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Exclusive Interview

an online marketer who is arguably
one of the most prolific publishers of
information in the world today.

Suzanne Dibble

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Raise the Titanic



In 1980 the film *Raise the Titanic* was released. It was a classic cold war story pitting the Americans against the Russians, this time they were competing to see who could get to a mineral that could power next generation defenses and weapons first. After some preamble, it is discovered that the mineral they were all after has been loaded onto the RMS Titanic to be shipped to New York, but as we know the Titanic tragically struck an iceberg and was lost.

In the movie a grand plan to raise the Titanic is set in motion, and at this point we head straight into the realms of fiction, as the Titanic is found in one piece at the bottom of the ocean. In truth, it broke in two before sinking and had not been found when this film was made. The grand plan involved siting inflatable pods all along both sides of the Titanic's hull which would then inflate and bring the ship to the surface.

Similarly, in our lives and businesses we may have a grandiose plan or concept for success or launching our products, but as we work towards fulfilling those plans it is important that we stop and ask ourselves at each juncture not only, "Can I actually do this?" but also "Should I do this?"

Apple under Steve Jobs made it their stock in trade to take an existing product and perfect it, a skill which others have tried to emulate with varying degrees of success.

Could we raise the Titanic, with the technology and innovative skills available? Yes, we could, but should we? The best product is never all that's needed, it's the best product for that moment in time, that is needed.



Resources and news

Zoom launches event platform

Originally available only as a private beta, Zoom has now made OnZoom accessible to everyone. This new events platform allows paid Zoom users to create, host, and monetize events — a seemingly useful tool as we begin to see the adoption of virtual events grow.

Hosts can run one-time events or event series for up to 1,000 attendees (this number varies depending on the host's license), as well as sell tickets on the marketplace.

<https://on.zoom.us/e/view>

Yahoo Groups Fully Shutting Down 12-15-20

Have you got any content on Yahoo Groups? Then you'd better grab it fast before it disappears forever.

Yahoo Groups is completing the final stage of shutting down on December 15, 2020, at which time it will be fully removed from the web.

<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/yahoo-groups-to-fully-shut-down-on-december-15-2020/384313/#close>



PayPal Instant Transfers expanded for businesses, in response to COVID-19

According to a recent survey by PayPal, 76% of small businesses in the United States have reported they are struggling with cash-flow shortages.

The financial stressors the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on businesses and individuals has not relented.

In fact, Techcrunch recently reported that in a recent survey conducted by PayPal,

76% of small businesses in the United States have reported they are struggling with cash-flow shortages; and

91% said having real-time settlement could help with some of that.

Given the circumstances, PayPal and Visa have announced an expansion of their Instant Transfer service to individuals and businesses on a global level. Originally launched in March of 2019 solely in the United States, Instant Transfer allowed users to gain immediate access to transferred cash within minutes instead of days.

<https://www.paypal.com/us/webapps/mpp/camp/choose-how-you-pay>



“How Can I Market My Own Program in Facebook Groups?”

If it's your own Facebook Group, then you can market your programs with no problem.

But if you're in a Facebook Group run by anyone else, you've basically got two options:

1: Be active, provide value, answer questions and solve people's problems to get noticed.

Because this can be time intensive, you might want to pick one group and stick with it rather than spreading your attention over several groups. Or you can outsource this work to someone else.

Look for opportunities to contact people via direct messaging, to offer your free report that solves their problem, or any other opening that gets them either on your list or in direct contact with you.

2: Ask the admin for a sponsored post. This is something of a numbers game, but it can be quite effective.

Find the Facebook Groups that cater to the audience you're looking for.

Contact each Facebook Group owner or admin and ask if you can pay them to pin a post to the top of the group for a day or longer.

Some of the FB Group owners will completely ignore your request, some will need more info and others will say yes. Keep in mind that unless these groups are in the make money online realm, there's a good chance you are the first person to ask to pay them for a sponsored post.

The post itself can be an endorsement from the Group admin or it can come from you. In either case, offer something awesome in exchange for the ability to contact them via email or for joining your own Facebook Group.

Once you have them on your list or in your own Group, you can promote your products to them as you would any other prospective customer.



7 Marketing Trends For 2021

The new Global Marketing Trends 2021 report from Deloitte Insights provides us with clues for what is heading our way in marketing.

Despite pandemic overload, consumers have a positive perspective on how brands are responding to the current environment, providing for positive experiences and even increased brand loyalty.

The top 7 trends are pointing to a need to lose the façade we often present to customers and instead be authentic while holistically meeting their needs.

1: Purpose

Why does your business exist and who are you serving? If you know this, being authentic comes easy.

2: Agility

During times of change - such as during a pandemic – imagination and innovation are key.

3: Real Connections

Authentic human to human connections are more important than almost anything. Consumers will pay far more for the product with the heart-warming story or the ethically designed supply chain.

4: Trust

This one never goes out of style. Try shifting your focus from demographics to values. Make a promise you can deliver and then deliver on that promise.

5: Customer Participation

Customers are now and will continue to be an active component of the sales process. They write online reviews, offer advice to other customers, join conversations on social media and even create brand relevant content. Embrace this trend because it's not going away.

6: Fusion of Ideas and Strange Partnerships

Your business isn't an island, or at least it shouldn't be. Join together two different products to create a third, or even partner with non-competing businesses to offer your customers something new and relevant that they need or want. For example, a life coach could partner with a physical trainer and a dietician to completely remake a person's life.

7: Talent Transformation

You don't need to be an expert in most areas to gain a competitive advantage. Thanks to the gig economy as well as the ability to get help from expert freelancers all over the world, it makes more sense to focus on the big picture and let others handle the small details for you, especially if you hope to build your business to a large size in a short amount of time.

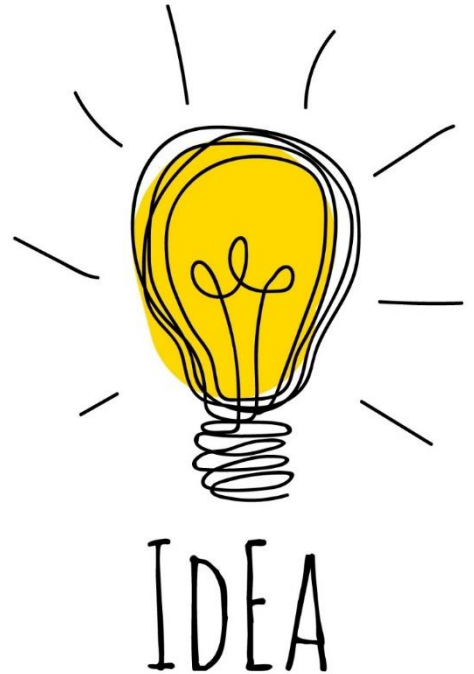
Open Site Explorer

Moz's Link Explorer is an SEO and SEM tool that'll help you explore any site. You can use it to find link building opportunities and to find out where you're being mentioned on the web.

Just plug in the URL for the site that you want to explore. Click the "search" button:

If you're not sure about the anchor text used to link to your site, you can simply click the anchor tab in the top left corner. Your objective is to get more brand anchor texts and fewer exact keyword anchor texts.

<https://moz.com/link-explorer>



LinkedIn rolls out stories feature to all users

Following rigorous testing, LinkedIn rolled out stories last week to all users in the United States and Canada. They will continue to roll out to the remaining regions in the coming weeks.

A story is a social media feed video (up to 20 seconds) or photo clip where you can add text, filters, GIFs, emojis, music, and more and share with your friends and colleagues. They also disappear after 24 hours.

<https://www.impactplus.com/blog/linkedin-rolls-out-stories-to-all-users>



17.5 Methods To Earn Real Money Online



If you've been laid off from your regular job because of the pandemic or your regular business is slow right now, you might want to pick up some extra money using one of these methods.

1: Affiliate Marketing – this is the big one most people already know. You do the marketing and selling – often of digital products but it could be tangible products, too – and another company handles fulfillment. This might be ebooks, courses, software, services and so forth. Affiliate marketing works especially well if you are a prolific blogger with a large following or you have your own email list. If you want to promote make money online products, you might start with JVZoo and ClickBank.

