

How to Give Your Novel a Real Chance in the Marketplace

Writers League of The Villages, Wednesday, Feb, 3rd, 2016

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- » 11 mysteries: sales ranked from 4,000th to 40,000th [12/6/15] Amazon
- » Over 2,400 total reviews with average of 4.3 Stars
- » Most books are among Amazon's 100 top-rated mystery novels
- » Most have been listed at least once as the #1 bestseller in genre or sub
- » One Million total books in circulation by Feb 28, 2016
- » Amazon All-Star Author in May, 2015 [royalty bonus]
- » One million Kindle Unlimited pages some months

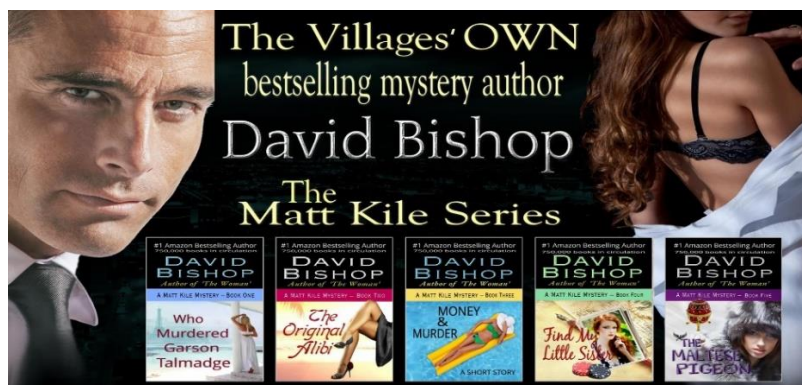
QUESTION: Is it your goal to be a legacy author or a commercial author

the three objectives of commercial authors:

1. Write a good story, very well
2. Market it effectively
3. Make bank deposits

Identifying the problem:

Our egos tell us we're okay on #1
Therefore, we perceive the problem is #2
Overwhelmingly, for most of us, the real problem is #1



W r i t i n g a good story, very well, seems easy because we all read good stories written very well. Good authors make good writing appear easy.

Let's take a look at how they do it.

Characters and Dialogue:

1. Create characters who readers care about (not just like).
2. Give characters their OWN voice, not the author's voice.
3. Cardboard characters require overuse of name tags.
4. Critique groups often DISCOURAGE character voices.
5. Bits and unique voices give birth to individual characters.
6. People rarely say each the names of those to whom they speak.
7. With VERY rare exceptions avoid stilted dialogue.
8. Discussion: What makes differences in how people speak?

Mechanics:

9. Word Swamp destroys reader interest. [exception under pace]
10. Show is often better than tell. Doing both insults readers.
11. To keep the reader emotionally in the story. Stay in deep pov.
12. The author is NOT the story. Avoid name Tags and filter words.

Pace:

13. Rooting the Reader (Who/What/where/why): This is critical stuff, but not engaging. Write it lean and get back to the story. In short, drive **fast** unless it (rarely) adds to the story.
14. Drive **slow** when in action or emotion. Give readers the details to feel and experience what is going on. The reader wants to be in the story emotionally. Put her there.
15. Avoid filter words like: Thought, considered, seemed, appeared, decided, realized, wondered, etc. Mostly, these words sit between the reader and the character and scream: AUTHOR IS WORKING HERE.

Let's compare writing with filters and then writing the same scene without swampy filter words:

Sharon **felt** a sinking feeling as she ran across the room and yanked the curtains open. She was **worried** if her husband would really leave. She could **see** him throw the suitcase into the car. She **realized** he had slammed the car door. He **seemed** angry. She could also **feel** his gaze upon hers. She **saw** him point his finger, using his thumb as if it were a gun. Now she **knew** he would go and not return. She **decided** she would beg, and ran outside, sinking to her knees on the wet grass along the edge of the road. The car's tires spun, and she **felt** the gravel spitting at her as she **saw** the vehicle accelerate.

