Generating post after post can create the illusion that effective marketing is occurring, when it's not.

The result of all this is that a marketer occasionally achieves small to moderate success, but abandons the idea of making a career out of writing.



When Marketers Know What They're Doing

Again based on experience, when marketers are inspired by their own messages, and recognise and do even some of the other functions involved, the picture can change quite a bit.

The sequence might go more like this:

i) Before even sitting down, they have complete certainty on what the messages of their books are.

ii) They build an author platform — a website, a social media presence, and other elements — and use cohesive images or sets of images which communicate what their work is about.

iii) As they are guided by these ideas, their marketing exudes more and more confidence and competence.

iv) They develop an author avatar which manifests itself as a 'marketing muse'.

v) They are visibly enthralled as the process continues.

vi) They find it easy to avoid distractions (because they know what they are doing and are actually enjoying it) and they procrastinate far less.

Marketing and selling becomes easier, more joyful.

They become the mentor or guide for prospects, turning them into customers.

When they attempt to publish their work, marketers who know what they are doing know exactly who to approach because they understand their own message and where it will be accepted. They don't bother contacting places where it will be rejected — spamming becomes a thing of the past.



Sales occur in increasing volume; viability begins to look possible.

What is present in this narrative that was missing in the earlier one?

It has a unifying message at the centre, inspiring the marketer.

Knowing that you want to say is invigorating.

Apart from bringing noiseless clarity to your marketing and selling, it brings you closer to your prospects.

Working on their marketing over a number of years, marketers with clear messages are free to explore creative possibilities. Every month, new angles emerge. When you know what you want to say, you can get creative finding new ways of saying it.

Marketers with clear messages begin to feel as though their customers are supportive communities that actually want the marketer to thrive and grow.

As we saw in Part One, when you find your message, everybody wins, including readers.

Now that you know what you want to say, you can begin reinforce it through every webpage, every social media post, every image, every comment, and every piece of copy. That's what it means to be a marketer with a message.

You can start to weave the elements of your message into every aspect of your narrative, shaping prospect engagement by employing all the different kinds of vacuums to grab, glue and guide customers.

Marketers with messages are accomplishing more effective communication — and getting sales.



*ADDITIONAL TIP:
YOUR readers, as
opposed to
general 'readers',
have particular
places where
they 'hang out'. If
you can't find
them — CREATE
them. (Read on
for details.)*

Your Marketing Strategy

Assuming that you have clarified your book's message, what you need to do next is find out where your prospects are hanging out.

Where do you look?

Wherever **your** readers might be gathering — note: not 'readers in general', **your** readers.

In the old days, this might have been libraries, perhaps, or a bookshop; these days they are more likely to be browsing a website like Amazon, maybe taking a look through their 'Customers who bought this also bought...'
recommendations, or asking Google for 'Any authors like...'

But they're not just general 'browsers': they are **particular browsers** looking for **particular things**. They are **your** prospects, not vague, generic 'prospects'.

Your prospects —i.e. people already predisposed to liking your book — actively looking for a book have their eyes drawn to three things in particular:

i) **the book's cover** — this has to have a precise appeal: a cover has to be genre-suitable (romance novels don't tend to have flying unicorns on the cover; science fiction novels tend not to have pictures of flowers, etc etc) but also has to have something different about it, something that pulls in their attention, something that suggests your message.

ii) **the blurb** — a book's blurb is most emphatically **not** about summarising a story in a few words, as many authors seem to think — a blurb is a key marketing tool. Its function is **to grab attention**. It does this by presenting core elements of a story in an exciting and open-ended way (which is why blurbs often finish with a question: 'Will Sam ever see his wife again?' 'Will the bomb go off?' etc)

After glancing at the cover, a potential reader will usually skim-read the blurb.

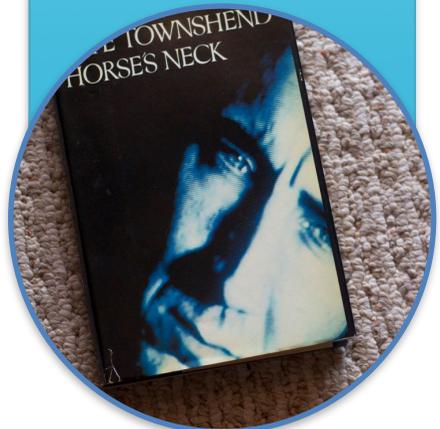
Course Marketing Exercise #11:

If you have self-published a book, who designed the cover?

Was it effective?

Did you base the cover on what you thought 'looked nice'?

Did you have trouble writing a blurb?



PROSPECT ATTENTION

Book cover

Blurb

Reviews

First page

The cover snatches enough attention to compel the reader to read the blurb; the blurb has to be good enough to hook enough attention for the reader to proceed further.

iii) **the reviews** — most prospects then scroll down to read the reviews. Why? Because these are people like themselves, who have gone that little bit further and tried your book. If the reviews are rave, prospects are much more likely to press 'Add to cart'; if they are mediocre or mixed, chances are the prospect will move on. They're always only a finger-click from moving on.

So it goes without saying that your original work has to be good enough to elicit fabulous reviews. That's up to you as a writer, using the principles outlined in Part One.

The above is the kind of process potential readers go through when looking for a new book to read.

It's the kind of process **you** go through when looking for a new book to read.

How can you better control this process?

1. Start a Group

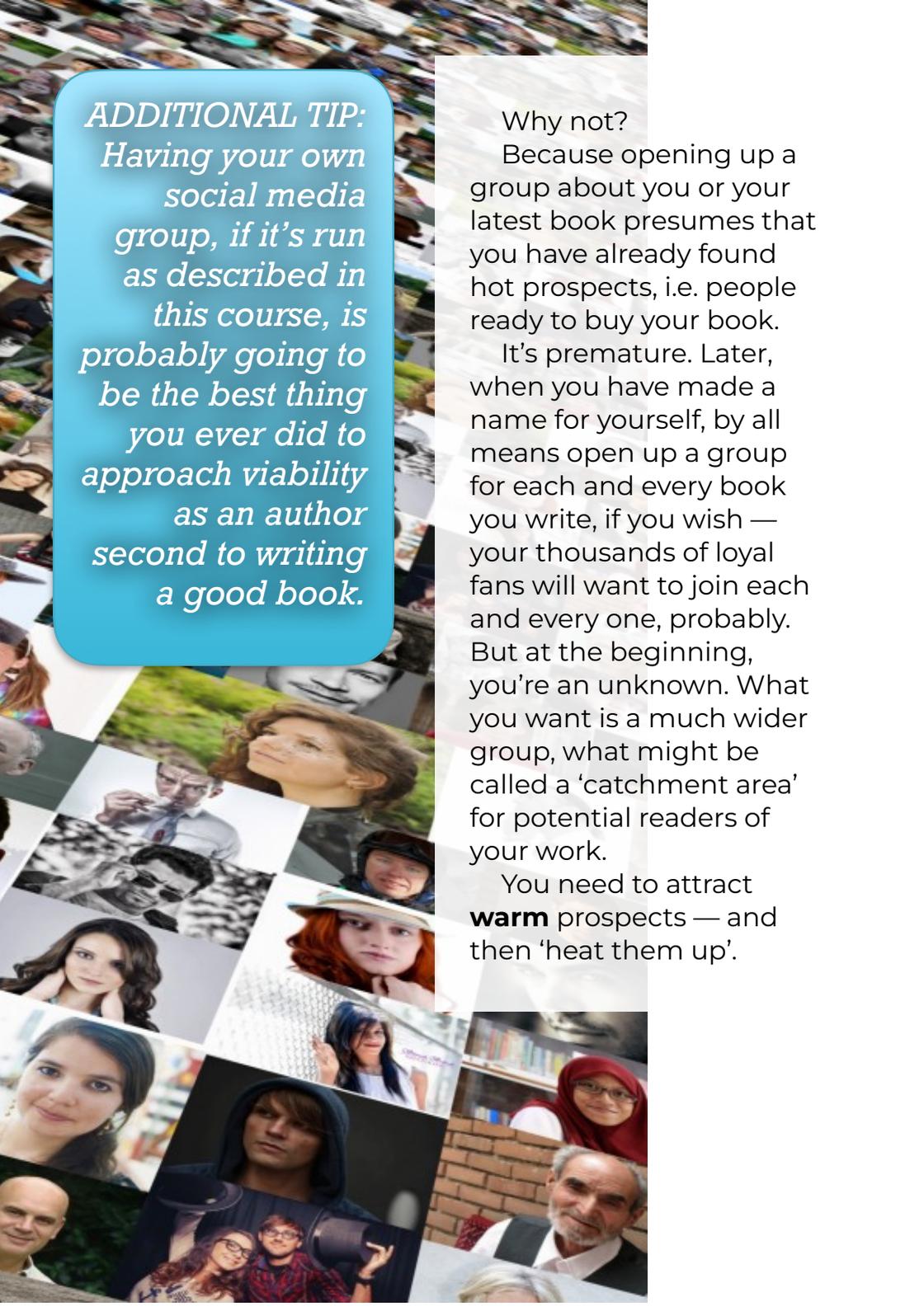
You can gather an audience of already warm prospects together using social media — I particularly recommend Facebook groups, but something else may better suit you.

In the past, this wasn't possible — authors used to either have to write for a pre-existing audience, or just write and take a chance that there was an audience out there that would eventually find the book. These days, it's different.

What does that mean, in practical terms?

It means starting a Facebook group (or other similar group), which is technically a very simple thing to do. But here's the rub: it most definitely should **not** be a group about your latest book or even (initially) about you or anything to do with you.





*ADDITIONAL TIP:
Having your own
social media
group, if it's run
as described in
this course, is
probably going to
be the best thing
you ever did to
approach viability
as an author
second to writing
a good book.*

Why not?

Because opening up a group about you or your latest book presumes that you have already found hot prospects, i.e. people ready to buy your book.

It's premature. Later, when you have made a name for yourself, by all means open up a group for each and every book you write, if you wish — your thousands of loyal fans will want to join each and every one, probably. But at the beginning, you're an unknown. What you want is a much wider group, what might be called a 'catchment area' for potential readers of your work.

You need to attract **warm** prospects — and then 'heat them up'.

