AUTHOR'S MARKETING PLAYBOOK



A simple content system for building reader relationships without living on social media

WHY THIS PLAYBOOK EXISTS

One of the things I hear most from authors - especially indie authors - is that marketing is the hardest part to figure out. Unfortunately, there's no magic "set it and forget it" method that guarantees bestseller status.

If someone promises you that, they're lying. Full stop.

So why listen to me?

If you're judging by my author socials alone, I might not look like the obvious choice. I've only been active since mid-July 2026. My TikTok following is small, but solid and growing, and my Instagram audience is still embarrassingly small.

But I work in marketing every day. In my current role, I've helped increase social visibility by more than 1,000%, grown organic website impressions by over 300%, quadrupled click-through rates, and grown newsletter audiences by 80%. I've also built email campaigns with open rates above 60%. All of those numbers are real, and I'm quite proud of them.

Those results come from studying, practicing, experimenting, failing, and learning what to do differently next time. And in a field that changes constantly, that learning never stops.

This playbook takes those same professional principles and translates them into practical steps authors can use to help readers discover their books. It's not a magic wand. It's a framework for taking action consistently, learning from the results, and adjusting as you go.

I need that reminder too. Spending my day marketing companies doesn't mean I always make time to market myself - or my book. (Knowing what to do and actually doing it are two different things.) So let's dive in together and market those books!

Side note: I believe in authors supporting authors, so this book is free, and always will be.



POSITION YOUR BOOK BEFORE PROMOTING IT

Marketing starts long before you post about your book.

For *traditionally published* authors, this work can make your query letter, pitch, and submission materials stronger. For *indie authors*, it fills a step you might otherwise skip entirely.

Either way, before you can market a book well, you need to understand what makes it compelling, what experience it promises, and how to explain that without retelling the entire plot.

In the following pages, you'll find SIX THINGS that every author should do before beginning to market their book.

If you're querying: complete these steps before you draft the query. It will help you identify the premise, stakes, comps, reader promise, and strongest point of differentiation - so the query becomes an expression of clear positioning instead of an attempt to summarize 90,000 words.

If you're publishing independently: you may never be forced to write a query, which means no one is forcing you to distill your book before launch. Do it anyway. You'll use this thinking in your book description, ads, social posts, newsletter copy, retailer pages, events, and interviews.

BEFORE YOU FIGURE OUT WHERE TO MARKET YOUR BOOK, YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING PEOPLE TO GET EXCITED ABOUT.

POSITION YOUR BOOK BEFORE PROMOTING IT

1. FIND THE BOOK'S STRONGEST SELLING POINTS.

Not "what happens in the book?" but:

- What is the core promise of this book?
- What makes someone curious within 10 seconds?
- What emotions does it deliver?
- What kind of reader experience is it: tense, romantic, cozy, devastating, funny, escapist, cerebral?
- What are the 3–5 elements readers are most likely to talk about afterward?
- What tropes, themes, dynamics, or settings are genuinely central?
- What is unusual about it compared with other books in its lane?

READERS WILL COME FOR:

_____

_____

_____

THEY'LL STAY FOR:

_____

_____

_____

THEY'LL TELL THEIR FRIENDS ABOUT:

_____

_____

_____

POSITION YOUR BOOK BEFORE PROMOTING IT

2. DESCRIBE THE BOOK WITHOUT RECAPPING IT.

This is where query-writing discipline is useful, even if you'll never use it.

The basic rule of thumb is: **Do not explain the whole book. Explain the setup, the tension, and why we should care.**

Your basic description setup is:

WHO + WANTS WHAT +
WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY +
WHY IT MATTERS

Example: *Sarai lives with her brother, then meets Aiden, who works for the Council, and her friend June discovers...*

becomes

In a city where memories can be bought and sold, a girl who has spent years hiding her past discovers someone is selling her secrets to her enemies.

As a reader, now I want to know more. I do not need to meet Sarai's entire extended family yet.

POSITION YOUR BOOK BEFORE PROMOTING IT

These three things will get reused everywhere: retailer descriptions, social posts, interviews, ads, emails, podcasts, events, graphics.

YOUR ONE-LINE HOOK:

_____
_____
_____

YOUR SHORT PITCH (2-3 SENTENCES EXPLAINING THE PREMISE, CONFLICT, AND STAKES):

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

THE CONVERSATIONAL VERSION (WHEN SOMEONE ASKS "WHAT'S YOUR BOOK ABOUT?"):

_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____
_____
_____

POSITION YOUR BOOK BEFORE PROMOTING IT

3. IDENTIFY YOUR BOOK'S "MARKETING INGREDIENTS."

Go through these checklist and identify the elements of your book that really matter.

- [ ] Tropes
- [ ] Character dynamics
- [ ] Setting
- [ ] Premise
- [ ] Worldbuilding
- [ ] Romance
- [ ] Mystery
- [ ] Stakes
- [ ] Humor
- [ ] Atmosphere
- [ ] Representation
- [ ] Themes
- [ ] Emotional payoff
- [ ] Plot twists
- [ ] Spice level
- [ ] Found family / rivalry / friendship
- [ ] Historical or cultural element
- [ ] Series hook

Then, pick your top three. **Because if everything is a selling point, nothing is.**

If the strongest ingredients are morally gray heroine + forbidden romance + brutal dystopian world, that gives you far more marketing direction than “I write YA fantasy.”