The bolded words are filters. The reader's attention is diluted away from the emotions. Filters are barriers placed between the reader and the story. You never want anything between your characters and your readers. Now the scene without the filter words:

Sharon's life fell to the bottom of her stomach. She ran across the room. Her outstretched hand groping for the curtains. She yanked them back. There he was. Her husband slammed a suitcase into the trunk of a car she didn't recognize. The car door slammed louder than the trunk. Her gaze met his stare framed by the driver's window. His eyes narrowed. He pointed a finger. The symbol of a gun. His thumb fired the make-believe shot. He grinned. A cold chill enveloped her. Tears wet her cheeks. She couldn't let him get away. Not like this. She slapped the screen hook free and ran out the door. Her knee buckled when she jumped off the porch. The screen door banged shut behind her. A second, softer bang and then it quieted. She crossed the sidewalk running as fast as she could in her housedress. She slid. The grass wet her knees. Her skin greened. Too late. The car's tires spun. Gravel pelted her exposed white thighs. His black vehicle tore at the grass as it pulled itself onto the road. He would not return.

She knew it.

Sale!

Okay. It's written. Now let's market it.

Some considerations:

1. Price is part of marketing. Free attracts many, repulsing some.
 - a. Steak and lobster, a baked potato, apple pie and coffee, \$3.99
2. Amazon does not allow perma-free books.
 - i. Other online retailers such as B&N, Kobo, Sony, Apple, and Google still allow Perma-free. (an oxymoron in itself)
 - ii. Amazon rules only allow free books by joining KDP-Select and limits it to five-free days per book, per quarter.
3. Amazon KDP-Select: Amazon gets your eBook exclusively. You get:
 - a. Free Countdown Deals (currently avail U.S. & U.K.)
 - b. Free book promotions (U.S. & U.K.)
 - c. Free Kindle Unlimited (Currently includes the U.S., U.K., Italy, Spain, Brazil, France, Mexico, Canada, Germany, and India)
4. Amazon Bestselling and Top-rated lists and Author Ranking lists are watched by some buyers. This is another free marketing from Amazon
5. Amazon lists of bestselling by genre and sub-genre – also free
6. Goodreads: An Amazon company has ratings also and takes ads (\$\$) Social Media: lots of time for mixed to poor results. Most people on social media are there to be sociable. Then there are people selling things who must fight to get the attention of others – The cost is the large amount of time needed to work social media

7. Specialty online advertisers – each have a cost. A shrinking number of these take free book promos without a charge, while charging if you wish to promote your book for other than free.
 - a. Book bub, The king of the online marketing outlets (\$\$\$)
 - b. Pixel of Ink (\$)
 - c. E reader news today, (ent) (\$)
 - d. Kindle Nation Daily (\$)
 - e. Freebooksy and bargainbooksy
 - f. Many more
 8. Marketing: What's available, what works, and the costs are constantly changing. Must invest time to stay current.
 9. Objective: What is your immediate objective?
 - a. Readership, or
 - b. Sales, or
 - c. Reviews: Amazon is increasingly scrutinizing reviews.
 - i. Amazon more and more is rejecting paid reviews of all kinds. Amazon refuses to post (or purges if already posted) reviews obtained in return for free books, for traded reviews, even for reviews from your social media friends. Also reviews from people sharing your Internet IP address
 10. Writing exercises, to do as a writer's group or individually:
 - a. Three people in a row on a plane. Mechanical troubles develop and the captain announces a forced landing:
 - i. Write the discussion among the three strangers, using only bits and dialogue – NO name tags.
 1. a female banker, a male dropout working as a janitor, and a pro golfer of either sex.
 - ii. Again, write the dialogue to this situation with the three passengers in the row being a hooker, a priest, and a college economics professor.
 - iii. Remember no name tags and they cannot use each other's names in the dialogue.
? How will they talk? most authors write dialogue in their words with generous name tags.
? How will they talk differently?
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