Need an example? Let's say that you write a kind of science fantasy adventure story along the lines of Edgar Rice Burroughs Mars/Barsoom tales. Your book, called **John Sword, Warrior of Titan** is all published and ready to sell. But what you don't do at that point is try to sell it directly (unless you want to waste time and possibly money). What you do do is open up a 'Science Fantasy group' and make posts about Burroughs and all the other Golden Age great authors, finding articles and images and other posts from strangers and plonking them into your group feed on a regular basis. This is very easy and not time-consuming, if it's done right.

What happens? The material you're posting, like blood in the ocean, attracts the sharks — readers who love Burroughs and the rest swim towards the group and join.



Remember, the **cover** grabs enough attention for them to read the **blurb**; and the blurb (**not** a story summary) grabs enough attention for them to investigate further.

Keep feeding the group with generalised material; don't mention your book yet, though you can put a link to it in the 'About this group' section if you wish. Just flow more stuff into the group and start chatting with members, building communication and affinity.

As the group grows both in numbers and activity, you can slip an occasional ad in for your book. Hopefully, you've had a cover designed which indicates both that your book definitely belongs to this genre but also hints at your particular message.

Remember, the cover grabs enough attention for them to read the blurb; and the blurb (**not** a story summary) grabs enough attention for them to investigate further.



Don't 'tell the story', pull the attention by hinting at the message of your book.

Make sure that your ad contains a link direct to your book, somewhere where it can be bought with a click.

Then go back to feeding the group with general articles, snippets, images and so forth, about the general area of science fantasy, Burroughs etc etc.

What will happen?

You'll get a few sales over time.

Then, if your book is good enough, you'll get positive feedback. Entice those who have purchased it into reviewing it both in the group and on the sales sites where it's available. That adds punch to your presentation and will draw more people along.

Course Marketing Exercise # 12:

Write a draft blurb for your book:

- 1. Write out the book's message.**
- 2. Dramatise the message using your characters.**
- 3. Don't reveal the outcome of the story. End off with your protagonist in jeopardy.**

Note this down for revision later.



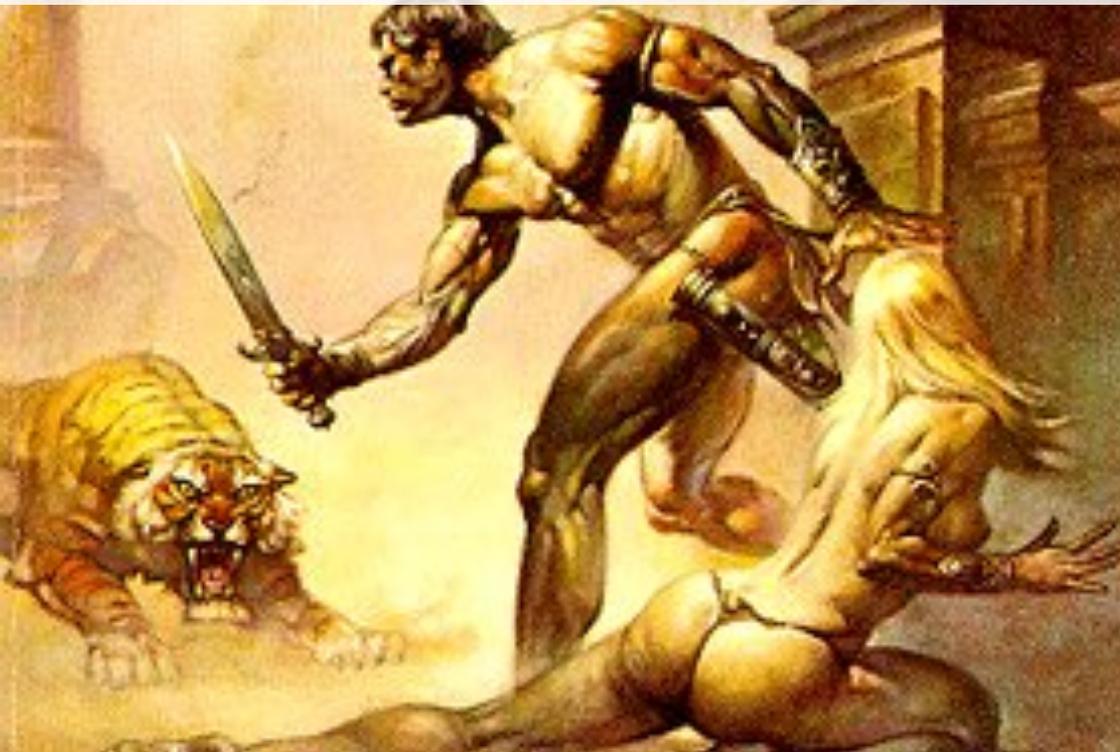
ACE | SF
PRICE \$5.95 | \$1.95

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS I AM A BARBARIAN

Yes, there's a little bit of work involved — but far less work than pumping ads out to people who aren't listening. Plus, if you've written a book called **John Sword, Warrior of Titan**, I assume that you will love Edgar Rice Burroughs and his ilk

and won't at all mind interacting with a group of rabid fans, discussing the genre, the adventures of particular heroes, the artwork, and so forth.

Marketing becomes fun — two words you never expected in the same sentence, probably.



Here's how you put such a group together, step by step:

1. Work out what broad genre your own work fits into.

Examples:

If you write 'literary fiction' set up a 'Literary Fiction' group.

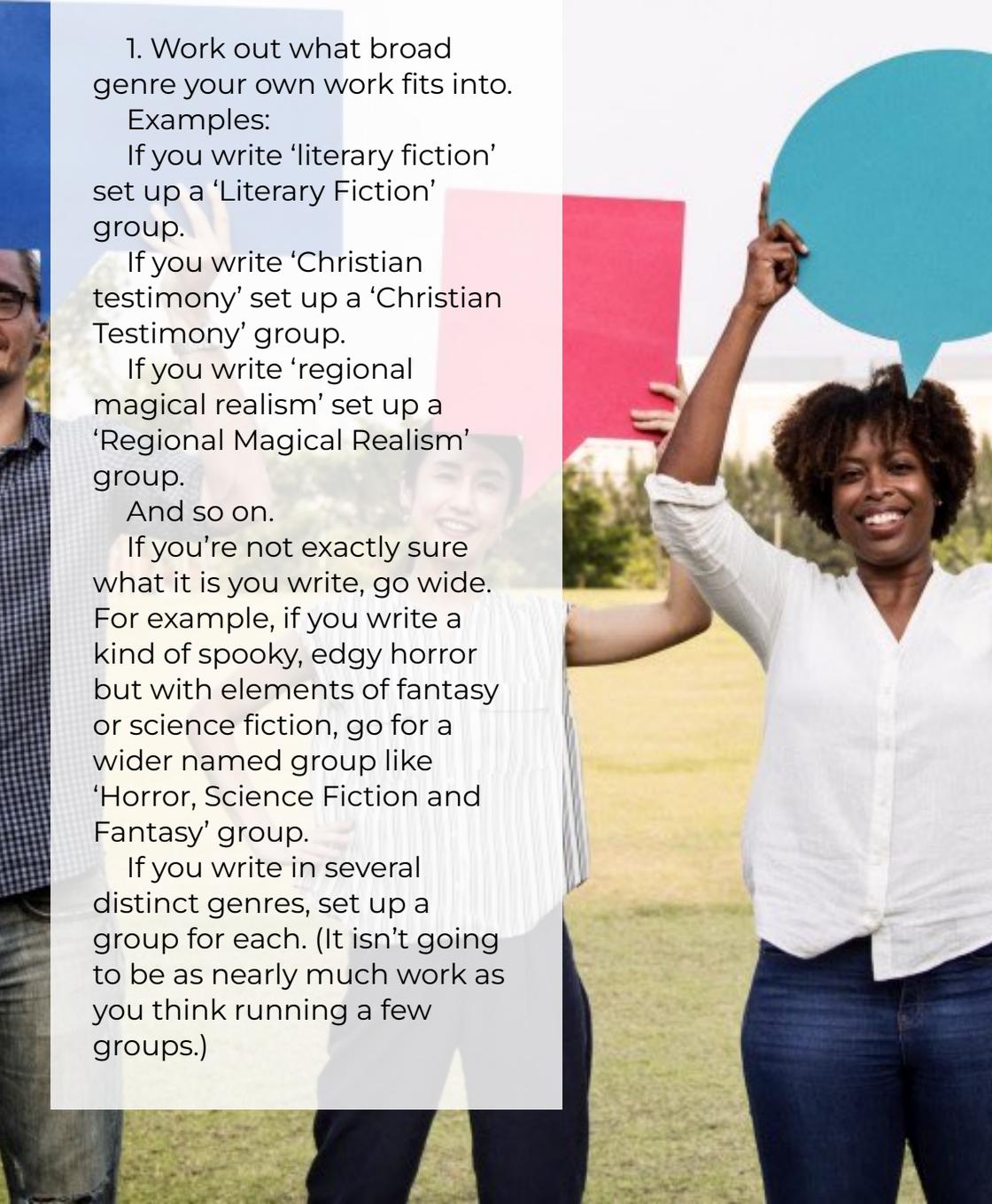
If you write 'Christian testimony' set up a 'Christian Testimony' group.

If you write 'regional magical realism' set up a 'Regional Magical Realism' group.

And so on.

If you're not exactly sure what it is you write, go wide. For example, if you write a kind of spooky, edgy horror but with elements of fantasy or science fiction, go for a wider named group like 'Horror, Science Fiction and Fantasy' group.

If you write in several distinct genres, set up a group for each. (It isn't going to be as nearly much work as you think running a few groups.)



A photograph of two people standing in a grassy field. The person on the left is holding a large teal speech bubble, and the person on the right is holding a large orange speech bubble. In the background, there are trees and a white building. A semi-transparent white box with a light blue gradient is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text. At the bottom of the image, there is a blue rounded rectangle containing a tip.

2. Set up the group or groups and invite a few people into each one whom you know are already interested in that genre or field.

Tip: keep a grip on who joins. Use a ‘rule of thumb’ to see what other groups a candidate is in — if their interests seem aligned, approve their membership; if they look like they might want to join so that they can bombard your group with ads for their own work (because they are still stuck in the primitive marketing strategy outlined above) don’t let them in.

