

RUNNING HEAD: ROAD TO ONE MILLION

Road to One Million: A Marketing Plan for *Dead Promise*

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ABSTRACT

For this study, I explored various strategies of marketing and promoting a book, including how a book is published. Also, I discovered common traits that lead to a successful writer, and they included intangible factors such as perseverance and determination.

Qualitative methodology was applied using case study as the primary approach and phenomenology as a secondary approach. Although a marketing plan does not guarantee sales of one million copies, it will position the author to achieve the milestone.

At the end of this research, a marketing plan was devised, reviewed by an expert panel, and implemented on a first novel, *Dead Promise*. Feedback from the expert panel was incorporated into the marketing plan.

## INTRODUCTION

There are many great writers out there, but why do so few succeed as a novelist? Does one have to be Stephen King, Sandra Brown, or John Grisham to sell over one million copies? If so, it certainly helps. For many writers, they lack the promotional and marketing know-how and effort, and for the few that are successful, they make a lavish living because there can be millions profited from the worldwide book industry. Brian Jud (2004, p. 2), author of *Beyond the Bookstore*, estimated the book market at \$90 billion, and a third of those sales are in the United States.

The statistics of becoming a successful novelist can be discouraging: There are more than 195,000 new novels published every year in the U.S., and 70% of them sell fewer than 500 copies (Kenyon, 2007). It is a competitive field; there are more than 300 new titles published each day and with the growth of electronic books, that number may be even higher (Poynter, 2003, p. 161).

When an author's name becomes a brand it is advantageous. For instance, Stephen King, his name alone is a brand with which people are familiar: people identify him as a great storyteller in the horror genre. In fact, for some of King's novels his name is printed bigger than the title; he has achieved enough success that his name alone sells. To attain such a status, the author must be in the best position to succeed, and that entails a marketing plan.

There are numbers of books and articles written by marketing experts and novelists on how to market a book. However, the researcher was unable to locate a scholarly or peer-reviewed article specifically on marketing a book. Nonetheless, there were scholarly articles on marketing other products or services, and what was relevant in these articles was incorporated into this paper.

### *Purpose of the Research*

The purpose was to explore strategies of promoting and marketing a book, learn the common traits among successful authors, and create a marketing plan for *Dead Promise*.

The approach was the same as marketing a business product because any business can have the greatest product but if no one knows about it no one will buy it. Every book needs marketing help because it will not sell by itself (Ink Tree Ltd., 2004). In this case, the product was a novel. As Sandra Brown, a multiple *New York Times Best Seller*, aptly said, “It’s a business and you have to treat it like one” (Rice, 2000, para. 13).

The researcher explored the publishing process because how a book is published can affect its marketing efforts, particularly when it relates to expense, revenue, and owning the rights. For many authors, it is hard enough to land a big name traditional publisher like Random House, Bantam, Penguin, Scholastics, and others. It is even rarer for a publisher to commit a huge investment in a marketing campaign. For large publishing companies, they must see that the book will provide high returns before investing heavily in it. For instance, when book publisher John Sterling read the manuscript of *The Interpretation of Murder*, he was convinced it was going to be a hit and acquired it for \$800,000. Then, he committed \$500,000 to a marketing campaign blitz, which included large ads in the *New York Times*, *New Yorker*, *Publishers Weekly*, and others (Trachtenberg, 2006, para. 2-3).

Regarding smaller publishers, they either do not have the experience to promote or they only want to create, whereas big publishers will heavily invest in a few of many books that they receive. In most cases, writers will have to do the marketing themselves. “Being an author is 5% writing and 95% promotion,” said Russ Marano, *Hi-Tek Newsletter* (Poynter, 2003, p. 160). The

biggest misconception that writers have is that the publisher will take care of all the promotion because they actually do little promoting (Poynter, 2003, p. 167).

When a publisher finally decides to accept and print the manuscript, they often do not set aside funds for a marketing campaign. A mistake that publishers make is they will budget up to the print run, and then not put enough money aside for promoting it. Selling the book will be tough if the publisher does not create the sales (Ink Tree Ltd., 2004).

Most first-time authors know little about marketing and expect the publisher to handle the rest, for many of them are just happy to see their first book in print, but instead many publishers rely on the writers themselves to market the book. The truth is writers must be constantly marketing, talking, and informing others of their work. “Beyond writing, marketing one’s book is also a large component of an author’s job” (Jones, 2008, para. 1).

In today’s age, there has never been a time where marketing a product to the world has been as cost-effective and easy as now: the Internet. Online marketing is faster, cheaper, and gets more effective results than by mail, phone, or fax. Books becoming “best sellers are more likely these days now that the Internet and mass-merchant stores have substantially expanded the number of places books are sold” (Trachtenberg, 2006, para. 12). Epan (2008) also added that the internet “is boon to people who need it for promoting any kind of business or for selling their self-published book” (para. 3).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *What is a Marketing Plan?*

There is an old saying, “Did you plan to fail or fail to plan?” Most people do not deliberately plan to fail, rather the latter is common. Hence a marketing plan is the plan. Although

marketing has various definitions, according to Bucher and Krotee (1998), it is a “strategic game plan for the various factors that relate to persuading the public to endorse, purchase, support, and utilize a product or service” (p.413). Malcolm McDonald (2007) described marketing as “a matching of between a company’s capabilities and the wants of customers in order to achieve the objectives of both parties” (p. 3). When it comes to marketing a book the company is the author, and the author’s task is to create a book for a particular readership. McDonald (2007) highlighted marketing as a process of:

- Defining the market
- Quantifying the needs of the customer groups (segments) within these markets
- Determining the value propositions to meet their needs
- Communicating these value propositions to all those people in the organization responsible for delivering them, and getting their buy-in to their role
- Playing an appropriate part in delivering these value propositions (usually only communications)
- Monitoring the value actually delivered

David Bangs, Jr. (2007) outlined a marketing plan to have the following or similar structure:

#### I. Executive Summary

A high-level summary of the marketing plan. Alexander Hiam (2004) recommended the executive summary to be one page, conveying the purpose and essential activities of the plan in a compelling manner that anyone can understand and see the vision. Also, summarize the bottom-line results: projected revenue and expense (p. 49-50).