POSITION YOUR BOOK BEFORE PROMOTING IT

4. SEPARATE "WHAT YOUR BOOK IS" FROM "WHY SOMEONE WANTS IT."

FEATURE: Dual POV
READER BENEFIT: You get to understand both sides of the relationship.

FEATURE: Elaborate fantasy world
READER BENEFIT: You get somewhere completely immersive to disappear into.

FEATURE: Short chapters and constant reveals
READER BENEFIT: This is the kind of book you accidentally stay up until 2 a.m. reading.

FEATURE: _____

READER BENEFIT: _____

_____

FEATURE: _____

READER BENEFIT: _____

_____

Market the EXPERIENCE, not the CONSTRUCTION.

POSITION YOUR BOOK BEFORE PROMOTING IT

5. USE COMPARABLE BOOKS WITHOUT TURNING YOURSELF INTO A KNOCKOFF

A lot of authors are unsure how to use comp titles to market their books. Before you do that, it's important to answer these questions:

1. What books would likely sit next to mine on a reader's shelf?
2. What do readers love about those books?
3. Which of those appeals also exist in mine?
4. Where does my book differ?
5. If someone loved X because of Y, what might they love about mine?

Try building this sentence:

"Readers who loved [book] for its [specific appeal] may enjoy this book's [specific related strength]."

This is much stronger than saying something like: "It's The Hunger Games meets Fourth Wing," which can become meaningless very quickly.

POSITION YOUR BOOK BEFORE PROMOTING IT

6. FIGURE OUT YOUR OWN POSITIONING

Marketing your books is only part of the equation. You're not only marketing that book, but you're building recognition around the kinds of experiences that you consistently create.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. What do I tend to write again and again?
2. What themes, character types, settings, or emotional experiences keep appearing?
3. What do I want readers to associate with my name?
4. What do I care about outside the books that naturally connects to my work?
5. What parts of my personality am I comfortable making visible?
6. What do I not want my author brand to require from me?

Example positioning statement: *I write speculative stories for readers who like women behaving badly, impossible choices, and worlds that feel a little too close to our own. I want readers to associate my books with tension, moral complexity, and emotional damage.*

Try it: I write [type of stories] for readers who want [experience]. My books tend to explore [recurring themes/elements], and I want readers to associate my name with [2–3 qualities].

START WITH THE READER, NOT THE PLATFORM

Author marketing works best when the content plan begins with a specific reader, not with Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, or any other channel. The platform is simply the delivery system. The strategy is knowing who you want to reach, what they are looking for, what makes them choose a book, and what would make them recognize your work as being for them.

THE GOAL: MAKE THE RIGHT READER THINK, "THIS IS FOR ME." THEN MAKE THE NEXT STEP OBVIOUS.

DEVELOPING YOUR AUTHOR ICP/BFRP

In marketing, ICP means Ideal Customer Profile. For authors, a better translation is Best-Fit Reader Profile (or BFRP). It is not a fictional avatar built from random demographics. It is a practical description of the kind of person most likely to want your book, recognize its promise, trust the signals around it, and take a next step.

A useful BFRP answers four questions:

- Who is this reader?
- What are they trying to feel, learn, escape, solve, or experience?
- How do they discover books like mine?
- What makes them say yes?

START WITH THE READER, NOT THE PLATFORM

BUILDING YOUR BFRP IN SEVEN LAYERS

1. **Reading identity: What do they already call themselves?** Romance reader, cozy mystery fan, history nerd, fantasy audiobook listener, book-club reader, homeschool parent, teacher, entrepreneur, grief reader, craft learner, etc.
2. **Desired reading experience: What job is the book doing for them?** Comfort, escape, suspense, laughter, belonging, validation, inspiration, practical help, expertise, a conversation starter, or a way to understand something.
3. **Taste and decision cues:** What helps them decide a book is "for me"? Genre, tropes, themes, tone, comps, cover style, narrator, review language, author identity, awards, recommendations, sample pages, content warnings, or format.
4. **Discovery behavior:** Where do they actually encounter books? Search, Goodreads, Amazon, BookTok, Bookstagram, newsletters, podcasts, libraries, bookstores, book clubs, Facebook groups, Reddit, YouTube, events, teachers, librarians, or word of mouth.
5. **Trust signals: Whose opinion counts?** Friends, reviewers, librarians, booksellers, influencers, subject-matter experts, media outlets, book clubs, awards, reader reviews, or a specific community.
6. **Friction and objections: What keeps them from acting?** Price, time, too many choices, uncertainty about tone, fear it will be too heavy, not knowing where to start in a series, format availability, or simply not understanding what makes the book different.
7. **Trigger and next step: What moment makes them ready?** A vacation, book-club pick, seasonal mood, life transition, new release, classroom need, recommendation, current event, gift occasion, or a sudden craving for a very specific kind of story.