*ADDITIONAL TIP: If you don’t police who is allowed into your group, this will create **much** more work for you in the long run.*

3. Fill the group with regular postings to do with the group's topic.

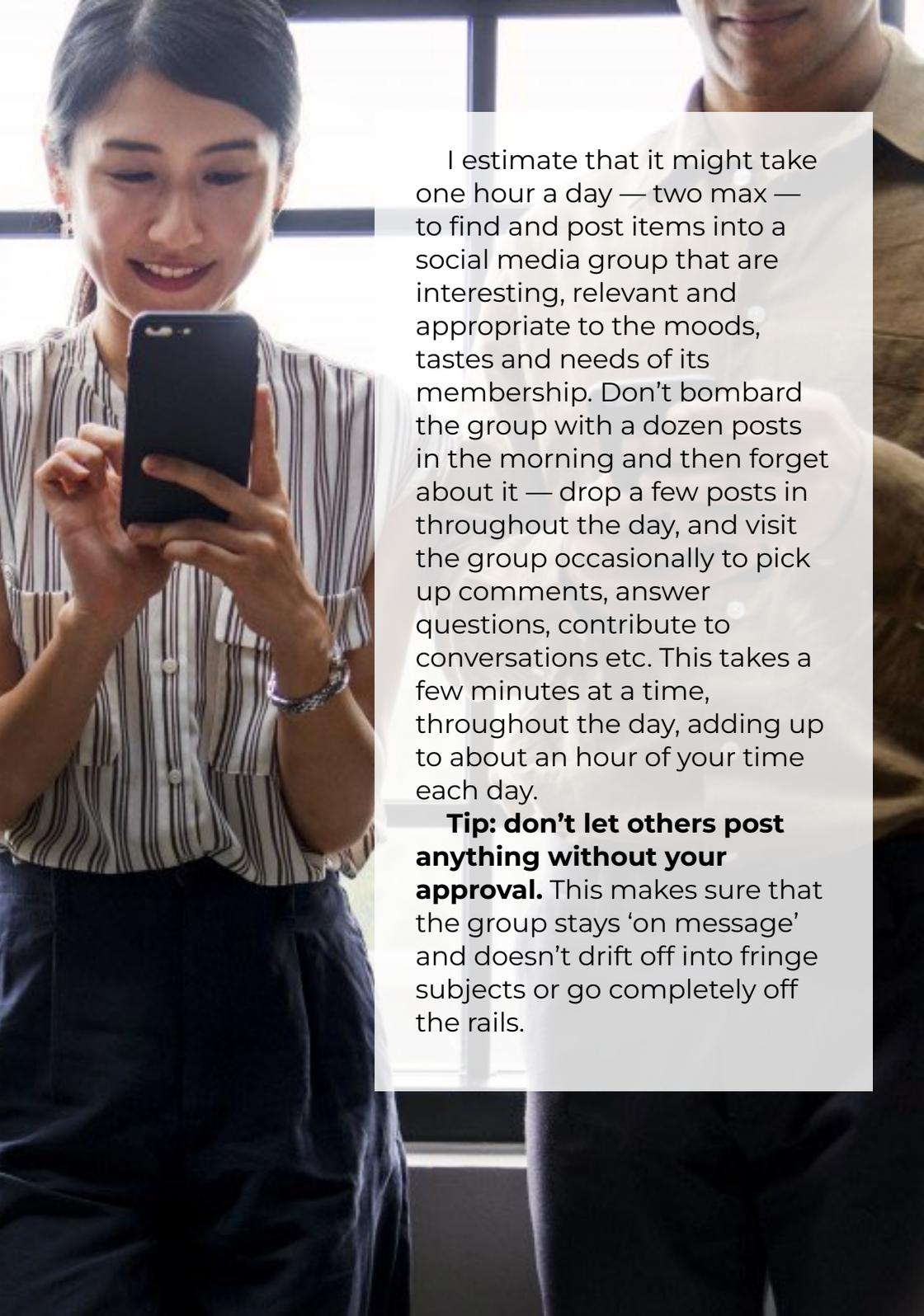
For example, fill your 'Literary Fiction' group with items and articles about literary fiction — news of new releases by other authors, articles to do with writing literary fiction, items about famous authors and so forth.

Fill your 'Christian Testimony' group with items about Christian testimony.

Fill your 'Regional Magical Realism' group with articles, pictures, features about that region and magical realism.

You get the idea.





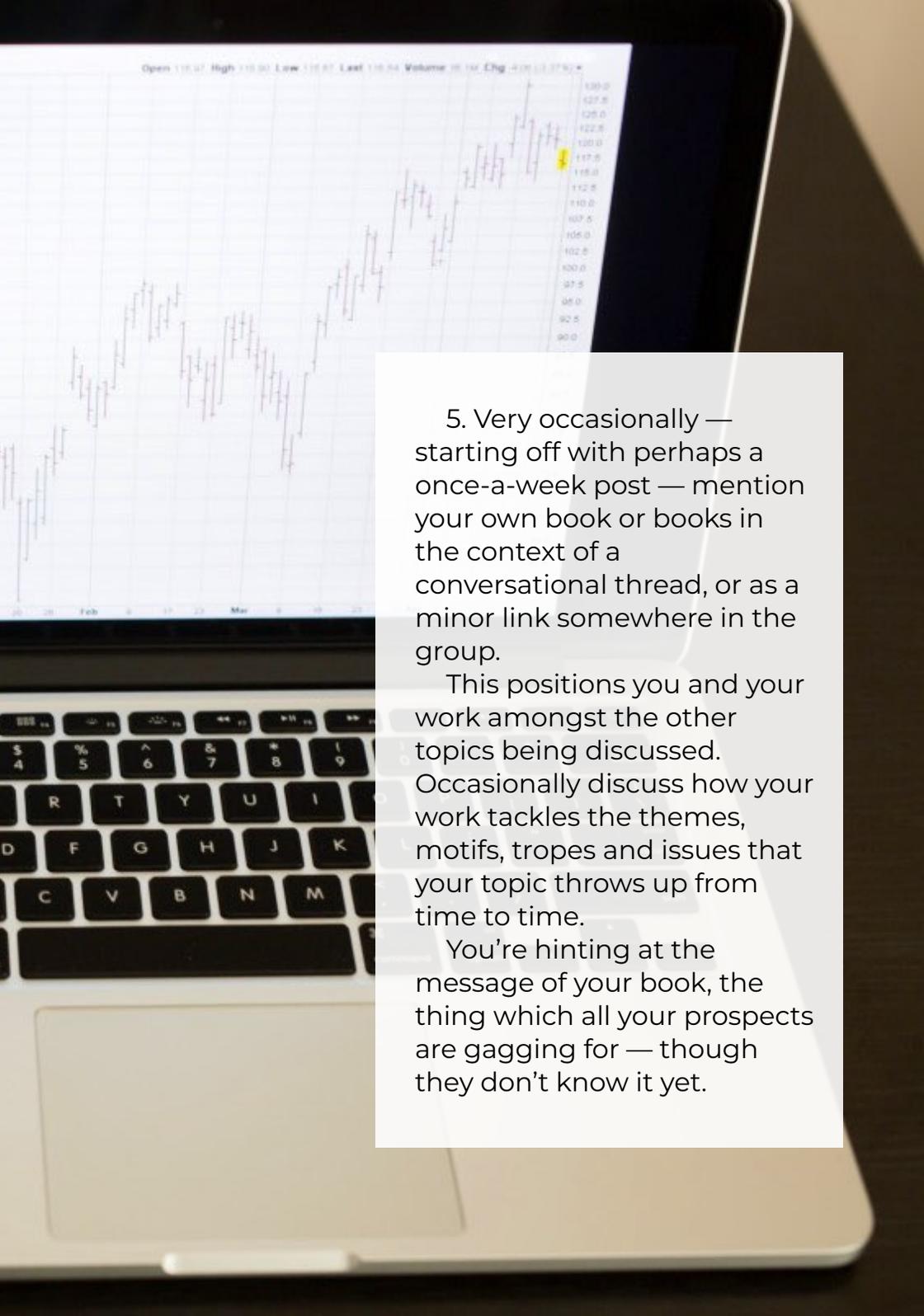
I estimate that it might take one hour a day — two max — to find and post items into a social media group that are interesting, relevant and appropriate to the moods, tastes and needs of its membership. Don't bombard the group with a dozen posts in the morning and then forget about it — drop a few posts in throughout the day, and visit the group occasionally to pick up comments, answer questions, contribute to conversations etc. This takes a few minutes at a time, throughout the day, adding up to about an hour of your time each day.

Tip: don't let others post anything without your approval. This makes sure that the group stays 'on message' and doesn't drift off into fringe subjects or go completely off the rails.

4. Allow the group to grow steadily.

Don't have huge expectations of immense or rapid growth — it takes time to 'appear' on the radar of interested folks. Of course, if your group is highly topical — let's say you write 'contemporary political thrillers' and your group covers contemporary politics and fiction writing, then you might get a more lively interest from the public at large than, say, a group with a topic like 'post-Jacobean detective dramas'. But who knows? Many groups find a niche swiftly and basically contribute to the expansion of a small topic.

ADDITIONAL TIP: Be patient. You're going to get way more results this way than by spamming the marketplace with ads.



5. Very occasionally — starting off with perhaps a once-a-week post — mention your own book or books in the context of a conversational thread, or as a minor link somewhere in the group.

This positions you and your work amongst the other topics being discussed. Occasionally discuss how your work tackles the themes, motifs, tropes and issues that your topic throws up from time to time.

You're hinting at the message of your book, the thing which all your prospects are gagging for — though they don't know it yet.