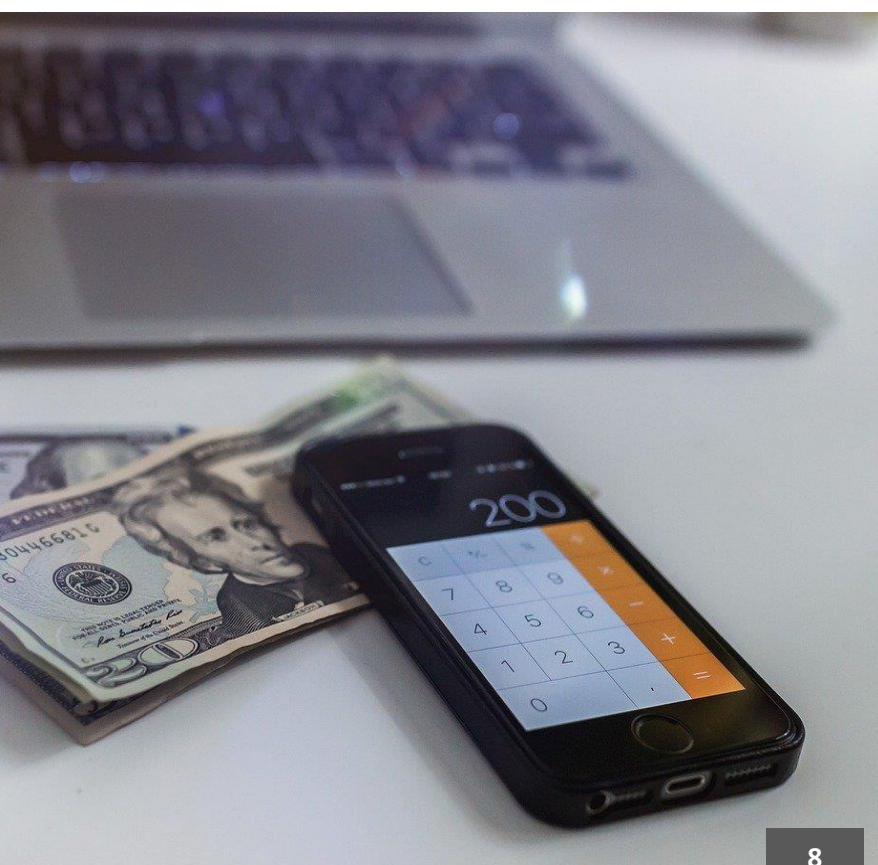
2: YouTube – the highest paid YouTubers are earning millions of dollars per year. The key is to pick a single niche and then build a strong, loyal audience. You might review products, teach or entertain. You can use your videos to promote products or simply monetize your channel with YouTube ads once you hit the 1,000 subscriber milestone.

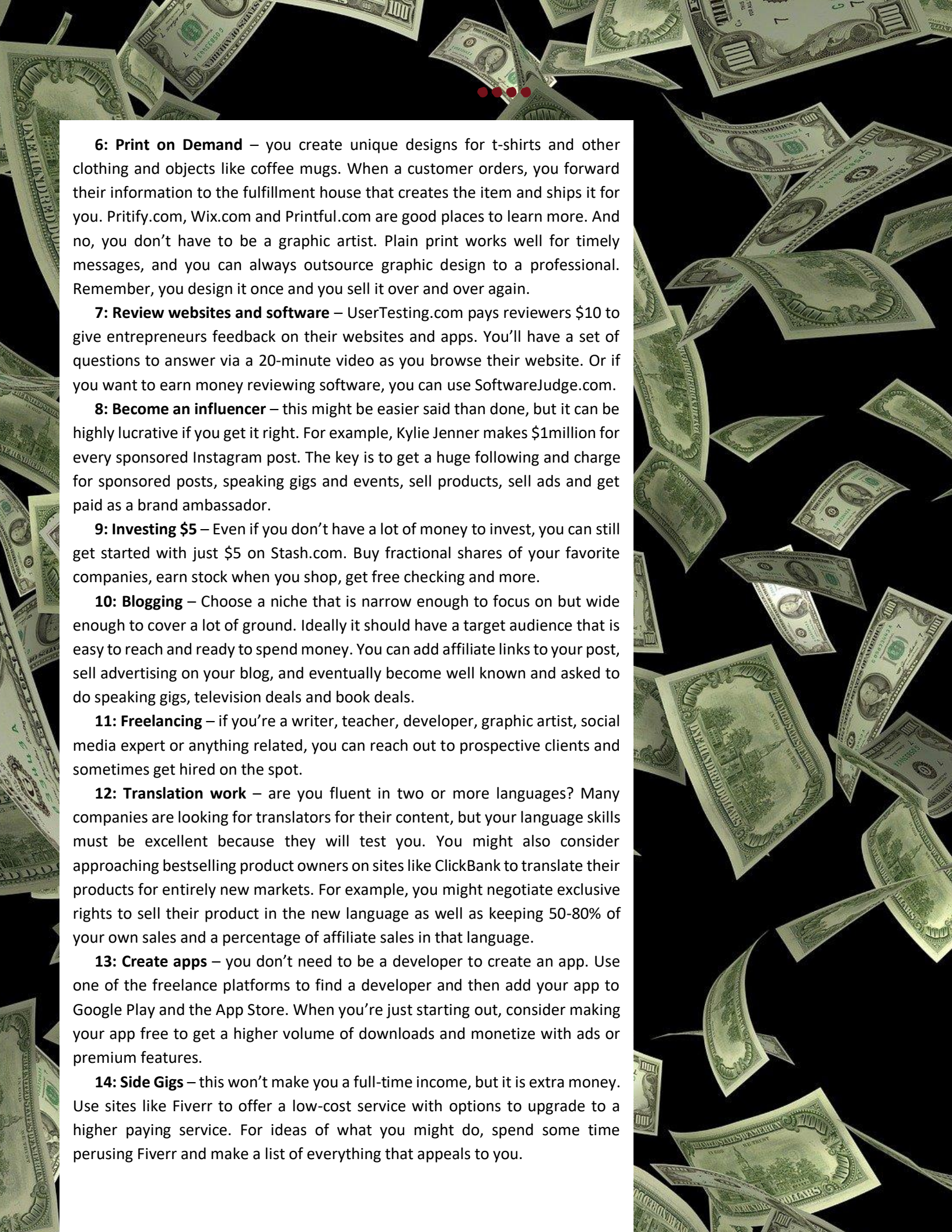
3: Create online courses – if you're an expert on a topic or willing to do extensive research and on your subject, this might be for you. Think of it as writing a book, only in course form. You can sell your courses on one of several sites such as Udemy or on your own website.

4: Publish ebooks – focus on popular niches and publish your books through Amazon's Kindle. You can outsource the writing, the cover and the formatting if you choose.

Learn how to market your books for best effect. Successful Kindle publishers typically spend as much time on marketing as they do on writing, but it can pay off handsomely. There are publishers of little 50 page ebooks who crank out a book every month or so and eventually earn five figures a month from all their endeavors.

5: Drop shipping – you sell a product to a customer, but the supplier packages and ships the product for you. You don't handle inventory and you don't need to purchase products before they sell. Oberlo.com is a good place to get started. With drop shipping you appear to be selling and doing product fulfillment yourself, and you will handle any customer service issues. With affiliate marketing, the customer knows the product is coming from someone else, and that product seller will be the one handling customer service.



The background of the entire page is a dynamic, high-angle shot of numerous US dollar bills falling through the air against a solid black background. The bills are in various orientations, some showing the front and others the back, creating a sense of constant motion and wealth. The lighting highlights the texture and details of the currency.

6: Print on Demand – you create unique designs for t-shirts and other clothing and objects like coffee mugs. When a customer orders, you forward their information to the fulfillment house that creates the item and ships it for you. Pritify.com, Wix.com and Printful.com are good places to learn more. And no, you don't have to be a graphic artist. Plain print works well for timely messages, and you can always outsource graphic design to a professional. Remember, you design it once and you sell it over and over again.

7: Review websites and software – UserTesting.com pays reviewers \$10 to give entrepreneurs feedback on their websites and apps. You'll have a set of questions to answer via a 20-minute video as you browse their website. Or if you want to earn money reviewing software, you can use SoftwareJudge.com.

8: Become an influencer – this might be easier said than done, but it can be highly lucrative if you get it right. For example, Kylie Jenner makes \$1million for every sponsored Instagram post. The key is to get a huge following and charge for sponsored posts, speaking gigs and events, sell products, sell ads and get paid as a brand ambassador.

9: Investing \$5 – Even if you don't have a lot of money to invest, you can still get started with just \$5 on Stash.com. Buy fractional shares of your favorite companies, earn stock when you shop, get free checking and more.