## II. The Challenge

Brief description of product to be marketed and associated goals, such as sales figures and strategic goals.

Describe compelling objectives, quantifiable and measurable. Keep this section to half a page to two pages, at the most (Hiam, 2004, p. 50).

## III. Situation Analysis

### *Company Analysis*

- Goals
- Focus
- Culture
- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Market share

### *Customer Analysis*

- Number
- Type
- Value drivers
- Decision process
- Concentration of customer base for particular products

### *Competitor Analysis*

- Market position
- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Market shares

### *Collaborators*

- Subsidiaries, joint ventures, and distributors, etc.

*Climate*

Macro-environmental PEST analysis:

- Political and legal environment
- Economic environment
- Social and cultural environment
- Technological environment

*SWOT Analysis*

A SWOT or Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis of the business environment can be performed by organizing the environmental factors as follows:

- The firm's internal attributes can be classed as *strengths* and *weaknesses*.
- The external environment presents *opportunities* and *threats*.

#### IV. Market Segmentation

Present a description of the market segmentation as follows:

*Segments*

- Description
- Percent of sales
- What they want
- How they use product
- Support requirements
- How to reach them
- Price sensitivity

#### V. Alternative Marketing Strategies

List and discuss the alternatives that were considered before arriving at the recommended strategy. Alternatives might include discontinuing a product, re-branding, positioning as a premium or value product, etc.

## VI. Selected Marketing Strategy

Discuss why the strategy was selected, then the marketing mix decisions (4 P's) of product, price, place (distribution), and promotion.

### 1) *Product*

The product decisions should consider the product's advantages and how they will be leveraged. Product decisions should include:

- Brand name
- Quality
- Scope of product line
- Warranty
- Packaging

### 2) *Price*

Discuss pricing strategy, expected volume, and decisions for the following pricing variables:

- List price
- Discounts
- Bundling
- Payment terms and financing options
- Leasing options

### 3) *Place* (Distribution)

Decision variables include:

- Distribution channels, such as direct, retail, distributors & intermediates
- Motivating the channel - for example, distributor margins
- Criteria for evaluating distributors
- Locations
- Logistics, including transportation, warehousing, and order fulfillment

### 4) *Promotion*

- Advertising, including how much and which media.

- Public relations
- Promotional programs
- Budget: determine break-even point for any additional spending
- Projected results of the promotional programs

#### VII. Short & Long-Term Projections

The selected strategy's immediate effects, expected long-term results, and any special actions required to achieve them. This section may include forecasts of revenues and expenses as well as the results of a break-even analysis.

#### VIII. Conclusion

Summarize all of the above.

- Exhibits: calculations of market size, commissions, profit margins, break-even analyses, etc.

#### *Identifying the Market*

The main word in marketing is market, and that is defining and understanding who to sell to and what strategy to execute. Jud (2004) emphasized on the following formula:

- Recognize: Identify the existing and new markets with the focus always on the people.

The way to do this is

“...discover what product opportunities exist. Second, learn the demographics (quantitative measurements such as age, income, and education), geographics (the physical location of your targets), and psychographics (qualitative measurements of values, attitudes and beliefs) of your prospective customers. Finally determine your markets size, growth, and competitive status (Jud, 2004, p. 20)

- Crystallize: Know your destination by writing down your objective(s) and the date when you plan to reach it.
- Strategize: Create strategies in the Four P's of marketing: Product, Place (distribution), Price, and Promotion.
- Organize: Find and implement specific actions will it take to achieve the Four P's.
- Prioritize: Do not waste too much time on uninterested buys as the time could be better spent on interested buyers.
- Capitalize: Created financial statements of projected revenue and expenses. This is a time to review the marketing program and financial resources.
- Energize: One must be willing to execute the plan passionately and persistently.
- Scrutinize: Assess the progress and make changes as necessary.
- Realize: Regain your bearing. Have some fun in the process while looking at the entire spectrum of efforts and time involved.

Before starting a marketing plan William Luther (2001) cautioned, “first determine if you have something customers want, you have the ability to develop or service it, it will work the way you say it will, there will be no adverse legal ramifications, and you can sell or offer at a profit” (p. 3). Furthermore, Steve Maxwell (1997) advised when devising the marketing plan “the goals and targets should be ambitious, but also realistic” and “information contained in the plan should be as complete as possible—don’t draw conclusions based on faulty data” (p. 14).

### *Marketing Strategies*

Many first-time authors do not have a business or marketing degree. So how does a writer promote and market a book? As many of the sources mentioned, the first task is analyze the

market by determining who will purchase the book, figure out the best way to reach them, and make them happy enough they will come back for more or let others know (Hiam, 2004; Poynter, 2003).

Brian Jud (2004) suggested breaking down the book market into mini-markets, and then selling to those more defined audiences, and at times with a different strategy for each. Jud called this process, *segmentation*. Entering the book into award competitions is also getting it segmented. So rather than waiting for the customers to come to a bookstore while also browsing at the competition, bring the product directly to the buyers.

Each time a book is marketed to a different niche market it becomes a brand new opportunity for sales growth, therefore it is important to concentrate the efforts into that particular market, because one can be different from another. Providing the content in a different format such as an audio book, an e-book, or in a different language also brings in new buyers (Jud, 2004). Joseph Nassise (2008) suggested foreign rights sales as another marketplace. Because many publishers and agents may only own US rights to the book and therefore, focus their marketing in the US market, the author can solicit to foreign publishers or literary agents but should first research and find out what books are selling elsewhere. One place to start is a local library's *International Literary Marketplace*. Another is to become a member of Publishers Marketplace, and use their *Deal List* to review recent sales for looking up who the agents and publishers are. "In today's market, making that first sale is great. But selling that book two, three, four or more times means greater success for you and greater interest from your publisher" (Nassise, 2008, para. 13).

Like defining the audience, the writer must be able to define the genre. Allen (2001) informed that a writer should not respond like: “I’m writing a sort of romantic-science fiction-mystery combining elements of Stephen King and Danielle Steele’s syndrome” (para. 4). This tells editors that the writer either had not refined his concept or lacked knowledge of the book market.