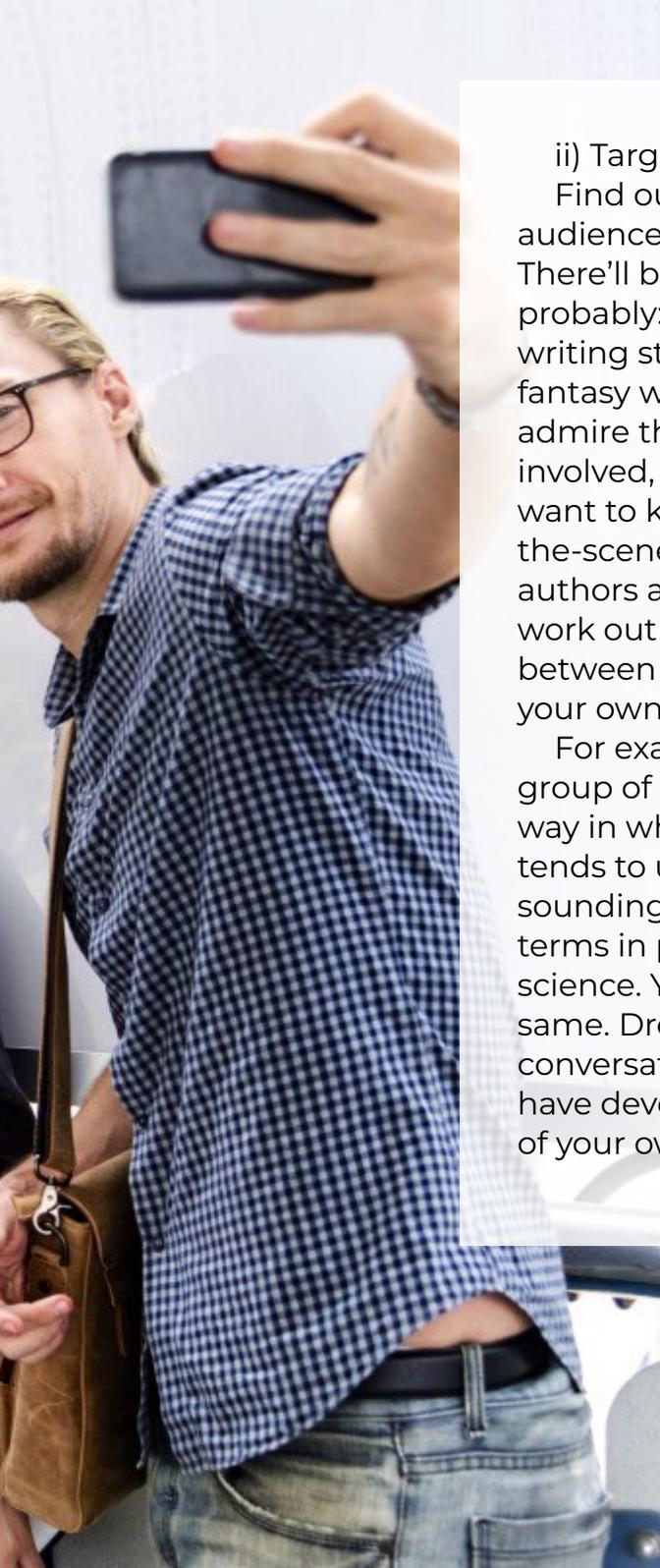
2. Run the group properly

You can mess up your group and lose all the momentum of this if you get certain etiquette points wrong, so here are the Seven Aims of a Social Media Group:

i) Build Rapport

By following the protocols, you want to build affinity and respect for your author avatar (the public relations 'You'). Demonstrate that you are a fan of the genre too, that you are listening, that you are present. You can do this on less than an hour a day, spread throughout the day — visitors to your group will assume that you are on social media all day long, when actually you're just popping in once in a while (between writing your next book, of course).

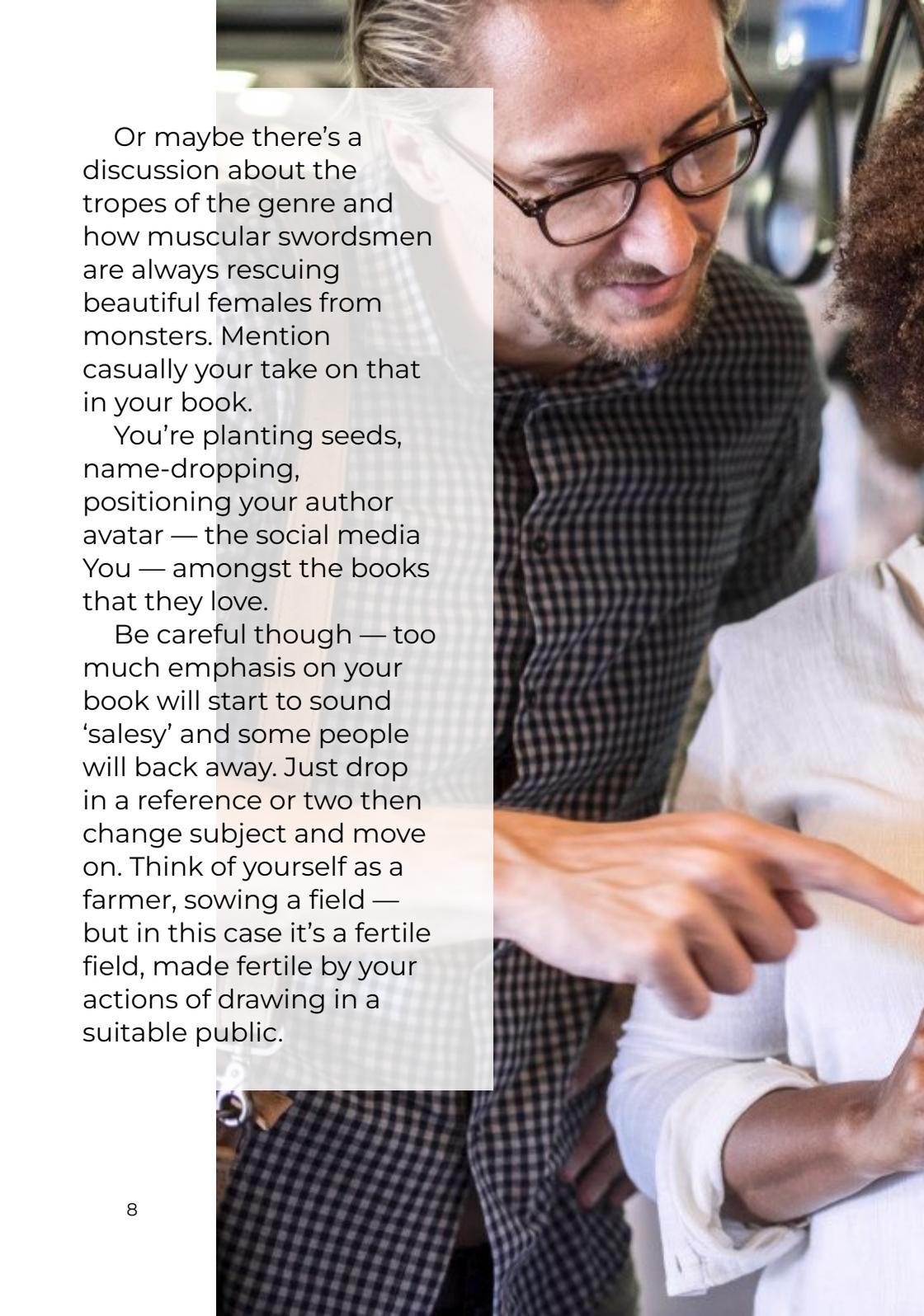




ii) Target The Passion

Find out what your audience's real passions are. There'll be a range of them, probably: some will like the writing style of science fantasy writers, others will admire the world-building involved, while yet others will want to know more behind-the-scenes stuff about the authors and their lives. Then work out connections between those passions and your own book.

For example, let's say a group of readers loves the way in which science fantasy tends to use convincing-sounding gobbledegook terms in place of any hard science. Your book does the same. Drop into a conversation thread how you have developed a few terms of your own.

A photograph of two men in a professional setting. The man on the left, with glasses and a beard, is wearing a dark checkered shirt and is pointing his right index finger towards a document held by the man on the right. The man on the right has dark curly hair and is wearing a white shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a modern office or meeting room.

Or maybe there's a discussion about the tropes of the genre and how muscular swordsmen are always rescuing beautiful females from monsters. Mention casually your take on that in your book.

You're planting seeds, name-dropping, positioning your author avatar — the social media You — amongst the books that they love.

Be careful though — too much emphasis on your book will start to sound 'salesy' and some people will back away. Just drop in a reference or two then change subject and move on. Think of yourself as a farmer, sowing a field — but in this case it's a fertile field, made fertile by your actions of drawing in a suitable public.



iii) Identify Any Blocks
What is your audience missing? What don't they like about this genre that they love? Are they irked by certain conventions? Gently discover these blocks and complaints and find ways of dropping into the discussion how your book deals with these matters.

iv) Occupy Mental Space
Actually, you have already started this just by doing the above. If you do these things gently enough, members of your group will already have positioned you and your work alongside Burroughs and the other favourites in that field. You won't be the equal of Burroughs etc in their heads, but you will have managed to inveigle yourself into the same mental space as those other, much more well-known authors. Major triumph.

v) Keep Posting
Continue asking questions, holding polls, posting images and so on to build up a complete affinity between your audience and its beloved genre. The stronger your author avatar's empathy with your group, the easier it will be for you to present your own work to them.

vi) Follow Your Instincts

When you can truly identify with what your audience is looking for, choose an appropriate moment to mention your book. Don't try to 'sell' it, but instead go with the flow of the conversation — 'softly, softly' will definitely produce the best results.



vii) Test Your Work

Once you've gotten a few of your audience to buy your book, engage them in group conversations about it. You can garner reviews this way, but you can also learn a lot about your own writing for future work. What did they like? What did they dislike? What compared to the greats in your genre? What fell short?

Basically then, if you use a social media group to gather an audience of warm prospects who are broadly interested in the types of story that you write, make that group interesting and alive around its topic, while occasionally dropping in a comment or two about your own book, then sometimes a well-structured and positioned ad for your book, everyone wins. Fans of your genre are entertained, enlightened and given something else that they might love to read, all without any sleazy or wasteful attempts to 'sell' them anything.

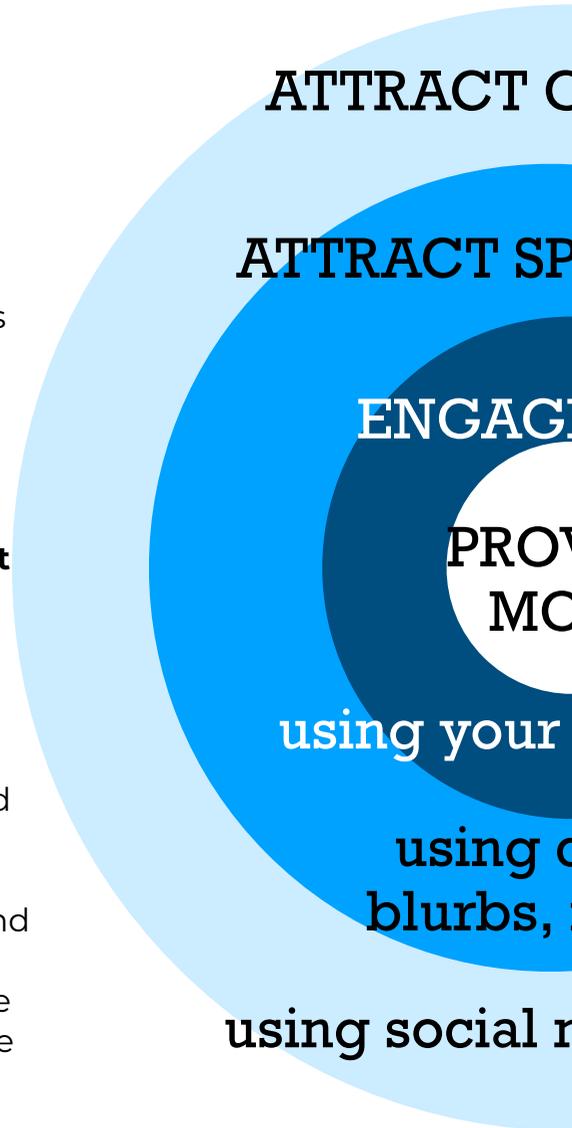
3. Use the Marketing Mantra

Now I'm going to introduce you to one of the most powerful marketing concepts ever devised. It's called the 'Marketing Mantra', but it's not some kind of mystical chant — it's a series of steps behind all successful marketing strategies.