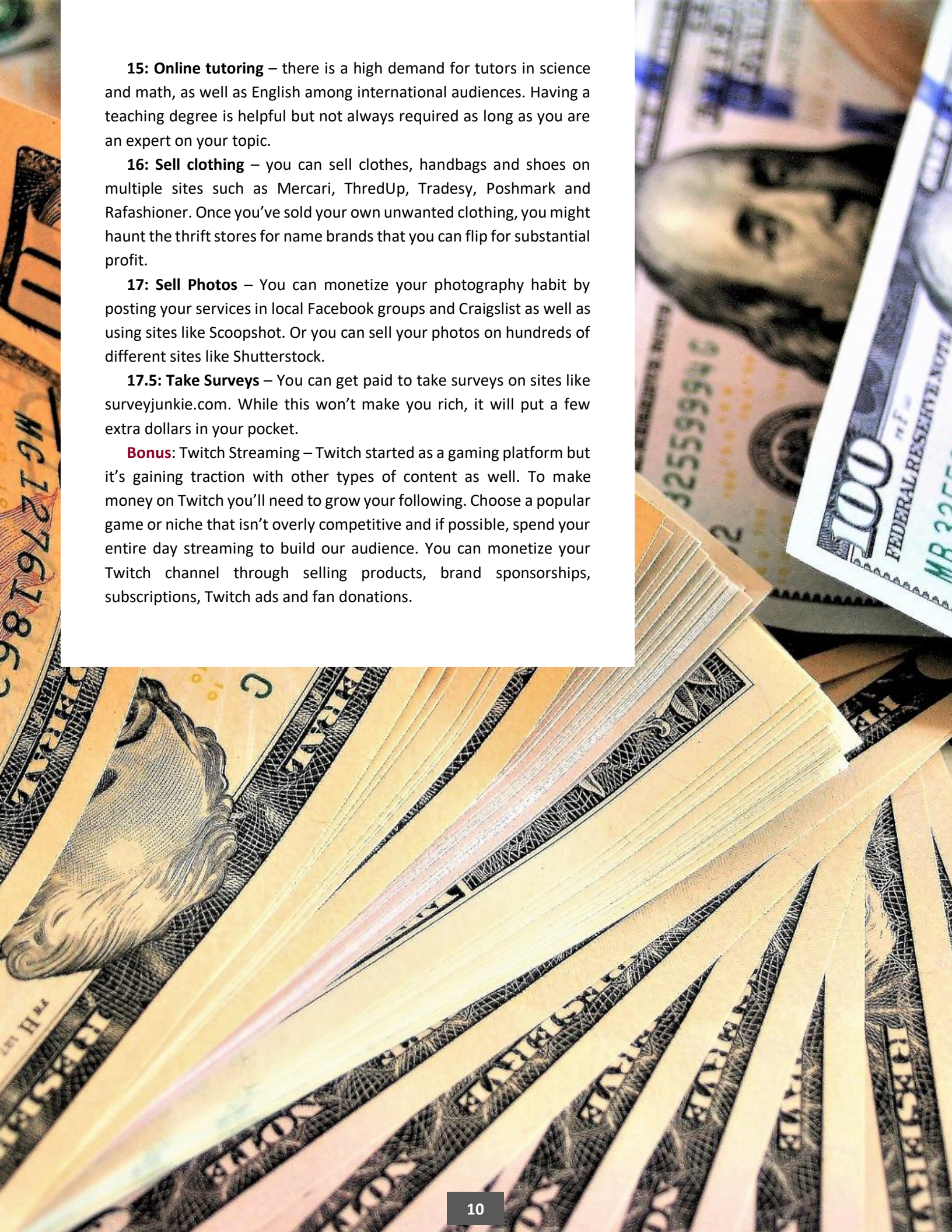
10: Blogging – Choose a niche that is narrow enough to focus on but wide enough to cover a lot of ground. Ideally it should have a target audience that is easy to reach and ready to spend money. You can add affiliate links to your post, sell advertising on your blog, and eventually become well known and asked to do speaking gigs, television deals and book deals.

11: Freelancing – if you're a writer, teacher, developer, graphic artist, social media expert or anything related, you can reach out to prospective clients and sometimes get hired on the spot.

12: Translation work – are you fluent in two or more languages? Many companies are looking for translators for their content, but your language skills must be excellent because they will test you. You might also consider approaching bestselling product owners on sites like ClickBank to translate their products for entirely new markets. For example, you might negotiate exclusive rights to sell their product in the new language as well as keeping 50-80% of your own sales and a percentage of affiliate sales in that language.

13: Create apps – you don't need to be a developer to create an app. Use one of the freelance platforms to find a developer and then add your app to Google Play and the App Store. When you're just starting out, consider making your app free to get a higher volume of downloads and monetize with ads or premium features.

14: Side Gigs – this won't make you a full-time income, but it is extra money. Use sites like Fiverr to offer a low-cost service with options to upgrade to a higher paying service. For ideas of what you might do, spend some time perusing Fiverr and make a list of everything that appeals to you.

The background of the page is a collage of US dollar bills. A prominent \$100 bill is visible in the upper right, showing the portrait of Benjamin Franklin. Below it, several \$20 bills are fanned out, showing the portrait of Andrew Jackson. The bills are slightly overlapping and angled, creating a sense of depth and abundance.

15: Online tutoring – there is a high demand for tutors in science and math, as well as English among international audiences. Having a teaching degree is helpful but not always required as long as you are an expert on your topic.

16: Sell clothing – you can sell clothes, handbags and shoes on multiple sites such as Mercari, ThredUp, Tradesy, Poshmark and Rafashioner. Once you've sold your own unwanted clothing, you might haunt the thrift stores for name brands that you can flip for substantial profit.

17: Sell Photos – You can monetize your photography habit by posting your services in local Facebook groups and Craigslist as well as using sites like Scoopshot. Or you can sell your photos on hundreds of different sites like Shutterstock.

17.5: Take Surveys – You can get paid to take surveys on sites like surveyjunkie.com. While this won't make you rich, it will put a few extra dollars in your pocket.

Bonus: Twitch Streaming – Twitch started as a gaming platform but it's gaining traction with other types of content as well. To make money on Twitch you'll need to grow your following. Choose a popular game or niche that isn't overly competitive and if possible, spend your entire day streaming to build our audience. You can monetize your Twitch channel through selling products, brand sponsorships, subscriptions, Twitch ads and fan donations.

Imagine if you had one little 4 letter word at your disposal that could keep you compliant with the law and prevent you from being attacked by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration), the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) or any other big brother agency.

When you're writing sales copy - whether it's an email, a sales letter, a blogpost or even a social media post - you've got to be careful.

One poorly worded claim and now the FDA is coming after you for giving medical advice or the FTC is knocking on your door for non-compliance with their many rules.

But there is a word that can change all that; a word that can keep you out of hot water most if not all the time...

And that word is "help".

For example, instead of saying your product will...

- Boost energy levels by infusing oxygen-rich blood to every part of your body
- Double your sales and your profits while spending half as much on advertising
- Put an end to foggy thinking while improving your memory and keeping you

mentally sharp

You can say that your product will help them...

- Boost energy levels by infusing oxygen-rich blood to every part of your body
- Double your sales and your profits while spending half as much on advertising
- Put an end to foggy thinking while improving your memory and keeping you

mentally sharp

Exact same bullets points, but now you're not claiming you WILL boost their energy, double their sales or end foggy thinking. Instead you're saying that your product will help them with these things.

Incidentally, if you happen to be in the health niche then I highly encourage you to check out this page to learn how to make health claims that won't bring about the full anger and wrath of the FTC:

<https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/advertising-and-marketing/health-claims>

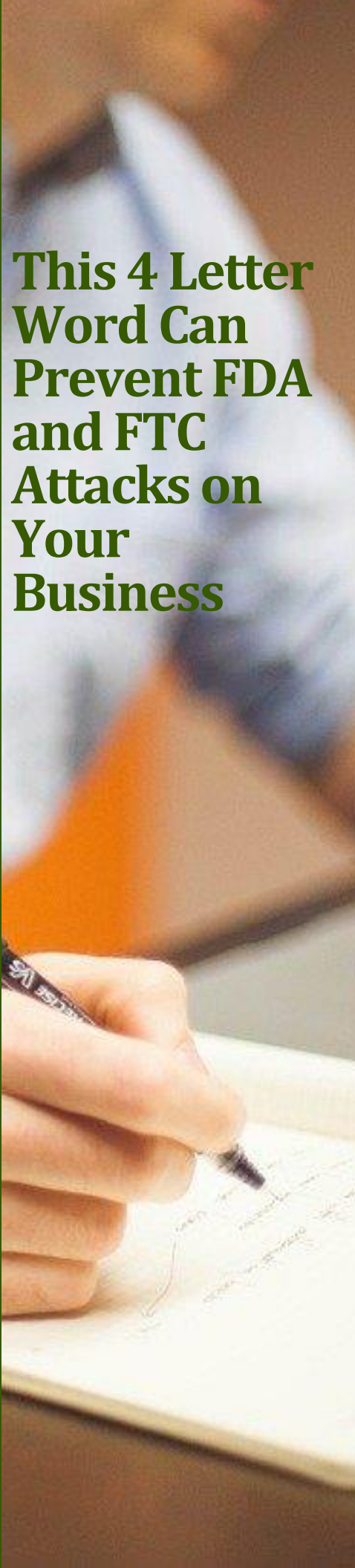
A basic rule in the health market is that you can't make disease claims. This means you'll need to replace certain words with generally accepted euphemisms, like these:

- Alzheimer's Disease → Age-related memory decline
- Arthritis → Joint stiffness
- Cancer → Abnormal cell growth
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome → Constant low energy levels
- Diabetes → Blood sugar imbalances
- Heart attack → Heart problems
- High blood pressure → Blood pressure imbalance
- High cholesterol → Cholesterol problems
- Osteoporosis → Bone loss/weak bones
- Stroke → Brain attacks

Combine these with the word "help" and your copy can still be effective without getting you into trouble.