Moira Allen (2001) recommended asking and answering the following questions: Do any magazines or journals target the same audience? Does the audience have a professional organization? Are there special stores that members of this group might visit? Are there discussions groups and major websites for these groups? To inform the market, Allen (2008) recommended direct-mailing, space advertising, web advertising, and cooperative advertising. In direct-mailing, the writer will need to prepare a sales flyer, a response form that could be included on the flyer itself, a mailing envelope, and a return envelope. Mailing lists can be rented from a special-list publication, usually in increments of 1000. With Space and Web Advertising, unless the writer has the skills, it is best to have an agency design effective ads. Although this can be very expensive, agencies usually have the know-how to give the ad its best chance.

Unlike Allen, Poynter (2003) recommended exploiting free publicity as much as possible, particularly through book reviews by submitting the book to applicable magazines, local newspapers, organizations, clubs, local radio stations, TV appearances, interviews, and feature stories. Kenyon (2007) advised taking advantage of every promotion opportunity, especially with the Internet. For his first novel, *Rabid*, Kenyon sold out on a first print run of 10,000 in less than two months. Kenyon was able to achieve this by getting active with blogging and online forums. He created interest by offering more information online via a website.

Another aspect of informing the audience is radio and television. It is good to be prepared, because “If you have any skeletons, you can bet the reporter will ask you about them” (Drake &

Wells, 2008, p. 34). Drake and Wells (2008) informed that getting and building public relations (PR) is a great way to generate *buzz*. They shared the following tips:

- Be honest and upfront.
- Try to make the reporter's job easy by having all the facts at hand, along with some interesting personal interest information or other colorful background that the reporter may use for a sidebar.
- Always remember that reporters are working on deadlines and they need quick responses. Respect their need for speed and be available to talk to them. Otherwise, without information from you, they may just move on to a story about someone else who is available in a timely fashion.

Having a website is one of the most important marketing strategies. Regina Paul (2005) affirmed that "having your own website to promote your writing is the best way" (para. 3). Paul said that sites like <http://www.bravenet.com> offer free webpages including a guestbook, mailing lists, tell-a-friend service, and with free hosting. But with more and more websites launching in cyberspace, the biggest challenge is drawing traffic to the site. So how does one draw traffic?

According to David O'Connell (2008), some standard steps are:

- 1) Submit the site to Search Engines like Google and Yahoo;
- 2) Submit site to Directories; and
- 3) Submit site to Classifieds.

Other informal ways are to:

- 1) Distribute articles with your website on it;
- 2) Participate in Forums; and
- 3) Advertise at <http://www.ezines.com>

Having a website has proven successful for other businesses including law firms. Gregory Siskind, an immigration attorney marketed his law practice by creating a website offering news and information targeted at specific groups: foreign students, high-tech firms, and hospitals. His law firm now consists of 20 attorneys with offices in New York City, Las Vegas, Beijing, Toronto, and others. His website has been visited by 150 countries (Edwards, 2008).

Another way of promoting a website is creating an online newsletter and offering special promotions for visitors. Chat rooms, message boards, and other online community sites are great ways to spread the word. Even when the writer is not online, he or she can advertise the website on business cards, letterheads, and envelopes (Cox, 2007). Paul (2005) recommended being active on message boards and on other authors' guestbooks, and when signing, emailing, or posting comments, always include the writer's website under the name. From online forums, blogs, to social-networking sites like MySpace and Facebook, the opportunities are there to create a *buzz* or excited talk. Drake and Wells (2008) also mentioned using YouTube and street teams, a group of unpaid fans asked to promote the product or book in this case, usually in exchange for merchandise.

Doing a press release is one of the best ways to promote, and when preparing one, it is important to ensure the press release is clear, concise, pertinent, and cater it to each publication or audience. The press release usually include: contact name, address, contact number, e-mail address, date of release, a lead paragraph, and body of the text, which provide more detail. Make the title and lead paragraph as compelling as possible. Then use the pound signs (###) at the bottom of the page to indicate the end of the press release. Include other applicable and catchy information such as graphs and quotes. Some other things to be aware of are: use 8 ½ X 11 inch

paper, include captions if photos are used, and always have another person proofread it (Paul, 2001).

It is never too early to start talking about the book prior to being published. This will help the writer be prepared for questions and provide smoother sales responses. When the author talks about himself or herself, it is important to relate it back to the book. After all, the focus is to sell the book. This applies to radio interviews, appearances, and so forth (Gauri, 2008).

Word of mouth referral is one of the best methods. It brings a higher rate of sales because it is built upon existing trusted relationships. The easiest way to start is notify friends, family, and then acquaintances, colleagues, and influential people. Epanand (2008) suggested making a cover letter and a brief summary of the book, and then email it to friends and family, asking them to forward it to their friends and families as well, and so forth. It is important to keep contacts organized and offer them incentives such as a discount or an autographed copy. Other ideas to market the book is to contact certain broadcasters, setup a stall or booth in public areas, and promote the novel with all the confidence in the world. Promotion in various avenues is key because it will reach different audiences. This is where having positive reviews can make a significant difference in sales, which is more important than the number of years a website is on the web or the total number of reviews. And when someone purchases the book, it is good to follow up with them. Invite them to leave comments or testimonials (Gauri, 2008). As the founder of Amazon.com, Jeffrey P. Bezos said:

Word of mouth remains the most powerful customer acquisition tool we have, and we are grateful for the trust our customers have placed in us. Repeat purchases and word of mouth have combined to make Amazon.com the market leader in online bookselling. (Gauri, 2008, p. 91).

After interviewing 24 of today's bestselling authors, Dee Power (2007a) learned that for these authors, word of mouth is more a priority than trying to attain good reviews. Maclay (2004) reported of a research conducted by PhD students at UC Berkeley who used a statistical physics model to analyze the dynamics of bestsellers. One of the researchers, Thomas Gilbert, a doctoral student in finance studied the top 50 bestselling books on Amazon.com from 2002 to 2004. He formulated two conclusions related to two shocks: *exogenous shocks* that strike quick and dies quick, and *endogenous shocks* that start slow but gain more strength over time. Gilbert reasoned that the endogenous shocks are as a result of word of mouth starting with a few individuals to book clubs and into large networks of buyers, revealing that the power of networking has the potential of an exponential growth. "This is quite phenomenal because we're talking about a human system: It is human beings talking and buying books and talking some more," said Gilbert (Maclay, 2004, para. 5). As for the exogenous books, their best chance of attaining more success is to redo the launch, however, this will require pushing out ads again, and hence, more money. Sometimes this can be worthwhile, particularly in the instance of a film's released based on the book (Maclay, 2004).