START WITH THE READER, NOT THE PLATFORM

THE READER/BUYER/INFLUENCER TRIANGLE

For many authors, the "customer" is not one person. It's important that you speak to all points of the triangle.

Role	Question	Example
Reader	Who consumes the book and what experience do they want?	A 13-year-old who wants fast-paced fantasy with found-family dynamics.
Buyer	Who pays for or acquires the book?	A parent, librarian, teacher, school, grandparent, or the reader themselves.
Influencer	Who helps the buyer or reader decide?	BookTok creator, bookseller, librarian, teacher, reviewer, friend, podcast host, or book club.

START WITH THE READER, NOT THE PLATFORM

CREATE A PRIMARY BFRP BEFORE YOU CREATE FIVE

Most authors do better when they choose one primary reader first. You can have secondary and adjacent audiences later, but the primary BFRP should be the person your hooks, website copy, newsletter, content themes, and launch messaging are designed to recognize immediately.

Audience Level	What it Means	How to Use It
Primary BFRP	The reader with the strongest natural fit for the book.	Write most messaging, hooks, content, and offers for this person.
Secondary BFRP	A reader who has a strong reason to care, but for a different angle.	Create occasional content that speaks to this use case or interest.
Adjacent Audience	People who can refer, recommend, stock, teach, review, host, or amplify.	Build relationship content and outreach rather than pretending they are the reader.

START WITH THE READER, NOT THE PLATFORM

THE BFRP RESEARCH SPRINT

Do not invent your BFRP entirely from your own head. Spend 30–60 minutes gathering real language and behavior. You are looking for repeated patterns, not one-off opinions.

- Read 20–30 reviews of comparable books. Highlight phrases readers use to describe what they loved, hated, expected, or wished for.
- Look at the comments under authors, reviewers, librarians, creators, or communities that already attract your reader.
- Notice the questions readers ask in book groups, Reddit threads, Goodreads discussions, event Q&As, newsletters, or library communities.
- Look at which hooks, tropes, themes, formats, and emotional promises repeat across successful books in your lane.
- If you already have readers, ask them how they found you, what made them try the book, and how they would describe it to a friend.
- Use your own analytics: newsletter clicks and replies, search terms, website pages, saves, shares, repeat commenters, retailer data, event questions, and the posts that bring the right people closer.

START WITH THE READER, NOT THE PLATFORM

TURN THE RESEARCH INTO ONE USABLE BFRP STATEMENT

Template: My primary reader is a [reading identity] who wants [specific experience/outcome]. They tend to choose books based on [decision cues], discover them through [channels/communities], trust [signals], and are most likely to act when [trigger].

Example: *My primary reader is an adult cozy-fantasy reader who wants low-stress escapism, found family, and a hopeful ending. They choose books based on tone, tropes, cover cues, and trusted reader recommendations; discover them through Bookstagram, Goodreads, newsletters, and bookstores; and are most likely to buy when they are between heavier reads or want a comfort read for a weekend or vacation.*