(Disclaimer: I'm not a lawyer and while I hope this article is helpful, please don't take it as 100% legal gospel. Consult your lawyer and remind her that you've got to strike the right balance between writing copy that converts and staying above the law.)

This 4 Letter Word Can Prevent FDA and FTC Attacks on Your Business





5 Ways to Get More Facebook Page Likes

Post regularly — post every day, or at least close to it.

Be authentic — use your own voice to speak to your audience, not some robotic company voice.

Use pictures — a great visual will increase your likelihood of shares and likes.

Ask questions — listen for the response and reply back.

Contests — offer rewards for those who share and like your posts. People like free stuff.

5 Ways to Boost Your Brand on YouTube

Post regularly — post every day, or at least close to it.

Be authentic — use your own voice to speak to your audience, not some robotic company voice.

Use pictures — a great visual will increase your likelihood of shares and likes.

Ask questions — listen for the response and reply back.

Contests — offer rewards for those who share and like your posts. People like free stuff.

Suzanne Dibble

interview



(Editor): Hello and welcome. Today's guest is someone I've been itching to talk to for some time. Suzanne Dibble is a former corporate lawyer who's worked alongside the likes of Sir Richard Branson and Simon Woodroffe, the founder of the YO! Sushi restaurant chain and one of the original Dragons on BBC's Dragons' Den. Well after winning many awards for her legal work, a few years ago, Suzanne decided to step away from the corporate world to start her own venture, The Small Business Legal Academy. Fast forward to today and she's recently published a bestselling dummies guide book on the subject of GDPR. And if you've never heard of GDPR, don't worry, you soon will. Suzanne, welcome.

Suzanne Dibble: Thank you. It is an absolute pleasure to be talking to you today.

(Editor): You've done so much already. It's really hard to know where to start, but perhaps you could tell me a little bit more about where you're from and how you ended up as a corporate lawyer.

Suzanne Dibble: Well, I can give you the abridged version or the very long version. I think for the sake of the listeners, we'll stick to the abridged version. And now some of you, if you listen to me talk a little bit longer you'd notice my flat A's. So even though I've lived down South now for about 25 years, you can still detect the Northern accent. So I grew up in the Northwest in a county called Cheshire, and I went to a private school, actually. And it was the type of school where if you were good at science, you were going to be a doctor. And if you weren't good at science, you were going to be a lawyer. That's about as extensive as the career advice was back then. And as you can tell from the way that my career went, I wasn't very good at science.

So it was really, you were pointed in those directions. I did a placement, I seem to remember, at the local and I mean, very local, high street law firm. And the managing partner drove a very fancy Jaguar and I thought, "That'll do for me. I'll go into law." I'd love to give you some tale about, I went down to the criminal law courts and saw a travesty, a miscarriage of justice that I wanted to remedy in some way. But actually, it was a little bit more superficial than that. But saying that, it's been a brilliant career for me. It's allowed me to do pretty much everything that I've wanted to do. It's exercised my grey cells certainly, it's enabled me to meet some incredible people.



Like you mentioned, I've worked alongside Richard Branson and Simon Woodroffe, and other fascinating entrepreneurs. I've been doing the kind of deals that you would read about on the front of the FT. I've worked to ITV and led the biggest deal that they ever did when we were transmuting over from the analogue signal to the digital signal. So I've had a fantastic career in law. And then I was very blessed that I was able to start my own practise, which has allowed me to work totally flexibly around my children.

So I consider myself very lucky actually to have not been good at science, say that I've gone down the legal route rather than the medical route. Although saying that, I am suggesting to my daughter that she might consider medicine, because obviously, I've had lots of experience of doctors with my husband and my mum and other family members who've needed the support of these brilliant people.

And I'd obviously have to say that doctors are, well, I don't know, maybe I'm doing lots of lawyers a discredit here, but certainly, I think doctors are able to give obviously a lot more value to society. So I'm suggesting that she might like that route but for me, the legal route has been a joy really.

(Editor): And what a journey it's been, as you say. I mean, you've worked for some of the top companies around the country, and then to branch out and set up on your own, that's a huge achievement. And as you mentioned, you have worked with some of the biggest names in the corporate world, like Richard Branson. What was that like?

Suzanne Dibble: Well at the time, to be honest, I didn't realise what a big deal it was. Having now been in a circle of entrepreneurs for the last 10 years since I've set up my own business, I've realised that most of these entrepreneurs would literally give their right arm to go for dinner with Richard Branson, and not just people in this country, but all around the world. And I did that many times.

I went to his house in Holland Park. I went for dinner with just him and three other people to a very cosy little restaurant in Chelsea. We went clubbing together on the King's Road. And at the time, I really didn't think that much of it. He was a great guy, we had a lot of fun but I wasn't thinking, goodness me, I'm here with a living legend in the entrepreneurial world.

And he was fantastic. I wrote a blog post actually about the things that I learned from him. And what he was excellent at doing was finding really good people and then letting them get on with it. So he wasn't one to micromanage, that's for sure. And I think that actually is a real skill.



But also just such a people person. When we went for dinner, we went to the pub first. I can't remember the name, but lovely little pub on the corner of the King's Road in Chelsea.

And everyone was staring and pointing and saying, "There's Richard." And rather than getting annoyed by it, he'd give them a little wave. I thought, "Well, that's jolly nice of him." And then we went to the restaurant and I kid you not, by the end of the meal, the whole of the restaurant had pulled up a chair around our table.

It was only a cosy little place. It's like maybe 30 people in there, and he was regaling the 30 or so guests with stories about his life, about Virgin and they were loving it. And he was so giving in that way. He didn't seem in any way annoyed that these people were interrupting a private dinner. And he was like that all the time. He'd come into the office and he would... Virgin were very good to their staff and I believe still are.

There was a games room downstairs with a tennis table and some games consoles and free food and free fruit and et cetera. And he would regularly pop in and he just made everyone so at ease and a really huge people person. And of course, there's his legendary vision. I think that was evident in the way that the company was set up.

We had a specific team that purely looked at ideas that people sent him. And every single one was looked at. And obviously, the ones that had viability were taken forwards. But he had about 25 group companies at that time. And he still had this venture capital arm that was actively looking for new ways to make the customer experience better, which is really what the Virgin Group was all about. So yes, fantastic time working at Virgin and getting to know Richard and learned a lot from him.

(Editor): Would you say he's influenced you in any way, Suzanne?

Suzanne Dibble: Even before I met him actually, I'd read all of his books. And if you'd have asked me who I wanted to be when I was 15, I would have said I want to be the female Richard Branson. So, I've obviously failed on that and unless in the next 20 years, I'm going to build and grow 25 companies to the level he has. I think I've failed on that. But he certainly ignited in me my entrepreneurial spark.

And I think that, that was what made it a lot easier to walk away from quite a structured corporate life to set up my own business. And I've spoken to lots of lawyers since who I know would, particularly women actually, who at the point that they had children wanted to still have some career, but they didn't want to have the demands that the corporate job placed on them. They just weren't brave or they didn't feel that they were brave enough to walk away from that and set up their own venture. So I think that he certainly gave me that, and working there as well or even, there was already always an entrepreneurial yearning there, but it gave me the confidence almost to see that through.

(Editor): That's great. You must've been worried as well about stepping away from that well-paid corporate job to set up your own venture?



Note from the editor:

This is a bridged version of the full interview which is available to listen to separately.

Case Study: \$20,000 Per Month With Simple Plumbing Sites

Margaret Jane spent years doing SEO for high end clients and she was brilliant at her job.

She worked hard to get her clients' sites ranked high to generate increased income for them.

But each time one of her client's websites hit the first page of Google, she was fired. They figured they didn't need her anymore.

That's why she was continually having to find new clients.

The better she did her job, the faster her clients' sites got to Page 1 of the search engines, the faster she was no longer needed.

It was incredibly frustrating for her. Worse yet, the sites would eventually fall back off of page 1 once she stopped doing the SEO. That's when she would get a call from the old client, telling her that she must have not job her job correctly. That's right – clients thought SEO was something you do once and then you're set for life.

Margaret knew there had to be a better way. Each new client meant a ton of hours spent working her SEO magic to rank sites and also to kill it for them on social media platforms. For each new client she would:

- Improve their website loading speed
- Implement site links, meta-tags, html and so forth
- Target keywords, brand names and niche-specific terms
- Publish quality keyword-rich content
- Implement backlink and citation strategies
- And more

There was no residual income in this work because once clients saw their income rise, she would have to get a new client and start all over. Typical clients paid her for 4 to 6 months. Then she would chase new clients to replace the income she just lost.

She knew there had to be a better way.

And this is when she turned the tables. Instead of ranking clients' websites, she would rank her own local sites and rent them out to clients.

A client would then have to continue paying to continue receiving the new business the site brought in each month. And if they stopped paying, she could simply replace them with another local business.

These sites would produce leads for the business owners who were hungry to grow their enterprises and happy to pay for a steady stream of new leads.



It's amazing what rethinking your business model can do.