It goes like this:

Attract generally; attract specifically; engage fully; provide more.

Using this sequence, you can discover your real prospects, service them and enthuse almost anybody about anything. Deviate from it or any of its steps, and you can end up in the marketing wasteland where many of you probably reside currently.



The Market

GENERALLY

SPECIFICALLY

THE FULLY

WIDE
MORE

book's text

covers,
reviews

media groups

ing Mantra

Here's how it works:

Attract generally

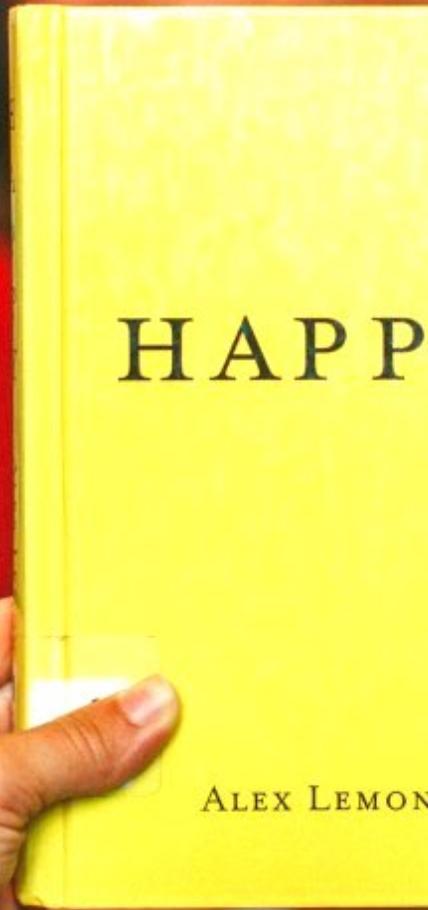
Have you ever tried to sell a specific product (like your book) to a general audience (like the world at large)? This amounts to lobbing tennis balls into an auditorium full of strangers—the result is that you soon become an annoyance and end up expelled from the arena, with hardly anyone catching your tennis balls.

No— it's very difficult to sell a specific product to a general audience. Having said that, this is what a great deal of primitive or conventional marketing tries to do, which is where Google ads and Facebook ads and search engine optimisation and all the rest of that paraphernalia come in: they are 'shouting from the rooftops' while making an effort to isolate a more specific audience through algorithmically targeted promotion.

Conventional approaches like that are a bit like a bunch of hunters firing off arrows into the forest in the hope of hitting edible prey. Slightly more sophisticated approaches, using tailor-made audience descriptors, are like the same archers firing off arrows into a part of the forest where edible prey is known to hang out — hence a slightly higher success rate. But that's still pretty random.

When human beings moved from depending on nomadic hunters for food to the domestication of animals and growing their own food, civilisation took a big leap out of a subsistence level of survival up to something a little more sustainable. And the same thing can be done by using advanced marketing.

Advanced marketing says 'Attract generally'. What does this mean? It means the equivalent of domesticating your 'food'.



HAPP

ALEX LEMON

You create vehicles, spaces, zones — in practical terms, social media groups — into which you entice your slightly more specific audience out of the general ‘forest’ and into an area that you control.

Social media empowers authors to do this — it wasn’t really possible before, unless you owned your own bookshop.

As you filter out a slightly more specific audience from the general background of ‘readers’, you begin to create ‘warm prospects’ — people who have at least some inkling of awareness or interest in your work or similar works.

Remember: You always have been in control, but no one told you. The Marketing Mantra gives you the tools.

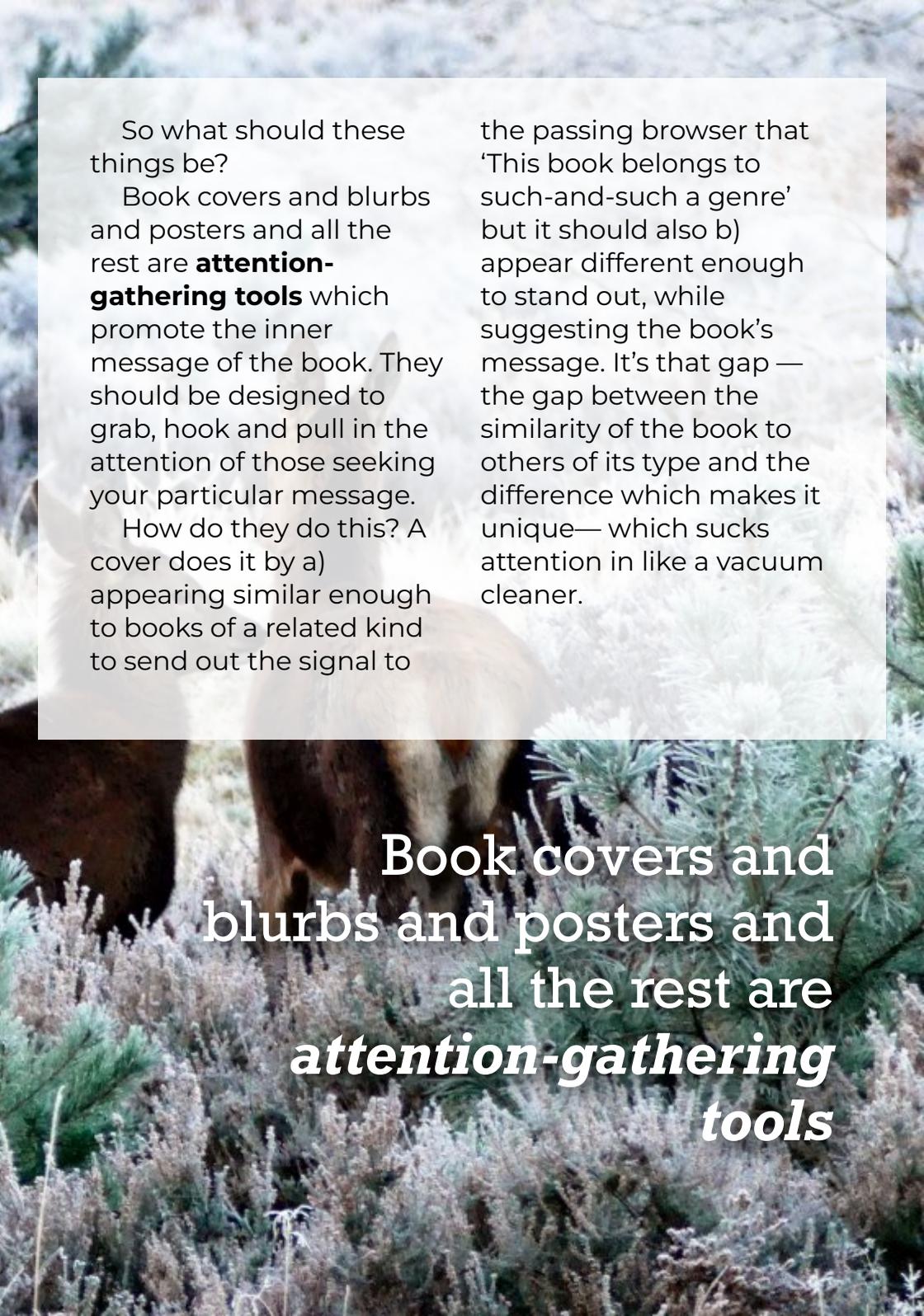
Y

Attract specifically

This is where the more conventional tools of the trade come into play. I call them 'external tools' because they are on the outside of your book: the cover, the blurb, the way the book is positioned with others of its kind, any connected advertising campaign and so on. This is aimed at people who have not read your book — these are the 'warm prospects' whom you have enticed into the general vicinity of your work because of their related interests.

Covers, blurbs and so forth should **not** be attempts to 'tell the story' of the book; nor should they be simply based on 'what the author likes'. A swift scan of some self-published books on the internet will soon disabuse you of the notion that 'the author knows best' when it comes to these elements. 'I like it' is often the worst reason for accepting a particular cover design, and the number of blurbs I have seen which are story summaries (and therefore ineffective) is limitless.





So what should these things be?

Book covers and blurbs and posters and all the rest are **attention-gathering tools** which promote the inner message of the book. They should be designed to grab, hook and pull in the attention of those seeking your particular message.

How do they do this? A cover does it by a) appearing similar enough to books of a related kind to send out the signal to

the passing browser that ‘This book belongs to such-and-such a genre’ but it should also b) appear different enough to stand out, while suggesting the book’s message. It’s that gap — the gap between the similarity of the book to others of its type and the difference which makes it unique— which sucks attention in like a vacuum cleaner.

Book covers and
blurbs and posters and
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tools***

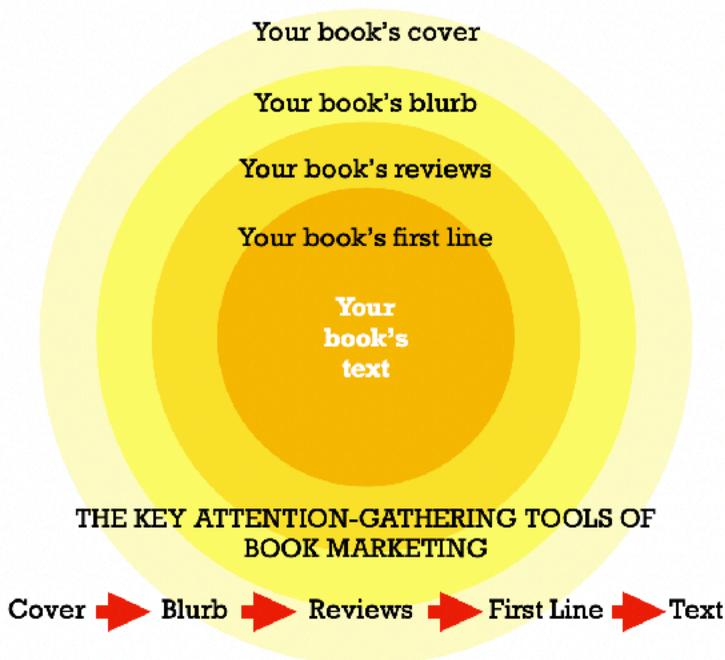
You need a cover to suck enough attention in that the passer-by then reads the blurb.