START WITH THE READER, NOT THE PLATFORM

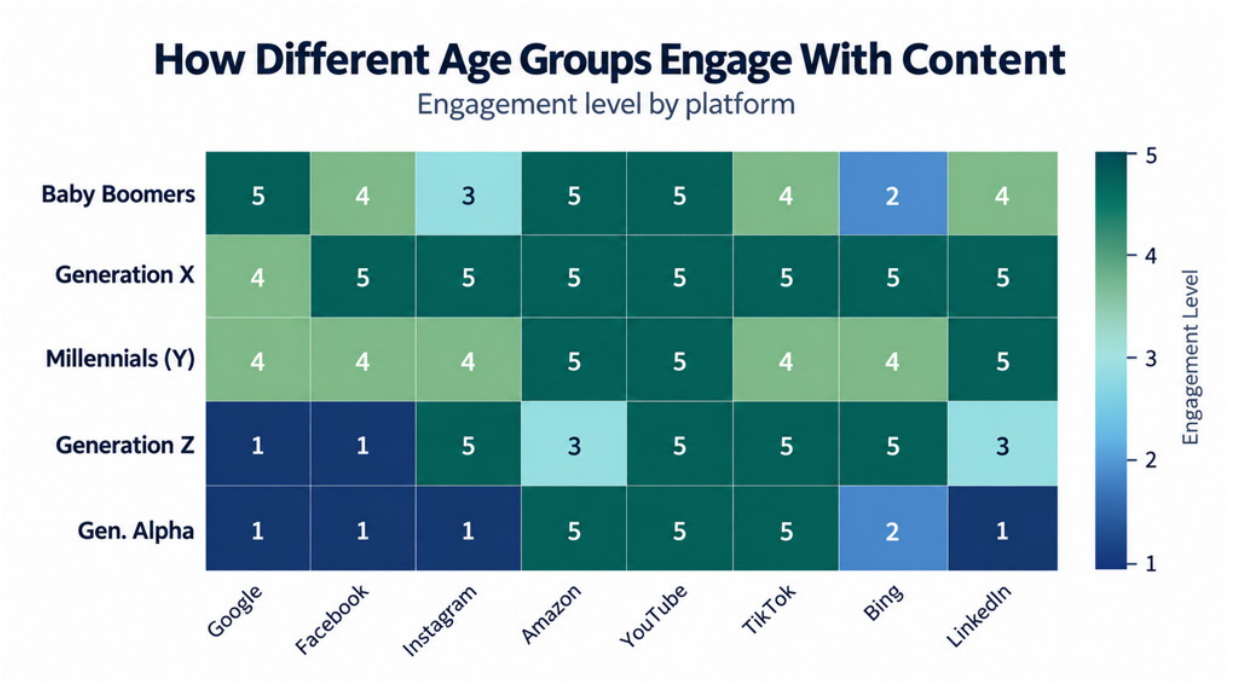
BFRP WORKSHEET

BFRP QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER
Primary reader identity	
Life-stage context (if relevant)	
Genres, tropes, subjects, or formats they already choose	
What they want to feel/learn/ solve/experience	
What they do not want	
3 decision cues that make a book feel right for them	
Where they discover books	
Who or what they trust	
Top 3 objections or friction points	
Trigger moment that makes them ready	
Best next step you can offer	
Words or phrases they use themselves	
Primary content themes that would attract them	

START WITH THE READER, NOT THE PLATFORM

AGE IS USEFUL CONTEXT – BUT IT IS NOT YOUR BFRP

Age can help you make smarter channel and format choices, but it should not be the thing that defines your reader. Two people in the same generation can have completely different reading tastes, discovery habits, budgets, communities, and reasons for buying a book. Use age as one layer of context, then build the actual reader profile around behavior and motivation.



Use the chart as a starting point for channel planning, then validate it against your own readers. Data courtesy of FMG Suite.

START WITH THE READER, NOT THE PLATFORM

THE FINAL TEST – CAN THIS BFRP GUIDE A REAL MAREKTING DECISION?

- If you know the BFRP, you should be able to choose a hook without guessing.
- You should know which two or three channels deserve more attention and which ones can be ignored for now.
- You should be able to explain why the book matters to this reader without starting with the plot summary.
- You should know what proof or trust signal will reduce uncertainty.
- You should know what next step feels natural: read a sample, join the newsletter, preorder, request at the library, attend an event, or share with a friend.

DO NOT ASK, "WHERE SHOULD I POST?" UNTIL YOU CAN ANSWER, "WHO IS THE READER, WHAT ARE THEY LOOKING FOR, AND WHAT WOULD MAKE THEM CARE?"

BUILDING YOUR MONTHLY CONTENT PLAN

A SIMPLE MONTHLY RHYTHM

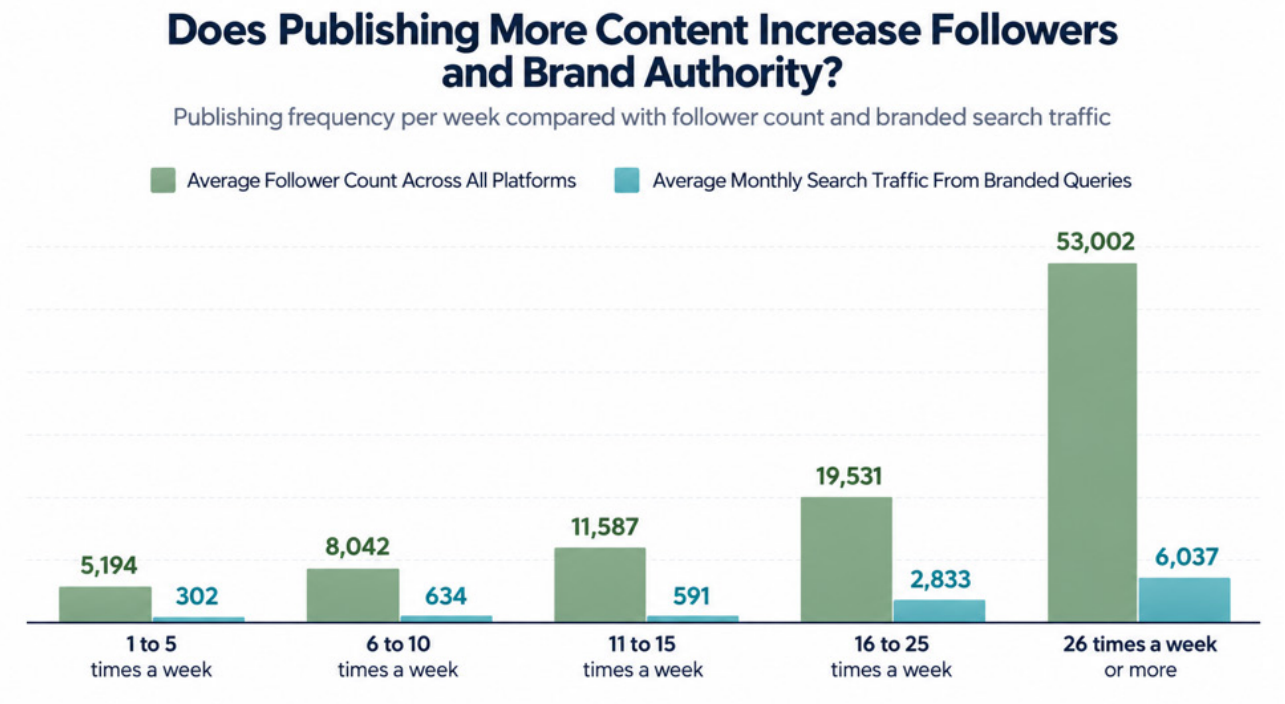
CONTENT	PRACTICAL RHYTHM
Social	2–3 posts per week that are worth reading on their own.
Newsletter	1–2 useful or relationship-building emails per month.
Anchor content	1–2 deeper pieces: blog, essay, interview, video, podcast, reader guide, or behind-the-scenes story.
Engagement	Short, consistent time spent commenting and connecting every week.
Launch / promo	Layer promotional posts into the mix instead of making every post promotional.