Now instead of continually finding new clients and ranking new sites, she could build her own sites, do everything she would normally do to get them ranked, and then easily keep them ranked with monthly maintenance. Clients would have to continue paying her if they wanted their phone to ring with new business. And if they stopped paying, she could easily offer those same leads to their competitor.

She built herself 10 websites in this manner - all in the plumbing niche - in 10 different cities.

She now puts in about one third the time she used to spend ranking sites for others. Remember, once the sites are ranked, she just needs to keep them ranked by updating content and a few other things.

And because they're all in the same niche, every site she did took less time than the one before. It's amazing what an expert you can become at ranking a certain type of site in a certain niche. The method becomes almost cookie-cutter-like.

Here's what her business model looks like now:

- 1: Build a website
- 2: Rank it in Google and on social media platforms
- 3: Generate leads
- 4: Find a local business owner to sell those leads to and get paid every month like clockwork.
- 5: If a business owner stops paying, approach their competition and strike a deal with them.

She's been doing this for almost 2 years now with 10 websites and she's had 11 clients. One of her clients retired and sold the business, and the new owner didn't think he needed new business to survive. That's when she made a list of his top 5 competitors and started phoning, and in less than 24 hours she had a new contract.

It's incredibly powerful to be able to tell prospective clients that you can provide a certain number of leads each and every month, but that you can do it for only ONE client in the city. Scarcity and greed will light a fire under those business owners. In three of her cities she accidentally started bidding wars for her services, resulting in even higher revenue for herself.

Do you need a cash windfall? Some business owners prefer to pay for an entire year at one time, especially if you can show them a nice discount for that annual payment.

Another huge advantage to this business model is that the lead generation is propelled by free organic traffic.



People are actively searching for keywords in Google because they're ready to hire someone right now to fix their problem.

These are live-quality leads that spend money and make business owners extremely happy they're working with you.

The trick to free traffic is you must invest time in getting your site to rank well. But once you do, maintenance is easy, and you can continue to get free traffic with little or no effort.

Of course, if you're good at paid traffic, you can always use that route, too. Paid traffic can be especially effective when you need to quickly increase the number of your leads.

Margaret Jane chooses to use only free traffic generated from optimizing her sites to be on page one of Google. She chooses markets that are large enough to get plenty of leads, but small enough to have less competition for ranking. In other words, no huge cities and no small towns, either.

And for those marketers who don't like to sell, this method uses only attraction marketing (people who WANT the product or service you're offering, such as plumbing) and no interruption marketing (getting people to buy something they don't necessarily want).

When you first get started and you have no track record to prove you can provide leads to these businesses, you might offer free leads for a week just to prove you can do it. Or you might ask for a percentage on closed deals for the first month.

Once the business owner knows for a fact that you can bring the business, it's time to iron out a flat rate monthly deal in which you are paid automatically on subscription. This way you know exactly how much money is coming in and when you can expect it.

Margaret says it's important to use tracking so that you're able to show the business owner how valuable your leads are. If the business is closing \$20,000 of business per month with your leads, they're not going to have any problem paying you 10%.

Unlike social media or SEO, this business model makes it clear to the business owner just how much return on investment they are receiving.

In fact you'll become the business' most valuable asset and in many cases they'll do whatever it takes to continue working with you. When you're able to double or triple their business, you have a customer for life.



Margaret says to pick one niche and become an expert in that niche. If you don't know basic SEO, take a course. It's not all that difficult to rank sites when they're location based, such as 'plumber Akron Ohio' and 'mortgage Salem Oregon'.

Here are a list of the top niches for lead generation:

Insurance – this might be the biggest lead generation niche. Target one or more sub-niches because when someone is looking for insurance, they have a specific need to fill.

Home services and remodeling – this is a broad category including services such as painting, plumbing, landscaping, tree care, heating and air services, electrical, carpentry, remodeling, decks, driveways, roofing and more.

Legal – you might choose a subniche here such as family, criminal, health care, etc.

Plastic Surgeons – this is an excellent niche because of the high price paid for even simple procedures.

Loans and credit cards – this includes mortgage, business, student, home repair, auto financing and credit cards catering to specific demographics.

Education – you might provide information on student loans and scholarships that can be applied to any university and then supply these leads to either online or local colleges.

Real estate – a huge and hot market. Providing quality leads to a real estate broker or a mortgage lender (or both) can be extremely lucrative for you.

Senior care – assisted living, home care services and senior care facilities are one of the fastest growing markets thanks to baby boomers.

Drug rehabilitation – this is a niche that is underserved. To keep their beds full, treatment centers need that phone to ring and you can help them.





How To Survive Your Fist Hashtag Hijacking

During a presidential debate, the sitting U.S. President gave a shout out to a group called, “Proud Boys”.

When I think of ‘proud boys’, I imagine two year old boys in diapers who just used the potty for the very first time.

But apparently these “Proud Boys” are actually a white supremacist group classified by the FBI as an extremist group and a hate group. Before the debate even ended, the hashtag #ProudBoys began trending.

That’s when LGBTQ Twitter users jumped in and hijacked the hashtag, posting photos and messages of love and pride including wedding photos of gay couples.

Within hours there were thousands of people – politicians, TV stars, the Canadian armed forces and so forth – posting gay love pictures and quotes under the hashtag.

For most this is a heartwarming result, but what about hashtag hijacking of legitimate businesses and groups?

When McDonald’s kicked off their #McDstories campaign, little did they realize they would be hit with plenty of negative stories on that hashtag, such as...

- “Fingernail in my BigMac Once” #McDstories
- “Ordered McDouble, chipped my molar” #McDstories
- “Hospitalized for food poisoning after eating at McDonalds 1989” #McDstories
- “I lost 50 lbs. in 6 months after I quit working and eating at McDonalds” #McDstories
- “Learn about McDonalds using pigs from gestation crates” #McCruelty #McDstories

Let’s say you launch your first hashtag campaign. It’s going well, your hashtag is starting to trend, your message is spreading and you’re getting plenty of user generated content. Then it happens: Your hashtag gets hijacked. It could be people who have a problem with your product, your marketing, your name or the cut of your hair. Or it could even be a total misunderstanding.

But hashtag hijacking usually falls into one of two categories: Either these hijackers are attention seeking trolls or you’ve got a complete PR disaster.



That's why you want to choose a specific hashtag that isn't easy to hijack. You don't want to make the same mistake McDonald's made of choosing a hashtag that is too broad and vague, inviting trouble.

Before you start using your hashtag, have a few people take a look at it and see if you're missing something obvious that could lead to trouble. For example, "Susan Album Party" looks harmless, but when you turn it into a hashtag (#susanalbumparty) then you've got something entirely different.

Once your hashtag is launched, monitor what's happening closely, looking for any signs of trouble. If you start seeing negative posts on your social media wall, be proactive.

Here is a list of things you can do to keep damage to a minimum:

1: Keep inappropriate posts off your social wall.

This isn't about paranoia; it's about protecting your brand image. You should already be blocking anything racist, pornographic or derogatory by using a blacklist. While I can't give you a list of words here to blacklist (nsfw) a quick search on Google will provide you with astonishingly long lists of terms.

2: Find your hijacker(s) and delete their comments.

Remove hurtful content, find the creator of that content and let them know their post was removed and you've blocked their account.

3: For legitimate complaints, apologize and make it right.

You can do this publicly or behind the scenes.

4: Wait it out.


Eventually all PR scandals are forgotten and people move on to other things.

In the future, follow these hashtag rules:

1: Do be creative and unique, and don't be vague or self-serving. If your hashtag is too vague then you're just inviting trouble. If it sounds self-serving, people will mock you.

2: Avoid open-ended hashtags. The #McDStories is a great example of what NOT to do because it's simply too broad, inviting sarcasm and negative posts.

When Delta Air Lines wanted to try a hashtag, they chose #Flydeltafree because of its specificity. Conversely, #whylove delta would have invited sarcasm and a host of negative posts.



3: Start new hashtags only in good times. If your business or product is generating any kind of negative press right now, then it's smart to forgo a hashtag campaign because it can burn you.

4: Use contest hashtags. To encourage customers to generate content for you, consider using a hashtag campaign. For example, let's say you're a coffee house during the holidays – how would you get customers to post photos of their drinks? Starbucks did it with their #redcupcontest, inviting people to post shots of their holiday-themed beverages for the chance of winning a large gift card and it worked beautifully.

Before I close, I want to share my favorite Hashtag campaign:

IHOP (International House of Pancakes) is known for being in the breakfast business, which is why fans went crazy when they announced a name change to IHOB. What did the "B" stand for? Would they still serve breakfast? What the heck was happening?

The company invited speculation on what the "B" stood for, resulting in 1.8 million mentions of #IHOB on Twitter, 86,000 tweets per hour at the peak, and holding the No 1 spot (IHOP) No 2 (IHOB) and No 4 (International House) according to AdAge.

Eventually IHOP let customers in on the joke, announcing the supposed name change was simply a marketing ploy to draw attention to their burgers and other menu offerings.