Promoting the book with key contacts is important like building relationships with influential individuals in the community, experts in a certain fields, or respected figures. Such individuals include: teachers, experts, bloggers, researchers, and journalists. The best place to start is with the people you currently know (Drake & Wells, 2008). Once this process begins, it can ultimately spread to potential big names such as getting an endorsement from Oprah Winfrey, which would be powerful. "In fact, when an author is scheduled to appear on her show, the publisher almost automatically puts the wheels in motion to print hundreds of thousands of copies

of his or her book. The publisher knows that visibility on Oprah guarantees a best seller” (Drake & Wells, 2008, p. 57).

A great reference for key contacts is listed in the *Literary Market Place* and other directories available at libraries. Make phone calls to businesses: introduce yourself and the purpose of the call, and ask to be connected with the right people. Find a sales pitch that is short and effective. Then find testimonials and quote them on all sales literature like brochures, news release, website, and on the front and or back cover of the book. Having testimonials made by recognizable names or by individuals who are regarded highly in the genre of the book is most effective. Poynter (2003) advised to not be afraid when soliciting for endorsements because people tend like to see their name in print while earning free publicity themselves. And also, do not pay for people’s testimonies or else it is considered invalid (Poynter, 2003).

In marketing, timing is essential. The best publication date is in the first quarter of the year because many big publishers aim for the fall season right before the holidays. Keep in mind that the publication date is not the date when the book is published nor is it the date listed on the copyright form. It is the date listed on the *Advance Book Information* form, and its purpose is to benefit a few important prepublication review magazines like *Publishers Weekly*. Therefore, four to five months prior to publication date, the writer should be sending out his or her bound galleys with a cover letter and news release for prepublication reviewers. Some of the big prepublication reviewers are: *Publishers Weekly*, *Library Journal*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *New York Times Book Review*, and *Los Angeles Times Book Review*. In a successful situation, a book’s first print run can be sold out before publication date (Poynter, 2003).

Before a large campaign is rolled out, be sure to have enough books on hand. The worst case scenario is to not have enough books in the stores or on-hand to meet the anticipated

demand (Kremer, 2006). That is where distribution plays the biggest role: getting the book to the customers as soon as possible.

Is it then all in the marketing? No. According to D. L. Wilson (2007), author of *Unholy Grail*, he mentioned that mastering the craft of writing will help the author in today's competitive market such as grammar, dialogue, prose, punctuation, and sentence structure. Wilson interviewed three top fiction editors and learned why mastering the craft of writing is more important than ever before. In the past decade or two, editors were expected to publish 12 to 15 novels a year. In today's high pressure publishing empires, editors are now responsible for 30-60 novels a year, which give them less than a week to perform all their normal functions necessary to bring the novel to the bookstores. As a result, editors are keen to look for manuscripts that are highly edited and close to publishable. One of the best ways to develop the craft is to read, particularly successful novels in the same genre.

Jud (2004) strongly suggested that the publisher and writer focus on selling to markets beyond the traditional bookstores like gift shops, airport stores, warehouse clubs, organizations, foundations, military bases, online communities, and many others. He called it *special-sales marketing*, in which "a successful title is written in response to an identified need, is published in the form desired by the reader, then is properly priced, distributed and promoted directly to a defined group of prospective customers" (p.3).

An idea in promoting a book is the benefit(s) it contains, such as emphasizing to the buyer that he or she will be educated in a particular subject or be entertained. The writer must know if the book is meant to inform, entertain, or educate (Jud, 2004).

### *Marketing Success*

Timothy Ferriss, a first-time author, his new book, *The 4-Hour Workweek* debuted at #123 on Amazon.com and ascended to #21 overall. So how did he make this happen? According to Steve Rubel (2007), Ferriss did all of it by word of mouth via blogs. He also launched his own blog site while building relationships with lots of influencers through making short but riveting 5-minute speeches at conferences like the Web 2.0 Expo Ignite Event. And he did this all in the busy summer book-selling season! All this created enough buzz that took the book up the Amazon charts. In summary, the key components to Ferriss' success were:

- Go where bloggers go
- Be there with a message and a story that will appeal to their interests, not yours
- Build and maintain those relationships through your own blog too (Rubel, 2007)

According to *Time Magazine* (1945), Nancy Bruff had failed to publish six previous novels until *The Manatee*. Additionally, she had been expelled from nearly every school she attended. Despite initial negative reviews by *The New York Times* and others, Bruff's marketing efforts, which included her publisher and a Hollywood salesman led to a sales of 52,000 copies in the first week. Soon after, people caught on, critics grew a better liking, and sales continued. *The New Yorker* even said, "...a first novel by a writer of unmistakable talent" (*How to Sell a Novel*, 1945).

### *Publishing*

Books are published either through a publishing house or self-publishing. For first-time authors, getting published can be discouraging and take a long time, particularly through commercial or traditional publishing companies. "It may take two to six months or longer to hear

the fate of your query or proposal; it may take six months to a year or more to get a response on an entire manuscript” (Allen, 2001, para. 13). The usual parties involved in the publishing arena once the manuscript is submitted are: the editor, designer, publicity and sales department, production control department, typesetter, and the printer (Rosie, 2000). Some publishers may do all of this in-house while others will subcontract.

The ideal way is to find a publisher, but it is “often a discouraging task for any new author” (Mehegan, 2008, para. 1). Trying to land a publisher is time consuming, tedious, and frustrating. Many publishers are reluctant to publish unproven authors, and that is because 85% of all books published do not sell enough to pay back their advances (Eble, 2007).