WHY CONSISTENCY MATTERS MORE THAN A PERFECT POSTING SCHEDULE

Consistency helps more people encounter your name, your books, and the ideas around your work. The point is not to chase an extreme posting quota. It is to build enough repeated visibility that readers can recognize you, remember you, and find you again.

BUILDING YOUR MONTHLY CONTENT PLAN

POSTING FREQUENCY AND BRAND AUTHORITY



Use this as a directional planning signal, not a mandate to post dozens of times a week. Sustainable consistency beats a burst-and-disappear cycle. Data courtesy FMG Suite.

Authors who consistently publish content - like book excerpts, articles, newsletters, social posts, or videos - give readers more chances to discover and engage with them. Over time, that can lead to more followers, more searches for the author's name or books, and a stronger sense of credibility or authority in their genre. While posting more content doesn't automatically guarantee growth, the chart suggests that consistent, high-frequency publishing can play a major role in building visibility, audience size, and brand authority.

BUILDING YOUR MONTHLY CONTENT PLAN

PICK A WEEKLY OR MONTHLY THEME

A theme gives your content a center of gravity. It can be tied to your current book, a reader interest, a recurring question, a trope, a season, or a subject you want to be known for.

EXAMPLE THEME	WHAT IT COULD CREATE
A trope or reader promise	Discussion post, character post, excerpt context, recommendation list, newsletter.
Behind the book	Research story, setting photos, process video, deleted-scene story, Q&A.
A reader problem or desire	Essay, checklist, personal story, resource post, discussion prompt.
Launch month	Reveal, anticipation, reader proof, event content, bonus content, follow-up.

CHOOSE CONTENT FORMATS BY THE JOB THEY NEED TO DO

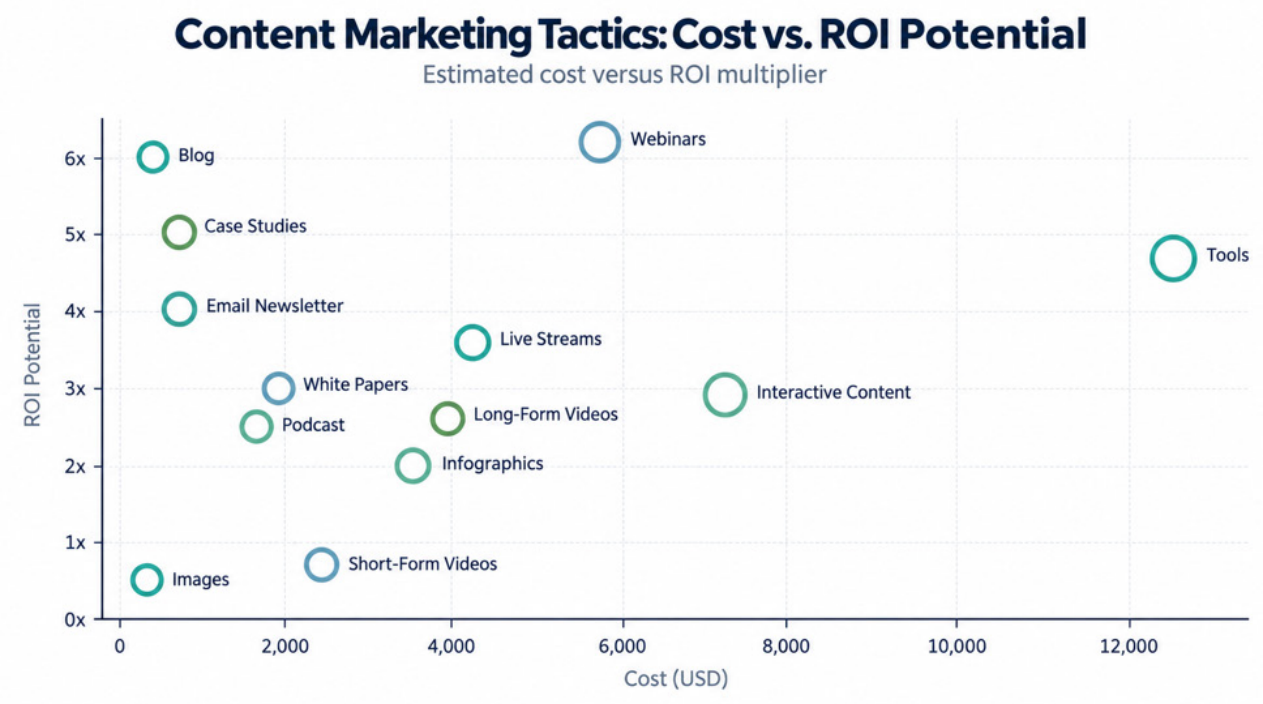
Not every format plays the same role. Some content is built for quick attention; other content keeps working longer, supports search, captures email addresses, or gives a reader a deeper reason to trust you. Build your plan around a mix instead of asking one platform or one format to do everything.