Done right, hashtag campaigns can generate a frenzy of buzz, visibility and even content.

15 Secrets of Persuasion to Help You Sell More Online

Persuasion is convincing someone to do something. Great persuasion is convincing them it's their idea to do it.

The human brain can be influenced through its three systems of...

- primal (sex)
- emotions (empathy)
- rationalization (logic)

When marketing is truly working, it's appealing to all three of these systems simultaneously.

The classic recipe to do this seems almost too simple to work: First, you use images to trigger the primal brain. Second, you use empathy and a good story to engage the emotional brain. And third, you add proven justifications to support the rational brain.

If you were to stop reading here and simply remember to use all three of these ingredients in every piece of your marketing, you would likely enjoy healthy sales of your products.

But let's dig deeper and give you 15 tips and insights to make your marketing even more effective and persuasive:

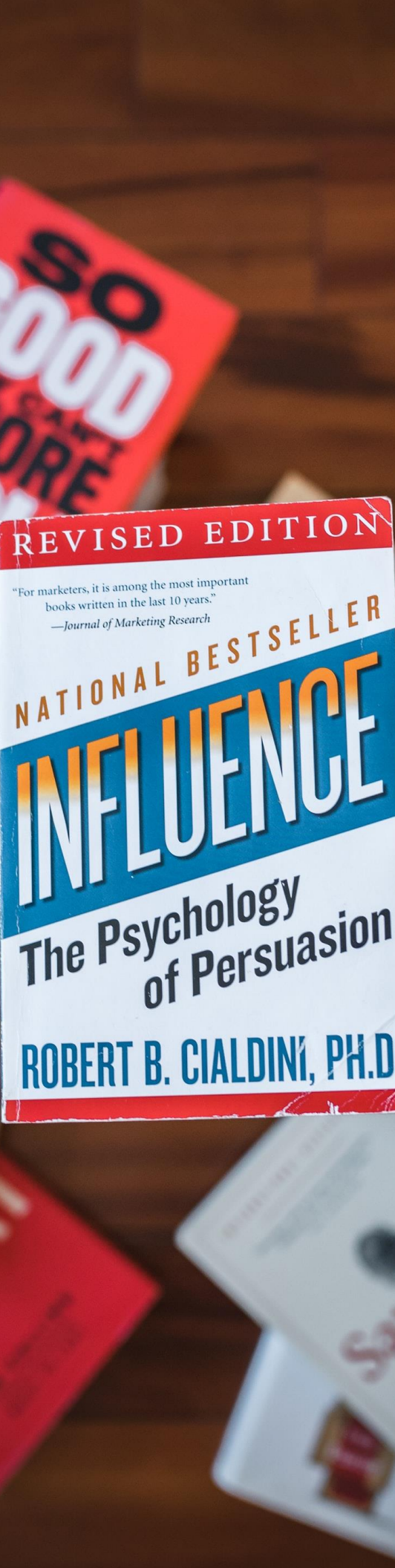
1: Speed. Always keep in mind that internet consumers want instant gratification and quick fixes. This means they're not prone to deep thinking or patience. 30 second preamble to your video? Remove it and jump straight into the deep end. Long sales letter? Break it up with plenty of subheadlines and make it easy on the eyes to read. Long blogpost? Break it up into sections and add images and illustrations.

2: Never be boring. Goldfish have longer attention spans than humans (less than 8 seconds). If any part of your presentation is boring, you risk losing their attention. See #1 above.

3: Get in their heads. Know exactly who your target market is and speak directly to their emotional needs and desires. What scares them, why does it scare them and how will your solution make them feel?

4: Go to them. How does your audience like to communicate? How do they like to receive their info? Where are they found online? Don't think they will hunt for you. You've got to go to where they already are, and when you get there you've got to speak their language.

5: Dig and deliver. Discover what your clients want (not necessarily what you think they should want). Then promise them what they want and deliver it in the most efficient way possible. Think of how easy it is to purchase something on Amazon (one or two clicks) and how fast it's delivered with zero hassle and you get the picture.





6: Give to get. Robert Cialdini teaches the first principle of persuasion as reciprocity, giving something so that the recipient feels obliged to return the favor. Those lead magnets we offer to get someone on our email list is a classic example. In fact, if you continue to give away free reports to your email subscribers, they will be more likely to open, read and act upon your emails well into the future.

7: Reciprocity II. Giving to get also takes the form of treating others as they like to be treated, so that they treat you the same way. For example, treating your customers with respect and as equals will help them to treat you the same way.

8: Commitment and consistency. When someone joins your list to learn how to lose weight, you can remind them of their commitment to weight loss. This reminds them to be consistent in their actions and follow through by buying and using the product that will help them stay consistent to their commitment.

9: Social proof. There's a reason so many websites use reviews from product buyers, and it's because people want to know about the experiences of others, good and bad. Believe it or not, even bad reviews can sometimes sell a product because the very thing the bad review is decrying might be exactly what someone else is looking for. That said, you still need a majority of good reviews and positive testimonials that far outweigh the negative reviews. And just once I would LOVE to see a negative testimonial on a sales letter because it would make everything else on that sales letter so much more believable.

10: Likeability. This one confuses people because they think they have to make EVERYONE like them in order to influence people. However, when you try to please everyone, you please no one. Instead, be yourself and don't be afraid to state your opinions (within reason, of course) and your point of view. This will indeed alienate some people, but it will also make your 'tribe' love you and follow you. These people will become not only your loyal customers but also your advocates.

11: Authority. Oprah is a master at authority. If she says to buy some obscure book, that book suddenly shoots to #1 on the best seller list. But what if you're not Oprah? You can establish authority over time with your useful content and your vast knowledge of your niche. Or you can borrow authority by interviewing experts and also using expert reviews and testimonials on your blog, your products and anything else you offer.

12: Scarcity. The less there is of something, the more valuable it is. Personally, I've probably bought more things because of scarcity than all of these other principles combined. If you're selling digital items, then your scarcity will likely be in the form of a limited time offer or limited copies of a very special bonus.

13: Repetition of contact. If you want to persuade in person, then the more time you spend with someone the more likely you are to influence them. Online is a little different in that you're not with them in person. But if they see your blog posts, social media posts, guest posts, videos and emails, pretty soon they feel they know you, like you and can trust you. That's why when you get someone new on your list you continue to email them daily for essentially as long as it takes to make that first sale or get them to leave your list, either of which is a positive outcome. Remember, you're not right for everyone, and not everyone is right for you. You are continually in search of your tribe because those are the folks who will grow to love you and buy from you.

14: Like your customers. We spoke about getting people to like you by showing them the real you. But you've also got to like them. Show that in your emails, videos and blogposts. Even your photo has to be friendly and likeable. Have you ever instantly disliked someone online because they look smug or unfriendly in their photo? Of course. Before you write or video record anything, get in the frame of mind that you are about to have a chat with your best friend.

15: Overcome objections. Whatever it is that you're trying to persuade them to do, there will be objections. If you don't overcome them in your sales letter or video, you won't make the sale. What are the reasons people don't buy your product? If you don't know, find out. Then be open and honest about these reasons. If you're not sure how to do this, just remember "Feel, felt, found". For example: "I understand that some people watching this video will feel this is scary. I know because I felt the exact same way. But what I found was that once I got started, it was much easier than I thought."

"good SEO is a result of being remarkable on the web."

– Rand Fishkin

"Without actionable data and clear metrics driven strategy, the marketing organization is being paid to guess."

– Team Position2

"A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is—it's what consumers tell each other it is."

– Scott Cook

"Data beats opinions."

– Anonymous

"Testing is the biggest no-brainer, and the killer of most stupid ideas."

– Avinash Kaushik

THE **BIG** SECTION



Publishing Your First Kindle Book in 30 Days or Less

Last month we covered how to write your first Kindle book in 30 days or less. Now we're going to cover how to publish your book. While this is not the most exciting step in creating, publishing and marketing your ebook, it is crucial to get a professional looking book that people want to buy, enjoy reading and for which they are happy to leave positive reviews.

Your Own Publishing Company

Here's something you've probably never thought you would do as a writer: Because there is still a stigma associated with self-publishing, it's a good idea to start your own publishing company.

Choose a name that is not your own name, not your business name and not your pen name. You don't want an obvious link to yourself because your goal is to make it sound like the publishing company is not your own, thus making you look like a published author rather than a self-published one.

When choosing your publishing company name, think about your branding. It's entirely possible that as you grow and expand your book series, you might want to publish other authors as well as expanding into audio and print.

You can also choose a color scheme associated with your publishing company as well as a logo.

Legal Stuff (This is NOT legal advice)

When selling on Kindle in the USA, you can use a DBA (doing business as) which requires no legal registration. There is a field in the Kindle set up where you will enter your "publishing company name (optional)". You can put anything you want in this field because Amazon doesn't care what it is or if it is registered.

The ASIN is an internal number specific to Amazon and assigned to your book by Amazon. You don't need to do anything to get it, and if you only sell through Kindle, then you only need to upload your book and they will auto assign the ASIN for tracking purposes.