Moira Allen (2001) advised, “Browse your local bookstore, and make a list of publishers who offer books in your category.” This will provide a good idea of what publishers to contact for what genre. When contacting the publisher, find out their submission process because sometimes publishers will only want a sample and at other times they will ask for the entire manuscript, and almost all editors at the best publishing companies will require a literary agent. One of the agent’s roles is to know exactly who in the publishing house to submit to because within each house, there are many editors and if it goes to the wrong editor, then that one chance is blown away (Wilson, 2007). How and where are literary agents found? Some places or resources are: writing conferences, referrals, the *Writers Market*, and online at <http://www.writers.net/agents.html>. Dee Power (2007b) interviewed over 60 successful literary agents and learned that 39% of the agents found their clients through referrals from existing clients, and 33% were from direct contact by the writer with only 3% from writers’ conferences. Other methods included referrals from other agents, editors, publishers, and non-clients. Power’s study proved the importance of networking with established authors.

New writers should be cautious to avoid being scammed from both publishers and literary agents. It is important to do one's research on the publisher: history, services, and policies on ownership, publishing and marketing; and on the agent: the genre or kind of authors they have represented, commission rate, services, and others (Power, 2007b).

To succeed, the writer will need patience and perseverance even if the manuscript is not accepted the first few times. Allen (2001) reassured, "Don't take rejection personally; just move one to the next publisher on your list. Often it takes time, effort, and many submissions to get published. Successful writers are those who don't quit!" Becoming a published writer takes determination and patience. Also, bear in mind that even Stephen King was not signed on the first night. It is a good idea to start with the large publishers and work the list down. If it is a really good story, chances are a publisher will eventually sign the writer (Hess, 2005).

What happens if the writer cannot land a literary agent or a publisher? Writers must know that they "don't have to have an agent, or connections in the industry, to get published (Allen, 2001, para. 2). This is where self-publishing comes in. Many of these are Print-On-Demand (POD) companies. The advantages about self-publishing are: overhead is much lower, it is quicker, the writer controls the entire marketing process, and the self-published author will make more money per book (Edie, 2007).

Despite POD books being rarely stocked in bookstores (Hill & Dee, 2007), with the Internet, self-publishing services have begun to flourish. Websites like <http://www.iUniverse.com> and <http://www.Xlibris.com> have allowed self-publishing to be easier. Today's technology has made publishing more democratized, and anyone who yearns to be an author can do it (Wildstrom, 2008, para. 11). Then there are some POD companies that offer free publishing, in which the author will only pay for the first copy. Then a small commission of additional copies

sold will be earned by the company. The marketing is entirely up to the writer. Nonetheless, there is no upfront cost to self-publishing; the publishing company will only make money if the author is able to sell the book (Gluckman, 2006). Hess (2005) informed that publishing companies like Café Press at <http://www.cafepress.com> that will do it for free but without any advertising.

### *Success Stories of the Self-Published*

There are more and more bestseller writers out there that initially self-published, such as Christopher Paolini, author of *Eragon* and Richard Paul Evans, author of *The Christmas Box* (Mehegan, 2008, para. 3). A recent example is the book, *The Lace Reader* by Brunonia Barry of Salem. Barry sold the book for over \$2 million via a literary auction. “It is one of the biggest deals ever for a previously self-published first novel and a vivid example of how old publishing norms have changed” (Mehegan, 2008, para. 3). Nonetheless, success did not come easy. Barry and her husband, Gary Ward formed their own company to edit, print, distribute, and market the book. Two important steps they achieved in the marketing process was landing a deal with a distributor, and more importantly, garnering rave reviews. As John Kremer (2006), author of *1001 Ways to Market Your Books*, indicated, “Any review is a good review...even a bad review helps to bring attention to the book and to fix the book’s title in the minds of readers” (p. 159).

Book publishers gamble big on potential titles. Another example: Little, Brown & Co., a publisher, paid \$2.2 million for first-time author Elizabeth Kostova’s thriller, *The Historian*. This turned out be a wonderful gamble because more than one million hardcovers were sold in the US. On the contrary, Kremer (2006) emphasized that a large budget campaign does not guaranteed success. For instance, the book, *A Remarkable Medicine Has Been Overlooked* had a \$1.5million ad campaign, yet it did not do well because the book was half biography and half medical proselytizing. The predicament: It was presented in a mixed message.

*Becoming a Bestseller*

The term *Bestseller* printed on the cover of a book gives it instant credibility and attention. It would be a great advantage for a writer to know the criteria, and henceforth, work toward earning such label. Kremer (2006) advised the following strategies:

- Send letters to major independent bookstores and chain store outlets, reminding them of the book.
- Send letters to major media such as *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Publishers Weekly*, reminding them that the book has potential to be a bestseller, and also of what efforts have been and will be performed.
- Follow up with the groups above.
- Advertise in *Publishers Weekly* three to four weeks before the book's publication date.
- Advertise in *The New York Times Book Review*.
- Aggressively promote the book.
- Get on a major TV show such as *Oprah* and *Joan Rivers*. "In fact, each selection of Oprah's Book Club, started in October 1996, immediately hit the bestseller lists. Most sold between 600,000 and 1,200,000 copies within weeks" (Kremer, 2006, p. 48).
- Get on Radio talk shows
- Get on a regional bestseller list like the *Chicago Tribune*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Washington Post*, and others.
- Get on specialty and wholesaler bestseller list.
- Be sure the book is stocked by a national bookstore chain
- Offer consumer rebates.

- Go slow. Apply the power of word of mouth and be patient but persistent. (pp. 47-49)

First-time author Gable Cooper was able to make it on the bestseller list because the publisher did the following: sent out 5,000 dumps or cardboard floor displays holding 12 copies of the book. This can be expensive as the publisher paid around \$30,000 for a single week. Then full-page ads were placed in the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Chicago Tribune*. More ads were placed all in New York City subway cars and sample chapters were inserted into morning papers on publication day (Kremer, 2006). In phases of promoting and marketing, word of mouth cannot be underestimated because “ultimately, for a book to get on and stay on a bestseller list, it must get good word of mouth” (Kremer, 2006, p. 54).