BUILDING YOUR MONTHLY CONTENT PLAN

WHERE SHOULD I POST?

For authors, the useful takeaway is the shape of the portfolio: pair lightweight discovery content with a few durable assets. A short social post can introduce an idea; a newsletter, article, guide, event, downloadable, or searchable page can keep earning attention after the post is gone.

The chart below discusses the ROI of different content marketing posting tactics. Keep in mind that even organic/unpaid content has a cost - your time developing it.



The source chart is best used as directional context for format selection; your own costs, audience, genre, and conversion path should determine what earns its place in your plan. Data courtesy FMG Suite.

YOUR 10-MINUTE AUDIENCE GROWTH ROUTINE

You do not need to spend the whole day online. A short, repeatable routine is more useful than disappearing for weeks and then trying to "catch up."

Utilizing a free content planning calendar like the one included in Adobe Express to schedule posts ahead of time can ensure that you spend less time online each day while still keeping a consistent posting schedule.

TIME	ACTION	WHAT TO DO
2 min	Check	See what is already scheduled and whether anything needs attention.
3 min	Engage	Leave thoughtful comments on 5 posts from readers, authors, booksellers, reviewers, librarians, podcasters, or communities that genuinely matter to you.
2 min	Connect	Follow or connect with people you actually interacted with.
2 min	Follow up	Reply to comments, DMs, mentions, newsletter responses, or new connections.
1 min	Capture	Save a question, phrase, or conversation that could become future content.

A USEFUL RULE: ENGAGE BEFORE YOU POST. MARKETING WORKS BETTER WHEN YOU ARE PART OF THE CONVERSATION, NOT ONLY BROADCASTING INTO IT.

A CONTENT MIX THAT FEELS HUMAN

THE THREE-POST MIX

1. Book / expertise: share something about the story, subject, craft, research, genre, or idea behind your work.
2. Conversation: ask an easy-to-answer reader question or react to something readers are already discussing.
3. Human: show a real moment from the writing life, reading life, event, research trip, desk, library, or ordinary day.

PROMOTIONAL CONTENT HAS A JOB – JUST NOT EVERY JOB

- Tell readers what the book is for, not only that it exists.
- Connect the book to a specific reader desire, emotion, trope, question, or experience.
- Use proof when you have it: reader reactions, reviews, event photos, milestones, press, or community response.
- Give readers a next step: sample, preorder, buy, borrow, join the newsletter, attend, share, or reply.

REMEMBER THAT READERS WHO ARE SEEKING YOU OUT ONLINE WANT TO SEE YOU, NOT JUST YOUR BOOK.

A CONTENT MIX THAT FEELS HUMAN

REPURPOSE ONE IDEA

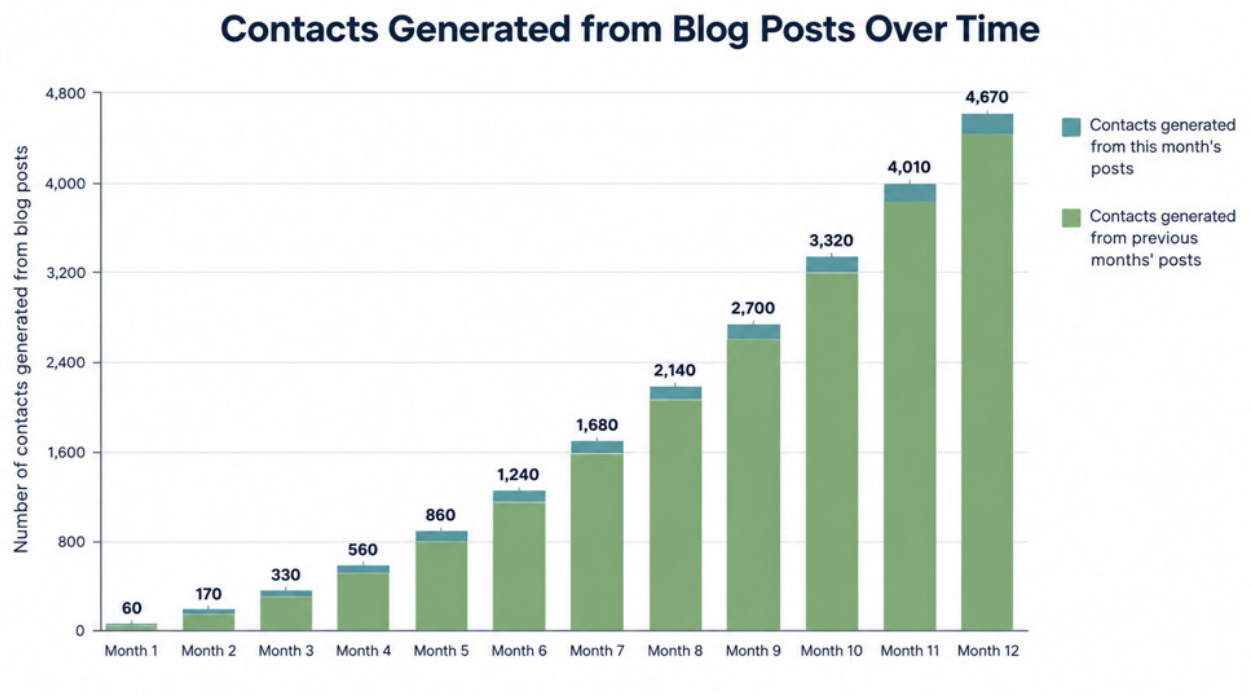
START WITH	TURN IT INTO
A blog/essay/newsletter	3 short posts, a carousel, a short video, 3 discussion questions.
A chapter theme	Reader question, behind-the-scenes post, visual quote card using your own text, video explanation.
Research	Fun fact, myth vs. reality, image post, newsletter note, recommendation list.
Character/setting	Introduction post, dilemma question, mood board, playlist discussion, location story.
Reader Q&A	FAQ post, email, short video, website update, future live discussion.