A blurb should take the maximum vacuum power of the story — the key gap, hole, threat, risk, loss or other ‘vacuum’ at the heart of the tale, the thing that most suggests the book’s message— and compress it into a powerful statement

which leaves the reader wondering what the outcome of things will be.

You need a blurb to be strong enough for the potential reader to read the reviews or to open up the first page and read it.

At that exact point we switch to the next part of the mantra.



Engage fully

As soon as the potential reader turns to the first page of your book, you should emit a little cheer — so far all your ‘external’ marketing work has succeeded. You’ve drawn the general reader into an area that you control even more minutely, and then turned him or her into a specific reader by attracting enough attention to get that first page opened. Now everything depends upon your story itself.

To engage readers fully, your work needs to apply the principles contained in Part One.

These are principles which have been in operation since storytelling began and which lie behind the success of every great and good piece of fiction ever written or spoken.

Using these tools — tools ‘internal’ to the story — the author makes sure that readers are fully engaged and complete the tale with some kind of emotional impact having occurred. Initial prospect attention has been condensed into reader emotion.

If all has worked well to this point, we can move onto the final part of the mantra.



Provide more

Readers whom you have drawn in from the wilderness, attracted to a specific product and then engaged fully through to emotional impact **will reach for more**. A writer who wants to be successful in commercial terms will provide more and more material for fans to buy and read. The end result of this is that the writer will grow a viable following of fans and superfans, readers who will eagerly await the next release, thus ensuring commercial growth from there on out.

Learn this mantra; remember it. It can be applied to any product: if you were trying to sell pizzas, the same mantra applies — you would attract a general pizza-eating audience, focus them on your specific pizza with packaging and advertising copy, and engage them fully with great flavours and satisfying consumption. The more satisfied your customers would be, the more of your pizzas they would want to buy.



Advanced
marketing
*puts the
producer in
control of
what
happens*

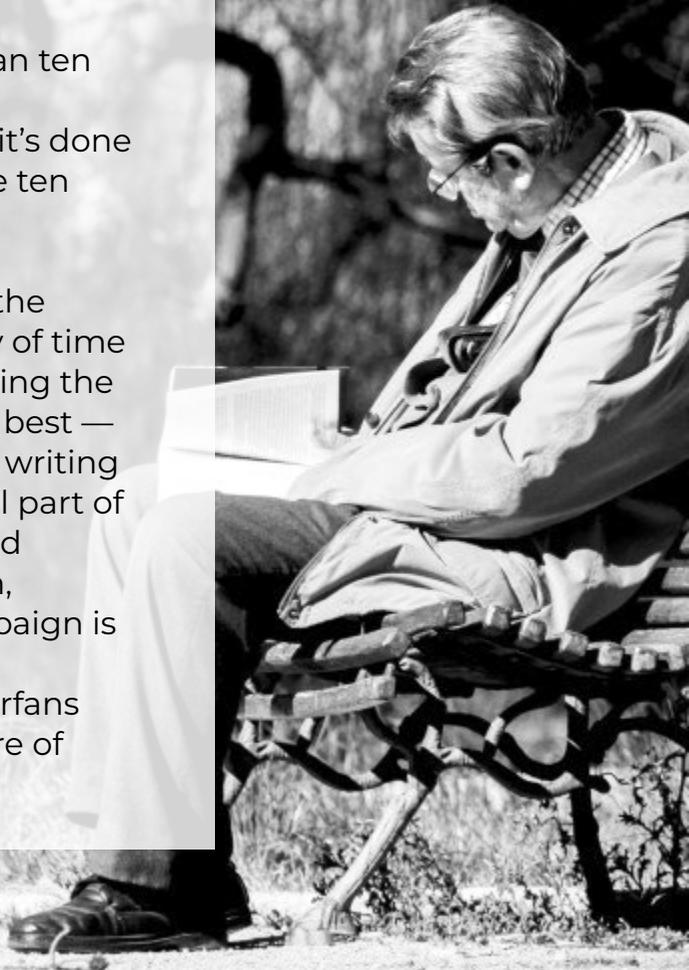
What makes advanced marketing successful where primitive or conventional marketing so often fails is that **it puts the producer in control of what happens**, just like agriculture put human society in control of its future in ages past. You no longer depend on random arrows striking suitable prey; you 'grow your own' supply.

Using this Marketing Mantra, you can effectively set up a profitable writing career. But the fact that it is a 'mantra' doesn't mean that it's magical or doesn't require work.

That doesn't mean 'hard, boring or uncomfortable work,' though. It can be quite the opposite.

Whereas many people might spend dozens of hours every week desperately pumping out ads and other promotion about their book, with very little return, I estimate that it's possible to run an advanced marketing campaign on less than ten hours a week, spread through the week, if it's done properly — and those ten hours won't feel like 'marketing' at all.

That should leave the average writer plenty of time to concentrate on doing the thing they love to do best — writing more. In fact, writing more becomes a vital part of a successful advanced marketing campaign, because such a campaign is aimed at creating 'superfans', and superfans will want to read more of your work.



An Average Day

So what does an average day look like for a writer who wants to undertake advanced marketing?

Obviously, the pattern of an individual day will change from person to person, but it's possible to use the principles of the subject to outline the kinds of things that should happen in order to show how this whole thing works. And you'll be pleased, I think, to discover where the emphasis lies...

1. Write.

However you structure your day, the bulk of it should be focused on **writing**.

That's not only because you are a writer and that's what you want to do, but also because you will need to make provision for what is arguably the most important sector of your public: the Superfan.

'But I don't have any buyers at all yet!' you might say. 'How am I supposed to cater for a group that doesn't yet exist?'



It's true that in the early days of an advanced marketing campaign you might have no sales at all, let alone a sub-group of fans clamouring for more.

But writing for the Superfan actually deals with two fundamentals: when you create fiction for those readers who will absolutely adore it, you are going to be working to your strengths — you yourself will be getting maximum pleasure from your work, writing the very things which you wanted to write,

developing the stories and characters and scenes which give you the most thrills and meaningful moments.

And secondly, you will be feeding the future — setting up stories and books which will be consumed in the months and years to come, providing you with the income you dreamed about.

So write — and enjoy it to the maximum, knowing that you are also working on future marketing.



2. Post.

One of your first activities during the day will probably be to look over what has come into your group (or groups) in terms of people trying to post things into the group. Depending on the subject and scope of your group, you can quickly scan through these and approve or disapprove as you see fit. This is your group's 'breakfast', if you like — articles, snippets, images, contributions of various kinds will then appear in group members' social media feeds, alerting them to the fact that the group is there and is an interesting place.

You can and should post a few things yourself at this time too, as an author avatar.

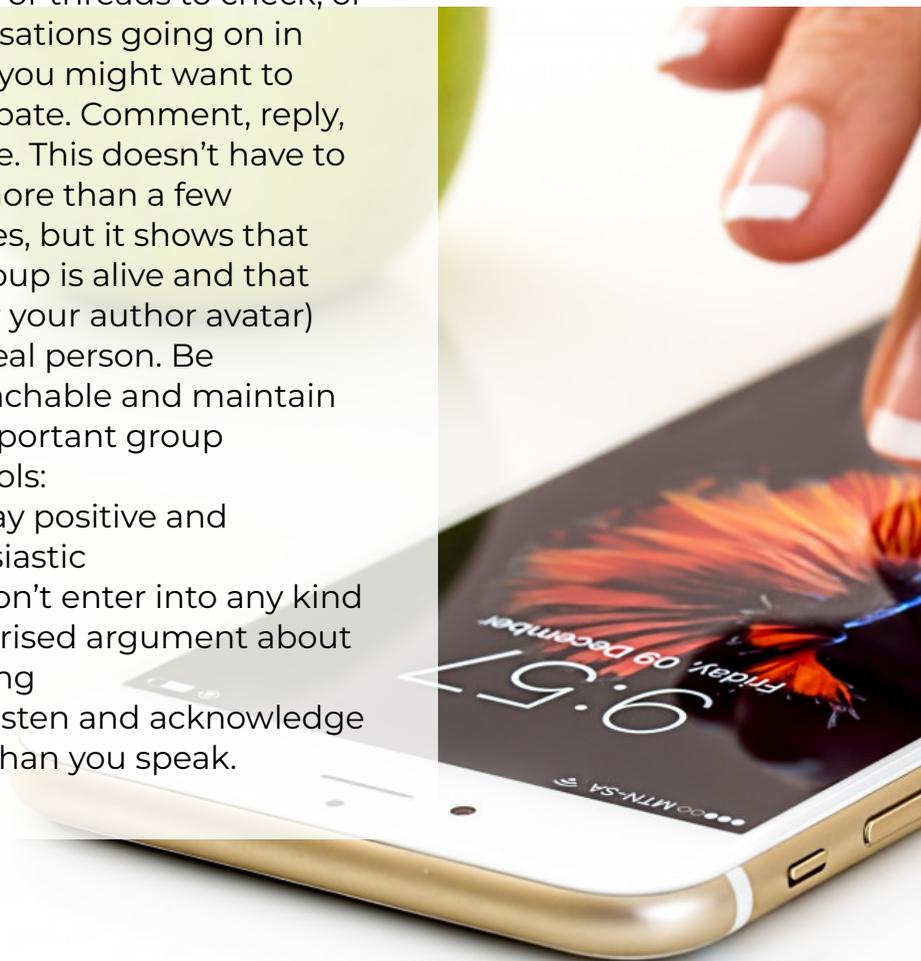
Tip: if you keep a blog, and it is at all relevant to your group's subject, post its latest articles or items into your group regularly. You'll get many more blog readers that way, while contributing appropriate material to your group.