But if you publish outside of Kindle, then you are going to need an ISBN (International Standard Book Number). This is the number that appears above the barcode on the book back cover. Book sellers use it to track sales and it's a requirement for print books. But because for now you're just publishing on Kindle, you can think about that later if you decide to expand.

Legal company registration is not required to publish on Kindle, so for the time being you can simply use your DBA.

A tax ID is required. It doesn't need to be a FEIN (Federal Employer Identification Number) unless you are a legally registered company, but if you don't have a FEIN, you will need to use your Social Security number if you live in the US.

If you live in another country, you'll need to see what Amazon asks you for in terms of tax ID. In some countries you might need to obtain an EIN. If you do, call the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and ask for help setting up an EIN. Tell them, "I am a foreign business complying with withholding regulations." They will walk you through the process and give you an EIN over the phone.

Please note that I'm not a lawyer so please do not consider any of this to be legal advice because it's not.

Your Book Cover

As you know, people do judge a book by its cover. A lousy cover will translate into lousy sales no matter how great the content might be. That's why, unless you're a graphic artist, you'll want to hire someone to create your book cover for you.

Book Cover Illustration - choose something that is highly appropriate to your topic and helps to sell the book. It's entirely possible to find stock images that work, or you might want to use a professional photograph or even hire someone to create an illustration. Use high quality images with a 300 ppi minimum. High resolution images will pop and look professional. And please make sure you have the rights to use the illustration, too.

Color scheme - again, it's best to have professional help with the color scheme because it needs to fit perfectly with the image and the text. If you dig deep on Amazon to find the books that aren't selling, you'll see crazy color schemes that scream 'amateur hour'.

Fonts - use nothing weird or unusual and don't use more than three. The title can be one font, the subtitle a second font and the author's name a third font, but all three must blend seamlessly. Dark text on a light background is best because it's easier to read. If you do use light text on a dark background, make sure the font is super crisp and easy to read.

Remember that your book cover is going to be shrunk down to a thumbnail. Even at thumbnail size, the title should be 100% legible and the illustration (if there is one) should be readily identifiable.

Book series

If you are doing a book series, then the goal is to get your audience to come back and buy more of your books. When planning a series, keep in mind...

Branding - Your books need to have a consistent look all the way through the series. The titles should generally all be the same color in the same font and in the same position. The exception is if you are using the same background color for each book but changing the color of the titles. If there is an illustration, it needs to be in the same location and consistent with the others.

Color - You have two options here: You can either use the same background color for each book in the series, or you can use complimentary colors and make each one different but consistent in appearance. For example, your series might all have light blue backgrounds with black titles and a different illustration on each. Or you might make each edition a different color background, such as red, blue, green, etc. Plan this ahead.

Logo - if you're using a logo, place it in the same place for each book. Also place the author's name in the same place as well as the title and subtitle.

Fonts - Use the exact same fonts on each book in the series.

It should be extremely easy to tell that any one book in the series goes with the others. If there is the slightest question, go back to your branding and use more consistency.

Images Inside Your Book

Should you include images inside your Kindle book?

That depends. While most Kindle books don't have them, it is true that images can greatly enhance the reader's experience. Images can help to explain points and break up the monotony of black words on a white page.

Images also increase memory retention which can be truly helpful in a non-fiction book.

And if you're explaining anything step-by-step, images can make it easier to understand, too.

The key is to use images that truly enhance the reading experience and make sense in context.

The image formats you can use on Kindle are:

- .gif (up to 5mb, not animated)

- .png
- .bmp
- .jpg (up to 5mb. This is the most popular format to use and tends to look the best inside a Kindle book)

Kindle Fire shows full color images, so when in doubt, use color images.

Use 300 dpi resolution for Kindle. Why? Because when your book is uploaded, it is compressed. And when it's compressed, information is removed from it and quality image goes down.

Think about the book making process... when you upload your image to your working file, it's compressed. Then when you save it to .pdf or .mobi, it's compressed again. Then when you upload the file to Kindle, it's compressed a third time. And it might even be compressed one more time when the reader downloads and opens the file on their device. That's why Amazon requires 300 dpi images.

If you start with a better-quality image then you will finish with a better quality image.

Full image height is 1200 px high. This will show your image at full height of the screen when it's held in a vertical orientation. When you download an image from a stock site, choose the original or large size. This is even more important if you ever print your book, too.

Do not use Kindle Preview on your computer because it will not correctly show images. Instead, always check your .mobi file on a real Kindle for accuracy.

You can use your own images, or you can purchase stock photography. If you download images from a website, be sure to give attribution according to the rules of that website.

Formatting Your Manuscript

You want to create a clean document to give a better reader experience and make your book look like it was professionally formatted and published.

If you have the habit of double spacing at the end of your sentences, don't. Some older folks who learned to type on typewriters still have this habit. But on an electronic document, it just looks strange. One space after a period is all you need.

Use 1.5 line spacing to make it easier for your editor to read and make notes. Then when you are ready to publish to Kindle, change your spacing back to 1.0.

Set your margins to 1 inch for editing. If you're paying for editing by the page and your margins are 2 inches, you'll pay more because you have more pages. Margins won't matter for Kindle because it's going to force the margins regardless of how you have it set.

Insert a page break between each chapter so the next chapter starts on its own page. You can place the cursor where you want the page break and then either hit "control/enter" or you can click on Insert>Break>Page Break.

Add a table of contents. If you're using Word, click References>Table of Contents. Chapter Titles in your book must be Heading Style 1 because that is the style name Kindle uses to make Chapter Titles in the TOC. And subtitles must be Heading Style 2.

Pen Names

Why would anyone use a pen name?

Lots of reasons...

- You've got past or present legal issues.
- You're talking about a sensitive topic and you don't want your name associated with it.

- You're writing in a niche you don't want to be known for.
- You're using personal anecdotes that you don't want a certain someone to see (like your parents, for example).
- You want a fresh start. (Maybe your past books didn't do well and you want to start over with a new name.)
- For ongoing privacy (Maybe you're hiding from an old spouse who used to stalk you.)
- You're the wrong gender to be teaching your audience (For example, if you're a woman but you're writing in a man's voice to a male audience.)
- Your name is too common. (If there are already authors using your name, you might want to choose something different to stand apart from the rest and avoid confusion.)

There are all kinds of reasons, and one of the best is to protect a brand you've already established.

For example, let's say you're a police detective and you write books about finding your true love.

Do you really want your fellow detectives giving you a hard time about your second profession?

Or let's say you've built a stellar reputation as the premier expert in cyber-crime, but you want to write books about the fashion industry. When corporations look for you online to get your help with a security problem, do you want to confuse them when they find your name associated with clothing, hair and make-up?

Why wouldn't you want a pen name?

- Because you're branding yourself in your niche.
- You're already well-known in your niche
- It's easier to market under your real name.
- Less work, because let's face it, it's a lot less work to maintain your real identity than to maintain a pseudonym. Imagine having to update multiple identities on websites, social media and so forth. It gets confusing.

How to choose a pen name

- Use your middle name and your same last name.
- Use a maiden name - yours or someone in your family history
- Keep it easy to spell, say and remember.
- Research your niche and see what author names are hitting the best seller list. Is there anything unique or memorable about them?
- Search Amazon to make sure you're not choosing a name that's already being used.
- Use FakeNameGenerator.com for help in creating a new name.

When using a pen name you might still want an author photo. Don't hire a model because if you ever need to make a public appearance, you'll have a problem. Instead, wear a wig, choose a more artistic pose, change the lighting and so forth. The point is to make it difficult for you to be recognized as your real self, but still look like you in case you need to appear in person.

Using Other People's Quotes

Why would you quote other people in your non-fiction book?

Because it lends credibility to your own writing and helps you to prove a point. Quotes can also be inspirational, and let's face it - sometimes someone else said it better than you can.

But here's what you might not know... you need permission to quote someone in your book.

- If the quote isn't in the public domain, it's best to ask for permission
- If it's copyrighted after 1964, then it's not public domain

- If it's pre-1964 but the copyright was renewed, you need to ask for permission to be safe
- If it's a song lyric or poetry, you need permission even if you use just one single line.
- If you're in doubt, ask for permission

However, if you're paraphrasing someone's material into your own words, then you can use their name without permission. "Joe Smith has essentially said..."

If you are simply mentioning a book or song title or an author's name, you don't need permission. Did you know that titles and names are not copyrightable? You might ponder the possibilities of what that means...

If you're simply using a link, you don't need permission.

And if it's fair use, you don't need permission. Fair use is...

"Any copying of a copyrighted material done for a limited and 'transformative' purpose, such as to comment upon, criticize, or parody a copyrighted work. Such uses can be done without permission from the copyright owner. In other words, fair use is a defense against a claim of copyright infringement. If your use qualifies as a fair use, then it would not be considered an illegal infringement." - Stanford.edu

Or...

"A doctrine that permits limited use of copyrighted material without acquiring permission from the rights holders. Examples of fair use include commentary, search engines, criticism, parody, news reporting, research, teaching, library archiving and scholarship." - Wikipedia.org

However...