Jerry D. Simmons (2005) informed that “the selection of a book for a best-selling list does not mean that title has sold a certain number of copies; it only means that the book was selected for a position on that print medium’s list of the best selling books in that market” (para. 1). Keep in mind that the words, bestseller or national bestseller can all be deceiving. Some publishers have an overly aggressive marketing strategy to sell as many books as possible and will

stretch the truth as far as reasonably possible without violating standards. If a book is selected as one of the best selling titles by the local newspaper in Anywhere, USA and is placed on a printed list that appears in the paper, then it can be called a bestseller (Simmons, 2005, para. 5).

Poynter (2003) also added that “Bestsellers are only a name, a myth” (p. 165). His reasons are because there are multiple national best-seller lists and not all are consistent with each other. For instance, you may sell over a million copies through mail order distribution, but if the

list tracks only bookstore sales, then the book will not make the list. Simmons (2005) gathered the following:

If the author's local hometown newspaper hears from the only bookstore in town that the new book is selling 'pretty good,' and the paper puts that in print, even though it is not positioned on what could be described as a bestseller list, then the publisher can call the book a bestseller. (para. 7)

The list that many are familiar with is *New York Times*. The Times use a variety of sources, rotating them periodically in the decision process such as independent booksellers and certain chain bookstores (Simmons, 2005). "Every publisher in New York City knows which sources or bookstores the Times uses and which carry the biggest weight in helping the Times make bestseller decisions" and "publishers pay particularly close attention to the source the Times uses for their bestseller list" (Simmons, 2005, para. 12-13).

There is no threshold of a certain number of copies a book must sell to be a bestseller, there never has been and I doubt there ever will be. Until all booksellers are able to supply similar information on actual unit sales, there is no reason for the Times to change the way they make selections. Besides, there are publishers who will always be opposed to an actual unit sales mechanism for selecting bestsellers. Such a selection process would take away their ability to use any and all influence to impact the selections of the Times. (Simmons, 2005, para. 16)

What are the common traits among bestseller writers? Dee Power (2007a) interviewed 24 of today's successful authors, and found nine traits:

- 1) Perseverance is key

- 2) They Write, and Write and Write
- 3) They like to Write and Write and Write
- 4) Promotion is Constant
- 5) Marketing is Critical
- 6) Fans Are an Important Asset
- 7) The More Success, The More Pressure
- 8) They are Grateful
- 9) There is no single profile for a Bestselling Author

Dee (2007a) learned that “writing talent is not the only separating factor; in fact it may not even be the most important factor” (para. 1) and seldom are they the top graduates from prestigious writing universities. In all, her findings reemphasized that nothing replaces hard work, having passion for one’s work, and great achievements rarely come easy, but through self-dedication and the tenacity to succeed, one is able to.

#### *Summary of Literature Review*

Before a writer publishes his or her book, planning and executing a marketing plan is important to success. Getting a publisher is difficult, yet if a writer is able to market and sell well through self-publishing, this will eventually get the attention of a traditional publisher or literary agent, or the writer can use this to build his or her credibility when soliciting for a publisher or agent (Edie, 2007, para. 16).

The marketing plan is set to recognize the audience, pricing, distributor and publisher, and competition. Additionally, strategies to create buzz using word of mouth, tradeshow, radio stations, direct mail, and the Internet all play significant roles in a book’s success (Poynter, 2003).

Although the process of becoming a bestseller is not precisely clear, attaining such a label is advantageous to future success, especially if it is the *New York Times Best Seller*.

Above all, writers need to understand that promoting and marketing will take time and persistent effort, and writers must not get discouraged. Knowing the strategies of what has and what has not worked will provide an author with a straighter path to success. An effective marketing plan is a roadmap to such destination, because a good plan will minimize surprises and maximize chances of success.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Introduction*

The researcher applied principles of qualitative research using the case study approach on the five writers. The researcher's objective was to "explore in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals" (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). This approach was applied to each interviewee to identify successful ways of marketing and promoting a first novel.

### *Method*

The purpose of a qualitative methodologist is "to explore, explain, or describe a phenomenon" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 33). One of its differences and advantages over quantitative research is qualitative research is flexible within its own process "to uncovering the unexpected and exploring new avenues" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 38).

Over the past years, qualitative methodology has emerged as a significant tool in social science. It worked well because inquiry was conducted in a natural setting (of the participants or subject of study) and the process was flexible and could evolve to meet the dynamic data found. Also, the researcher was the tool for data collection and analysis, data was perceived and

collected from participants' unique perspectives and experiences, bias was recognized and taken in full account, and reporting encompassed quotations, narration, and detail (Imel, Kerka & Wonacott, 2002).

Qualitative research, like other methods has limitations. Its biggest drawback: "The study is bounded and situated in a specific context" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 42). Ethical and privacy concerns must be considered in interviews, settings, and other aspects that may offend or discriminate a particular individual or group (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 57). Nevertheless, the study could be transferable and applicable to near or similar cases. To improve the research method, reviewing related literature was imperative in that "it demonstrates the underlying assumptions behind the general research questions...demonstrates the researcher is knowledgeable...shows the researcher has identified some gap," and it further "refines and redefines the research question by embedding them in larger traditions of inquiry" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 43).

The greatest strength in using qualitative research is that it "is exploratory or descriptive and that stresses the importance of context, setting, and participants' frames of reference" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 54). For this research, the qualitative process included conducting interviews, observing behavior, and collecting data of participants and researcher.

### *Research Approach*

The case study approach was effective because "case studies focus on process, context, and discovery rather than outcomes, a specific variable, or confirmation" (Imel, Kerka & Wonacott, 2002), and "case studies examine complex phenomena through in-depth analysis of a limited number of details and the interrelationships" (Mulenga, 2001). Additionally, the case study approach was used with the phenomenology approach in perspective, because in

phenomenological research “the researcher identifies the ‘essence’ of human experiences concerning a phenomenon” and understand “the ‘lived experiences’ ...and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning” (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). It was important that the researcher focused on the phenomenon and set aside or bracket their prior beliefs concerning the phenomenon lest those prior beliefs interfered with seeing or intuiting the elements or structure of a phenomenon as it was consciously experienced by participants (Merriam, 1998). For this study, the phenomenon was to explore the individual’s marketing effort in relationship to number of copies sold.

Using the case study with the phenomenology approach in perspective enabled the researcher to further understand and identify methods and factors that contributed to an effective marketing plan.