3. Visit.

Just about the time that a hobbit would be enquiring as to a second breakfast, pop into your group again and check what's happening.

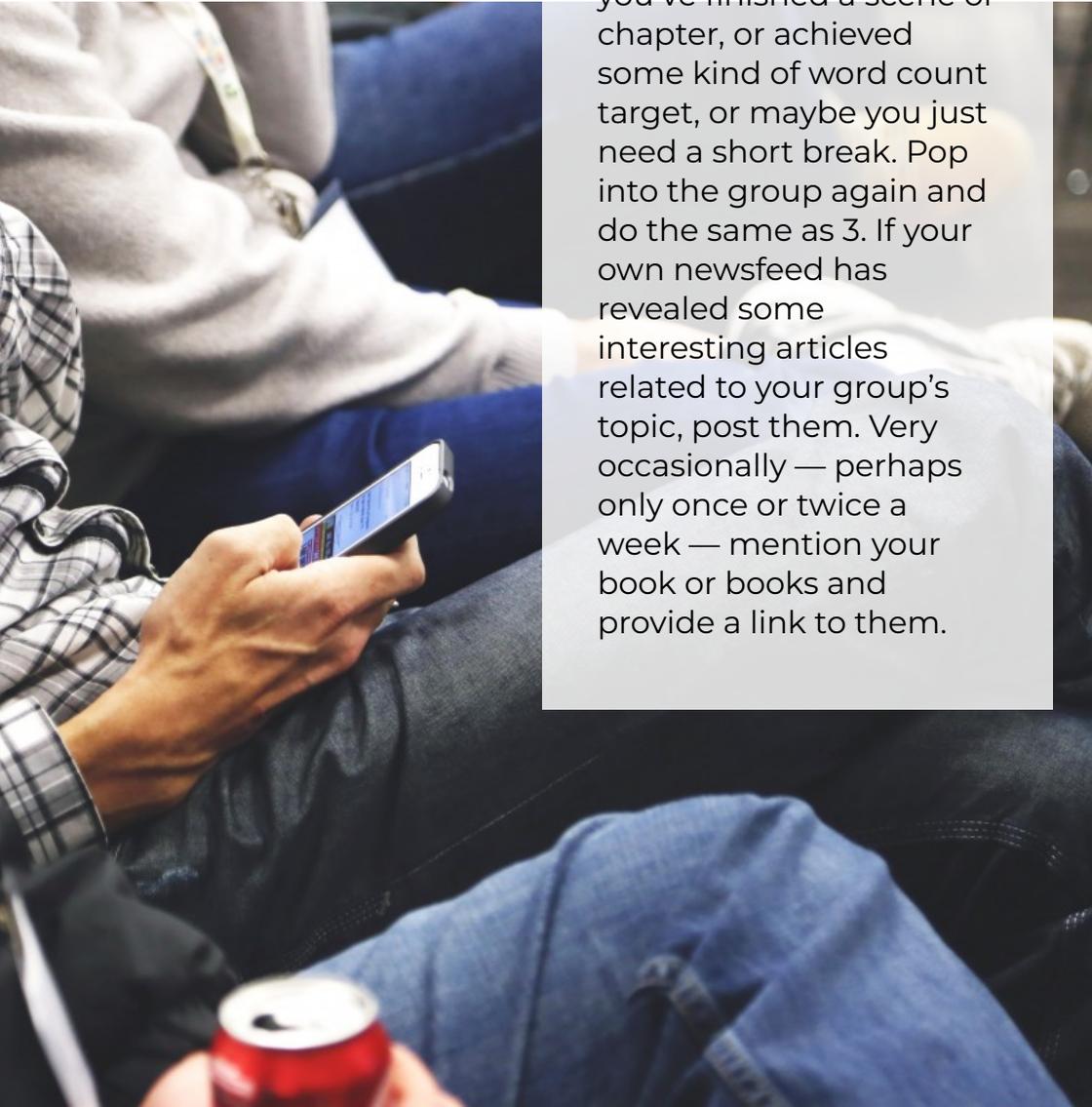
There may be new posts to look at or threads to check, or conversations going on in which you might want to participate. Comment, reply, engage. This doesn't have to take more than a few minutes, but it shows that the group is alive and that you (or your author avatar) are a real person. Be approachable and maintain the important group protocols:

- i) Stay positive and enthusiastic
- ii) Don't enter into any kind of polarised argument about anything
- iii) Listen and acknowledge more than you speak.



4. Visit again, later.

Keep in mind that, between these visits, you are writing. The time to visit a group is when there's a natural break in your writing — maybe you've finished a scene or chapter, or achieved some kind of word count target, or maybe you just need a short break. Pop into the group again and do the same as 3. If your own newsfeed has revealed some interesting articles related to your group's topic, post them. Very occasionally — perhaps only once or twice a week — mention your book or books and provide a link to them.



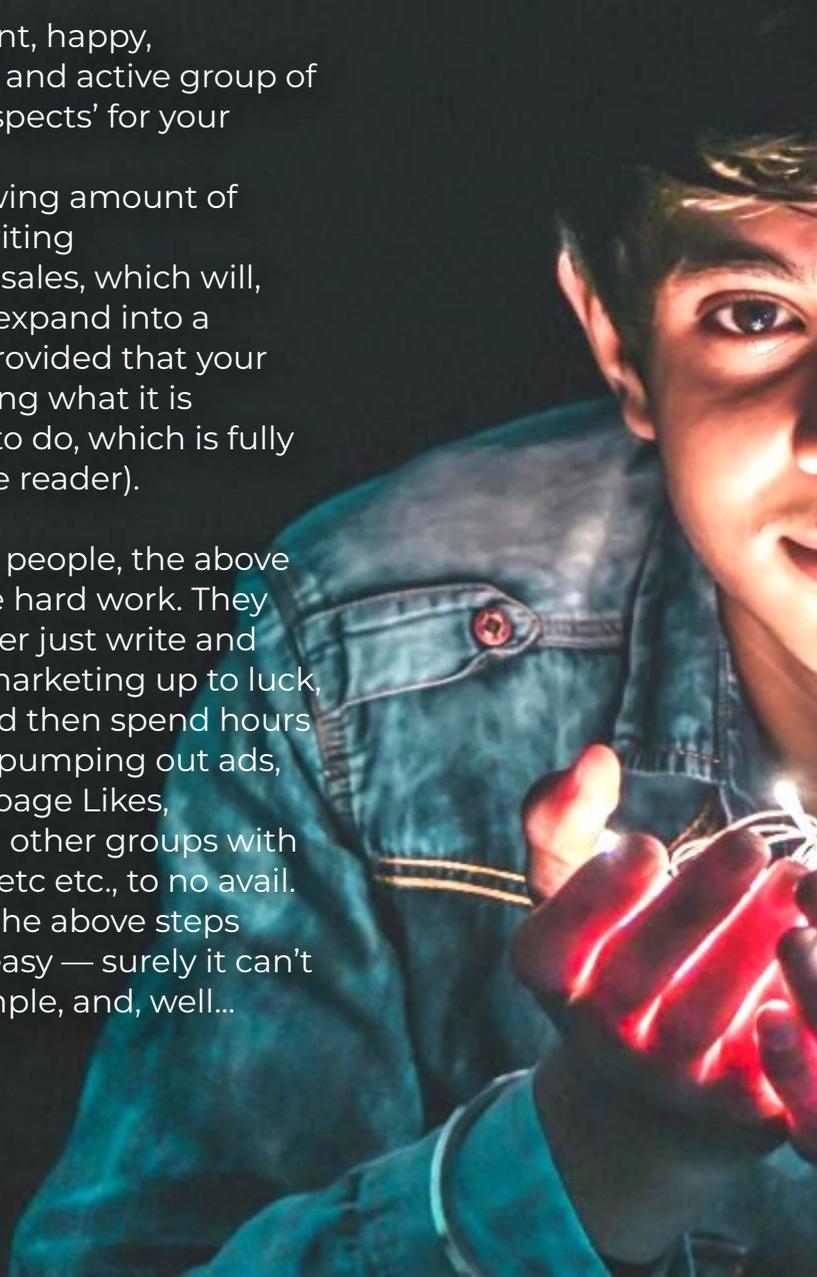
That's it. If you continue to do the above every day, you will have the following over time:

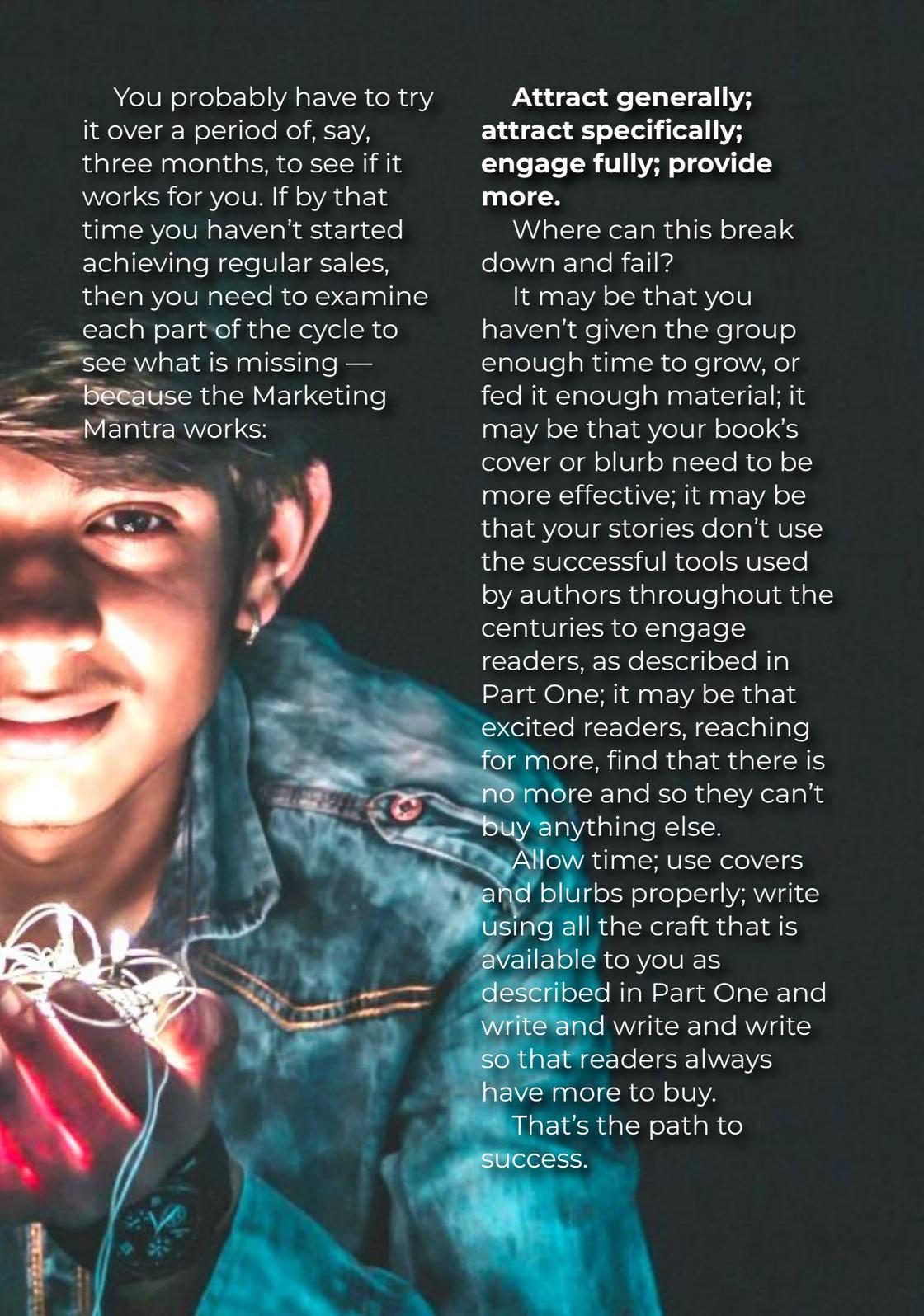
i) a vibrant, happy, expanding and active group of 'warm prospects' for your book.