Author beware, because the US government copyright office states that...

"The distinction between what is fair use and what is infringement in a particular case will not always be clear or easily defined. There is no specific number of words, lines, or notes that may safely be taken without permission. Acknowledging the source of the copyrighted material does not substitute for obtaining permission. The safest course is to get permission from the copyright owner before using copyrighted material."

Whew.

I'll bet that as an aspiring author you didn't realize you'd also have to learn about copyright law and how ambiguous it can be, but there you go.

Preparing Your Book for Kindle

You might remember back in the early days of Kindle when you would open a new book in your reader and wonder WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED to make everything look so darn screwy.

This is because people were uploading anything and everything to Kindle, thinking that it would all display correctly. It won't.

You cannot upload a Word document to Kindle unless you want massive complaints and one star reviews. Instead, you need to convert your manuscript from Word to MOBI so that it...

- Looks cleaner
- Reads better
- Is more professional in appearance
- Avoids negative reviews

Your best bet is to outsource your MOBI conversion rather than try to do it yourself. There is a learning curve to doing this and it's steeper than you think.

If you don't want to outsource, you can use conversion software. Just be aware that the results are seldom perfect, especially if you have bullet points or images in your document. You'll have to do it and redo it and check it on Kindle Fire and weak it some more.

Seriously, find someone who's done this conversion a hundred times and pay them. It's well worth the investment. Ask them to put it into EPUB format as well, in case you want to place your book on Barnes and Noble's Nook, iBooks and so forth.

If you also need a PDF format so that you can place your ebook on your website, it's easy to do from inside Word. Just click "Save As" and choose .pdf.

Next month is our final installment in this series, in which you'll discover how to market your Kindle books. Just to prepare yourself, it's important to realize that marketing is literally half the work you'll need to do to become a successful author. The idea that you can write a book and it will magically catch fire and sell a million copies on its own is largely a myth. Yes, it is possible, but it's like winning the lottery. It's best to realize in advance that you will indeed need to actively market your book to make the kind of sales and money you're looking for.

See you next month!

Zombie Apocalypse

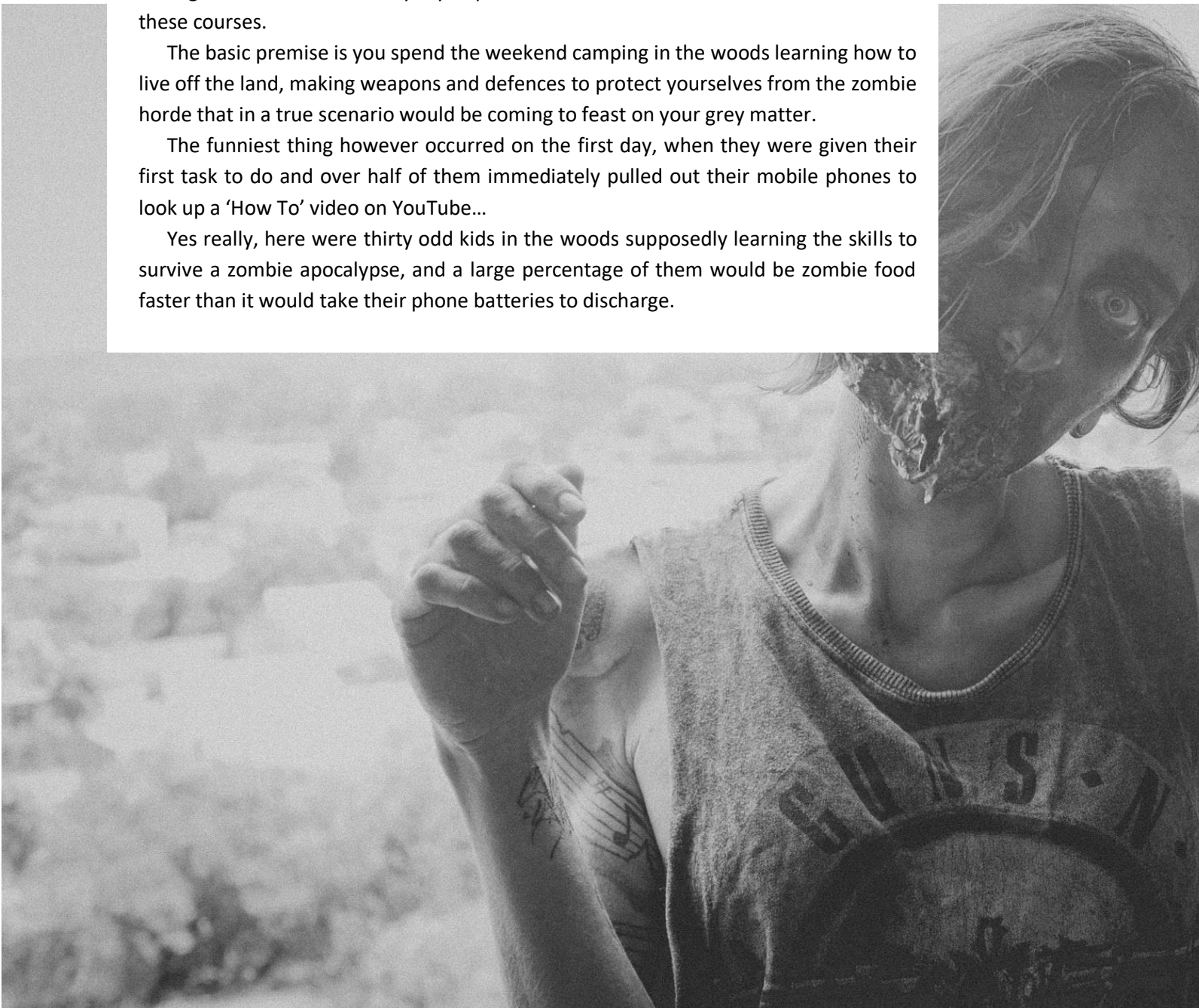
Over the last few years there has been a rise in survival courses and experiences tailored to “How to survive a zombie apocalypse”. Obviously no one is expecting a Resident Evil style zombie uprising, and in most cases we aren’t expecting a global pandemic resulting in citizens trying to eat each other’s brains.

The focus of these courses is to teach basic survival skills that -in today’s society- have gotten lost. Just recently my nephews and some of their friends went on one of these courses.

The basic premise is you spend the weekend camping in the woods learning how to live off the land, making weapons and defences to protect yourselves from the zombie horde that in a true scenario would be coming to feast on your grey matter.

The funniest thing however occurred on the first day, when they were given their first task to do and over half of them immediately pulled out their mobile phones to look up a ‘How To’ video on YouTube...

Yes really, here were thirty odd kids in the woods supposedly learning the skills to survive a zombie apocalypse, and a large percentage of them would be zombie food faster than it would take their phone batteries to discharge.



And that is the state of the world of today, we have become so reliant on our technology that even the simplest of tasks cannot be accomplished without it. It struck me as sad in a way that all the skills our ancestors learned are being replaced by a box and a 'How To' video.

It would seem that we would rather sit and watch someone else doing it instead of trialling it ourselves. That is the lesson I took away from this experience, technology has its place, but at the end of the day it is merely a tool, much like a hammer or an axe.

The value is in how we use that tool, in our businesses we use technology to sell and market our products. How effectively are we making use of that tool, and are there instances where maybe an older more physical technique might have greater meaning for us and our customers?

See you next month!



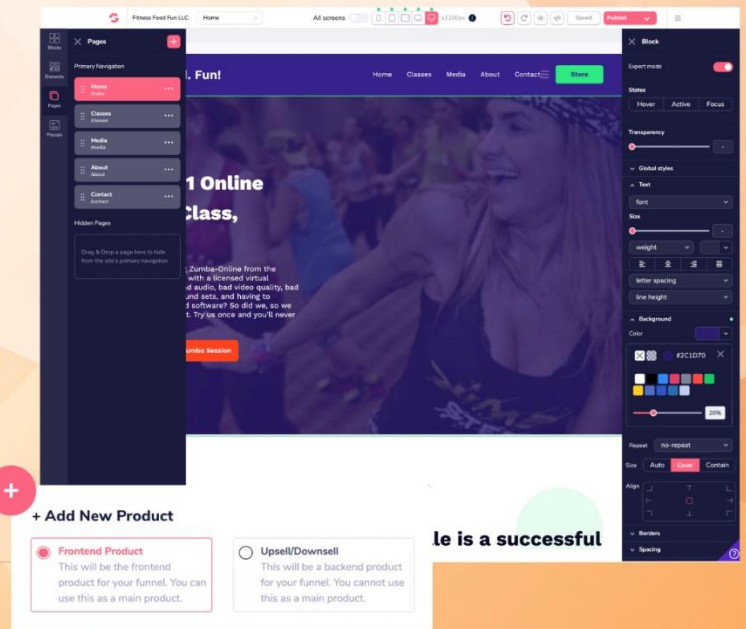


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