#### *Research Design & Data Collection*

The researcher conducted interviews on a convenience basis, beginning with published writers from the researcher’s network such as friends, writers’ groups, writing instructors, and writers listed on [www.writers.net](http://www.writers.net). According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), such a method is known as elite interviewing because each interviewee is selected for “their expertise in areas relevant to the research” (p.105). The researcher solicited potential interviewees through email and phone until five writers were secured. Selection of writers was subject to a first-come-first-serve basis with exception to ensuring at least two females and two males out of the five, and the fifth could be either gender. Interviewees were published authors from either fiction or non-fiction background.

The method of interview was subject to each writer's convenience or preferred method. During a live interview it was important for the researcher to be aware when asking questions of other elements because the "interviewees may be unwilling or may be uncomfortable sharing all that the interviewer hopes to explore" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 102). For email and live interviews, the researcher had to "rely totally on the honesty and accuracy of participants' responses" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 125). Follow up questions were asked separately if the researcher deemed clarification was needed.

### *Instruments*

The instruments used were: interview schedule (see Appendix A), letter of consent (see Appendix B), and demographics form (see Appendix C). The demographics form was comprised of twelve questions. The purpose of the demographics form was to acquire a better understanding of each interviewee's background, and in turn compare it to their responses. Marshall and Rossman (2006) warned to take caution "in displaying the logic of interpretation used in inferring meaning from the artifacts" (p. 108). The consent letter acknowledged the interviewee's permission to participate in the research.

The purpose of the interview schedule was to explore and identify effective ways to market a book from each case or interviewee. The questions were open-ended in effort to minimize biases. The researcher aimed for each interviewee to reveal methods that proved most effective or ineffective toward their book sales. Common mistakes to avoid in the marketing and publishing process were implemented into the marketing plan. The interview schedule consisted of nine questions.

### *Setting of the Interviews*

Location, time, and date of interviews were based on the convenience of the interviewee's discretion. Each interview was a one-on-one interaction either in person, phone, or email. Live interviews were scheduled to be no more than one hour long; it was aimed to be conversation-like because according to Marshall and Rossman (2006), "qualitative, in-depth interviews typically are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories" (p. 101). During a live interview, a digital voice recorder was used. This allowed the researcher to be more tuned in with the interview process and observation rather than constantly worrying about taking notes. Notes were taken from the recording, and to ensure confidentiality any recorded session was deleted after the research was completed.

The advantages of interviewing were: researcher had control over the line of questioning and participants could provide historical information. Meanwhile some limitations were the researcher's presence and preexisting relationship because both elements may have resulted in biased responses. Through observation, the researcher had a firsthand experience, and unusual aspects could be noticed during observation. The researcher was aware that some limitations with observation were: researcher may be seen as being intrusive, researcher may not have good observing skills, and private information may be observed that the researcher cannot disclose (Creswell, 1998, p. 186).

### *Methods Analysis*

The typical qualitative procedure to analyze data included: organizing the data, immersion in the data, generating categories and themes, coding the data, and offering interpretations, searching for alternative understandings, and writing the report for presenting the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 156). For this study, the researcher applied the following phases: organizing

the data, immersion in the data, generating categories and themes, alternative understanding, and conclusion of data.

In organizing the data, Marshall and Rossman (2006) advised: “The researcher should also log the types of data according to dates, names, times, and places where, when, and with whom they were gathered” (156). The data was organized by the following columns: Date (of the interview), Place (location of primary communication), Activity (What took place), Who (name of the interview), Total Copies Sold (books sold), Age, and Bio (highlight of individual background). Immersion of data required reading and rereading of the interviews and demographics in order for “the researcher to become intimately familiar with those data” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 158). In the process, the researcher deduced the data with as little bias as possible, and if so, was aware of such bias.

The most difficult stage and complex stage, yet creative and fun was generating categories and themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.158). The researcher assessed the data with a heightened awareness. In doing so, salient themes, recurring ideas, and patterns were identified. The process involved integrating all the data and then noting categories as they emerged. It was this phase that the researcher uncovered a common thread among the responses. While the researcher reviewed and reread the data, notes were taken. Then the notes were assessed.

For the alternative understanding process, the researcher began “evaluating the plausibility of his developing understandings and of exploring them through data” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 162). This positioned the researcher to challenge his own conclusion that was being put forward while putting thoughts in a larger context. Apparent themes were challenged and viewed from another perspective. Alternatives were explored in explaining other possibilities that was most plausible. Lastly, the conclusion encompassed the all the previous phases in which the

researcher made his final assessment, outlining the core findings in relationship to the purpose of the study while being fully aware of preconditions such as bias. The objective here was to summarize and reveal findings in an interpretive manner, giving meaning to the gathered data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

### *Panel of Experts*

The researcher aimed to receive three expert reviews of his marketing plan (see Appendix D). A total of six experts were solicited and the first three responses were incorporated into the plan. This group also known as the *expert panel* consisted of individuals who owned a marketing firm, has a marketing degree, or has worked directly in marketing for five years or more. Each expert was selected on a convenience basis, from the researcher's personal and professional network.

The purpose of the expert panel is to provide constructive criticism regarding the marketing plan. Each expert was given a copy of the researcher's marketing plan with the objective to review the marketing plan for its soundness and effectiveness. The main objective for each marketing expert was to review the plan on a scale of 1-5 (1: poor and 5: excellent) based on:

- Organization of Ideas
- Thoroughness
- Marketing Strategy and Effectiveness
- Implementation

The rest was open for each expert to comment or critique. For convenience, the author emailed the plan to each individual. Seven calendar days was given with a reminder email on the

sixth day. Each expert was encouraged to write notes on the marketing plan itself or use a separate sheet of paper for additional comments.

Interviewees and the expert panel were given the option to receive a copy of the final marketing plan. Names of marketing experts had the option to keep their names confidential via pseudonyms. For the purpose of this research, their profession will be identified. At the end, applicable constructive criticisms were incorporated into the marketing plan.