ZERO-CLICK VALUE: A READER SHOULD GET SOMETHING FROM THE POST EVEN IF THEY NEVER CLICK AWAY FROM THE PLATFORM. THE LINK IS A NEXT STEP, NOT THE ENTIRE VALUE.

A CONTENT MIX THAT FEELS HUMAN

BUILD CONTENT THAT KEEPS WORKING AFTER YOU PUBLISH IT

Social posts are useful for discovery and conversation, but your marketing system gets stronger when some of your work has a longer shelf life. Searchable blog articles, website pages, reading guides, resource posts, interviews, and newsletter archives can continue introducing new people to your work long after the original publish date.



Data courtesy of FMG Suite

Think of this as the compounding-content principle: one strong piece can keep contributing while newer pieces are added on top of it. That is another reason to repurpose thoughtfully instead of treating every post as disposable. A useful author question: **"What can I create this month that a reader could still discover six months from now?"**

WRITE HOOKS THAT MAKE THE READER STOP

THE FORMULA: WHO THEY ARE + WHAT THEY CARE ABOUT + THE SURPRISE

A good author hook does not need to be loud. It needs to be specific enough that the right reader recognizes the promise, question, emotion, or curiosity immediately.

#	HOOK
1	Readers who love [genre/trope]: this book starts with [specific tension or promise].
2	If you have ever wanted a story where [reader desire], this one is for you.
3	You think this book is about [surface premise]. It is really about [deeper emotional question].
4	Before you meet [character], there is one thing you should know: [intriguing contradiction].
5	The hardest part of writing [book/scene/character] was not [obvious challenge]. It was [surprise].
6	I thought I knew how this chapter would end. Then [unexpected writing discovery].
7	If [character] could give you one warning before page one, it would be this: [warning].
8	This is for the reader who wants [specific feeling] without [common frustration].
9	Everyone talks about [popular trope]. I wanted to explore what happens when [fresh angle].
10	The question behind this book is not “Will they [plot goal]?” It is “Can they [emotional stakes]?”
11	One tiny detail changed the entire direction of this book: [detail].
12	The scene I almost cut became the scene that explained [character/theme].

WRITE HOOKS THAT MAKE THE READER STOP

13	If you like [comp title/story quality], but wish there were more [distinctive element], you may like this.
14	This character makes one decision that seems small. It changes everything.
15	What would you do if [clean story dilemma]?
16	Which would you choose: [option A] or [option B]? My character chose [tease, not spoiler].
17	The first version of this story was about [old focus]. The final version became about [new focus].
18	Here is the thing I wish more readers knew about writing [genre/form]: [insight].
19	I wrote this scene for anyone who has ever [emotion/experience].
20	This book began with one question: what if [high-concept question]?
21	If you are waiting for permission to [creative/reader action], consider this your nudge.
22	The most surprising research rabbit hole behind this book: [topic].
23	This week in the writing life: [specific honest moment], [small lesson].
24	You do not need to know my whole book to answer this: [easy reader question].
25	Would you rather read about [A] or [B]? I am deciding what to share next.
26	The line that unlocked this chapter was: [short paraphrased idea, not copyrighted excerpt].
27	Behind this cover is a story about [reader-facing promise], not just [surface category].
28	If my book had a “for readers who…” label, it would say: [3 specific qualities].
29	The best marketing question I can ask is not “How do I sell this?” It is “Who will feel seen by this?”
30	If you finished [your book] and wanted one more thing, I would send you to [newsletter bonus/related content].