ii) a growing amount of focused writing

iii) a few sales, which will, over time, expand into a fanbase (provided that your work is doing what it is supposed to do, which is fully engage the reader).

To some people, the above sounds like hard work. They would rather just write and leave the marketing up to luck, or write and then spend hours and hours pumping out ads, asking for page Likes, spamming other groups with book links etc etc., to no avail. To others, the above steps seem too easy — surely it can't be that simple, and, well... pleasant?





You probably have to try it over a period of, say, three months, to see if it works for you. If by that time you haven't started achieving regular sales, then you need to examine each part of the cycle to see what is missing — because the Marketing Mantra works:

Attract generally; attract specifically; engage fully; provide more.

Where can this break down and fail?

It may be that you haven't given the group enough time to grow, or fed it enough material; it may be that your book's cover or blurb need to be more effective; it may be that your stories don't use the successful tools used by authors throughout the centuries to engage readers, as described in Part One; it may be that excited readers, reaching for more, find that there is no more and so they can't buy anything else.

Allow time; use covers and blurbs properly; write using all the craft that is available to you as described in Part One and write and write and write so that readers always have more to buy.

That's the path to success.

Reviewing Your Progress

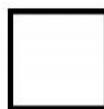
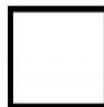
Review all of the above regularly. If you're not getting sales after about three months — even in small amounts — run through the following checklist:

i) Have you fully isolated **your book's message** and the correct genres for your work?

ii) Have you established at least one **social media group** which reflects the broader interests and passions of readers who like your genre?

iii) Have you **kept control of who joins the group** and stayed 'on topic' with your own posts and by keeping control of what is posted?

CHECKLIST





iv) Have you **fed the group enough material** to make it an exciting place for potential readers to visit?

v) Have you maintained sufficient 'presence' in the group as an **author avatar** to be regarded as approachable?

vi) Have you avoided using the group as a venue to 'sell' your book(s)?

vii) Have you given everything enough time?

viii) Does your book have a cover which indicates that it is clearly of a certain genre while also containing distinctive elements to make it attract the attention of people seeking your message?

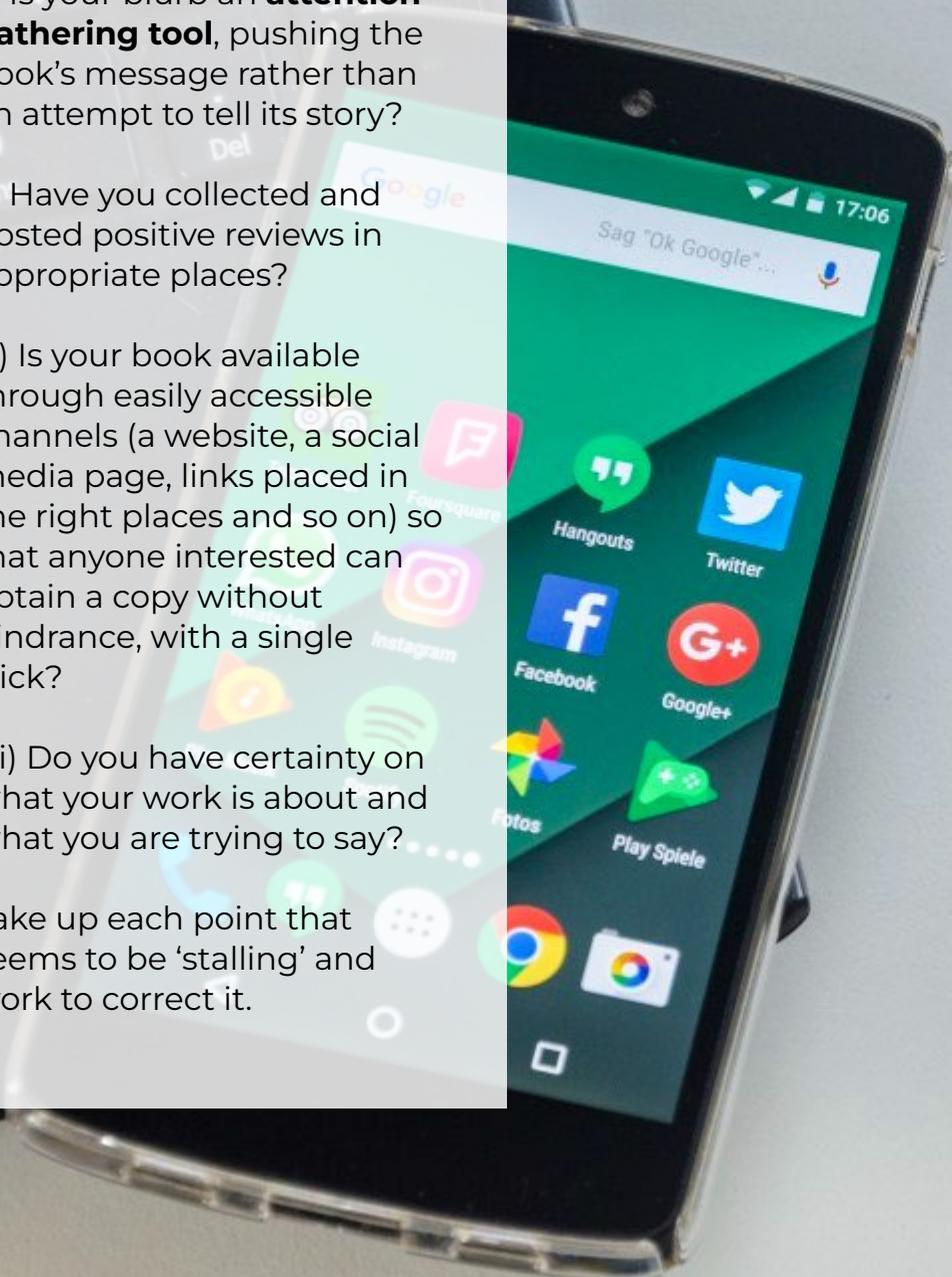
x) Is your blurb an **attention gathering tool**, pushing the book's message rather than an attempt to tell its story?

x) Have you collected and posted positive reviews in appropriate places?

xi) Is your book available through easily accessible channels (a website, a social media page, links placed in the right places and so on) so that anyone interested can obtain a copy without hindrance, with a single click?

xii) Do you have certainty on what your work is about and what you are trying to say?

Take up each point that seems to be 'stalling' and work to correct it.

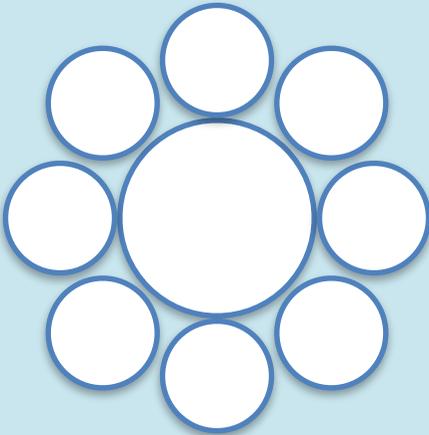




Marketing Lesson Three:
It is possible to succeed in marketing if you realise that you are in control: instead of hunting for prospects, you gather them into an area under your governance and then cultivate their attention. You can turn attention into action using specific tools and a marketing mantra which works.

Marketing Lesson Three Exercise: BUILDING YOUR MACHINE

Using lists you made earlier, build a marketing machine.



Set up a social media group or groups based around your book's message, its genre or field of writing, NOT on your book.

Tip: keep a grip on who joins.

Spend about one hour a day — spread throughout the day, not all at once— dropping a few relevant posts into the group and occasionally pick up comments, answer questions, contribute to conversations etc.

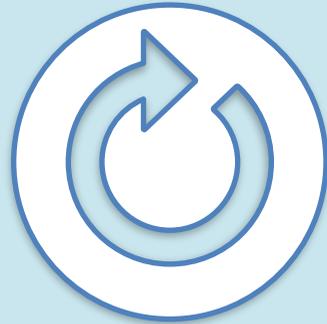
Tip: don't let others post anything without your approval.



Let the group grow gradually and organically over time. Members will 'self-select' through their interest in your genre or topic.



Build rapport; target passions; identify blocks; occupy mental space; keep posting; follow your instincts; test your work occasionally.



Focus on writing. You're playing a long game of preparing work for a group that doesn't yet exist: your Superfans.

MARKETING DONE PROPERLY

- 1. Keep your group ticking over, as above.**
- 2. In doing all this, you are applying the Marketing Mantra: Attract generally; attract specifically; engage fully; provide more.**
- 3. Note down any problems or slows.**
- 4. Patiently cultivate your own public.**

**Your next
module:**

**BECOME A
PROFESSIONAL
AUTHOR
COURSE
PART TWO:
SELL STORIES EFFECTIVELY**

Marketing Lesson Four:
Building a Better Website

Grant P Hudson