WRITE HOOKS THAT MAKE THE READER STOP

HOOK CHECK

After you've written your hook, use the following five criteria to test it for efficacy.

1. The reader can tell why this is relevant to them.
2. The first line contains a specific promise, tension, emotion, or tension.
3. It sounds like a person, not ad copy.
4. It avoid phrases like "big news" when the actual news can be named.
5. The post delivers what the opening promises.

NEWSLETTER: MAKE IT WORTH OPENING (AND FORWARDING)

The newsletter is not only a sales channel. It is one of the best places to build a direct reader relationship because you are not dependent on a social feed.

BEFORE YOU SEND, ASK:

- Would a reader open this subject line if they did not already know what I was promoting?
- Is there one clear reason this email matters now?
- Could a reader forward this to another reader because it is useful, interesting, funny, moving, or specific?
- Is the promotional ask proportionate to the value in the email?
- Is there an easy way to reply and start a conversation?

NEWSLETTER CONTENT IDEAS

- Behind-the-book story or research rabbit hole.
- What you are reading and why you recommend it.
- A short personal note connected to a theme in your work.
- A reader question with your answer.
- Event recap, photos, or what you learned from readers.
- Bonus scene, reading guide, playlist, printable, or other reader extra you own the rights to.
- Launch update with a clear next step.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, NOT JUST FOLLOWER COUNTS

A bigger audience is useful only when it includes people who actually care about your work. Focus on relevant relationships: readers, authors, booksellers, librarians, reviewers, book clubs, podcasters, event hosts, educators, and communities connected to your subject or genre.

The following chart explores common steps in the marketing process and details ways that authors can apply them.

STAGE	AUTHOR VERSION
Identify	Find the people and communities that naturally overlap with your readers.
Engage	Comment thoughtfully and participate before asking for anything.
Connect	Follow, subscribe, or connect after a real interaction.
Share	Offer something genuinely useful or relevant.
Collaborate	Interviews, events, newsletter swaps, panels, book-club visits, or joint conversations.
Follow up	Stay in touch. One interaction is not a relationship.

MEASURE THE SIGNALS THAT MATTER

Do not judge a post only by likes. Look for signs that readers are recognizing themselves, responding, and moving closer to your work.

SIGNAL	EXAMPLES
Attention	Reach, profile views, website visits, sample-page visits.
Reader response	Comments, replies, saves, shares, DMs, newsletter replies.
Relationship	Repeat commenters, book-club contacts, reviewer relationships, event invitations.
Owned audience	Newsletter subscribers and reply rate.
Book action	Samples, preorders, sales, library requests, event registrations - when you can measure them.
Compounding	Older posts or articles that keep bringing readers to your site or books.

MONTHLY REVIEW

1. Which 3 posts created the best reader response?
2. Which first lines made people stop and reply?
3. Which topic or book promise attracted the right people?
4. Which content was easiest to make and still performed well?
5. Which piece could become a newsletter, article, video, or future post?
6. What should you stop doing because it takes time without building reader connection?

AUTHOR WORKSHEETS

MONTHLY CONTENT PLANNER

Ideal reader this month	
What they care about now	
Monthly theme	
Book/project focus	
Anchor idea #1	
Anchor idea #2	
3 book/expertise posts	
3 conversation posts	
1 personal/ writing-life post	
Newsletter idea	
5 people/ communities to engage with	
Reader next step	
Metric to watch	

AUTHOR WORKSHEETS

HOOK BUILDER

WHO THE READER IS	
WHAT THEY WANT/ CARE ABOUT	
THE SURPRISE/ TENSION	
FIRST-LINE DRAFT	
WHAT THE POST DELIVERS	

REPURPOSING PLANNER

Anchor idea	
Post #1: hook	
Post #2: behind the scenes	
Post #3: reader question	
Visual / carousel	
Short video	
Newsletter angle	
Website / blog angle	
Follow-up / CTA	

AUTHOR WORKSHEETS

ONE-WEEK EXAMPLE

DAY	CONTENT / ACTION
Monday	Post: reader-facing hook + useful or intriguing idea. Spend 10 minutes engaging first.
Tuesday	No post required. Comment, reply, connect, and capture questions.
Wednesday	Post: conversation question tied to your genre, theme, or book.
Thursday	Newsletter or deeper piece. Reuse one idea from the week.
Friday	Post: human/behind-the-scenes moment. Review new relationships and follow up.
Weekend	Optional: timely reader content, event content, reading-life post, or nothing. Consistency does not require constant posting.

KEEP IT SUSTAINABLE: THE BEST AUTHOR MARKETING PLAN IS ONE YOU CAN KEEP DOING WHILE STILL WRITING BOOKS. BUILD A SMALL SYSTEM, REPEAT WHAT WORKS, AND LET EACH STRONG IDEA DO MORE THAN ONE JOB.



Island Lore Creative is a creative-focused marketing and web design company founded by author and Director of Marketing Renee Bell. Renee enjoys helping people and companies build their brands, connect with their audiences, and scale their businesses. Through Island Lore Creative, she combines strategic marketing expertise with thoughtful design and storytelling to help businesses bring their ideas to life.

Learn more at islandlorecreative.com