## RESULTS

### *Findings*

Pseudonyms were used for the interviewees below:

### *Data Gathered from Interviewees*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Total Copies Sold (est.)</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Bio</i>
8/27/08	Borders	Live interview	Ka Vang	15,000	27	Masters Degree in Non-Fiction Writing. First-time published writer. Owns her own business to help with writing.
10/04/08	Internet	Email interview	James Michael	35,000	76	Published 5 books. Post Graduate. Second Place winner by Premier Book.
10/05/08	Internet	Email interview	Dale Webster	53	17	High school student. First-time published writer.
10/6/08	Internet	Email interview	Stan Robinson	20,000	47	Published 2 books. Owns his own company: graphic design & marketing consultant.
10/18/08	Internet	Email interview	Maggie Rivers	Did not know	N/A	Published 3 books. Post graduate.

Ka Vang is a recently published author, and promotes her book by speaking at locations like local universities and high schools. Some of her interviews are available on You Tube and she markets herself through her own website. Vang answered all the questions, but due to time constraint she was short and brief. The interview was recorded and notes were later taken from the recording. The first publisher Vang approached agreed to produce her book. Her target was the Hmong audience. The most important lesson she learned about marketing a book is to be active, to talk, and be involved with different groups in the community.

The oldest of the interviewees was James Michael at 76 years old. He has published five books in the fiction genre and has a post graduate degree. His latest book took second place in a nation-wide general fiction contest under *Premier Book Awards*. The most effective means of promoting his books have been: emailing lists, book-signings, and using a personal sales representative. When asked of his target audience, Michael mentioned, “Nobody I know understands where the audience is...while women read and like my fiction, my books are aimed at male readers” (J. Michael, personal communication, October 4, 2008). Furthermore, Michael advised for an author to always carry copies of his or her book and talk about the book when meeting people.

Dale Webster, at 17 years old was the youngest. Webster recently published his first book and used posters to market himself as a young writer. He did not have a sales goal but did have a target audience: young adult males. Like Vang, Webster published his book with the first company he contacted and was set up with a publicist. When asked what made a book sell, Webster replied, “The author. Until someone like the *New York Times* starts reviewing your books, how well you write doesn’t matter. Salesmanship will trump style” (D. Webster, personal communication, October 5, 2008).

Stan Robinson was the only one of the five interviewees who did not respond to the interview questions. Contacted three times, Robinson said he would reply but did not. Because the researcher did not receive Robinson's responses, the researcher did not gather marketing strategies that have worked for Robinson. The researcher did visit Robinson's website to learn that Robinson did his own marketing including marketing for other writers. Robinson has a post graduate degree, has published two books, and has his own website to promote himself and his marketing services.

Maggie Rivers was the only interviewee who did not disclose her age. Rivers has published three books and also has a post graduate degree. Out of the five interviewees, she was the only one who did not know how many copies her books have sold. Rivers skipped question 8 on the Interview Schedule and she had no sales goals. Regarding marketing, Rivers (2008) advised that the author and book should be promoted collectively, particularly if the author has unique experiences.

Of the five interviewees, Ka Vang was the only live interview. The single live interview was crammed in a 20 minute window due to Vang's schedule. The rest were conducted via email. Again, the method was subject to preference or convenience of each writer. Three of them were out of state and so email was most convenient. Two were local from the Minneapolis and St. Paul area. One of the five interviewees, Stan Robinson, was a cold solicitation gathered from [www.writers.net](http://www.writers.net) while the rest were within the researcher's network. Robinson did not return the interview schedule after three email reminders in a three-week span. Information used was from the demographics form and his website. As Marshall and Rossman stated, "Elite interviewing also presents disadvantages. It is often difficult to gain access to elites because they are usually busy people operating under demanding time constraints" (p. 105).

Together, what all the interviewees shared was the importance of being known, creating a buzz, and spreading the word out. From the demographics, all but Webster (who is 17 years old) received a post graduate degree. When it came down to marketing, two themes captured were: 1) Create a buzz around the book, and 2) The author must put him or herself out there into the public and be marketed alongside the book.

### *Immersion in the Data*

The interviews provided information on the determination, emotions, and vision of each participant. What was learned was the importance of having a sales goal. The ones with a sales goal like Michael sold more copies than Webster who did not have a sales goal. Nonetheless, the four interviewed all lacked a strong marketing plan. When Maggie Rivers was asked: What was the most effective means of marketing your book? Rivers answered, “I did nothing” (Personal Communications, October 18, 2008). Rivers did not know what to do to reach and expand her market. This confirmed that writers can be great at writing but poor at selling. Even Michael was surprised at the demographic of his audience; he discovered that 80% of his readers were females though his books were aimed at male readers.

### *Marketing Plan: Expert Reviews*

Of the six marketing experts solicited three responded, and all concurred that the marketing plan was either effective or great. Its strength was in its free channels like blogging and speaking at various locations.

Brad Noah, Creative Director of a marketing firm wanted to see a better implementation chart, at least visually, including more specifics of how each implementation stage is to be conducted. Noah was the only respondent who rated the plan from the scale provided by the

author while the other two dismissed the scale completely. Noah's scores averaged 4.13 on a scale of 1 being poor and 5 being excellent.

Dennis Wayne, MBA and President of a marketing business provided information on resources for mass emailing and low cost services for business cards and flyers. Wayne also reaffirmed using free routes like word of mouth and having a strong internet presence. Both Noah and Wayne emphasized the effectiveness of breaking the target markets in further detail, constructing an itinerary to reach that specific target, and to describe the ideal or potential customer.

Rick Yang, Vice President of a marketing firm liked the overall marketing strategies and added other methods such as renting a booth at various fairs, local events, and becoming a sponsor. Also, he mentioned the idea of approaching investors to acquire more capital for a larger marketing campaign.

All experts enjoyed reading the plan and saw the value of its vision, the effectiveness of the marketing strategies, and importance of accountability.

### *Categories and Themes*

What was discovered from the interviews affirmed the literature review analysis. First, having great writing skills have nothing do with how well a book sells. Second, the ability to sell is second to none. The author must take initiative to sell the book such as putting oneself out in the public eye in some tremendous way or form. If the author is unknown, which is the biggest hurdle for first-time authors, the book will find itself difficult to sell, even difficult to publish in the first place. In this instance, Rivers affirmed, "I had the top agent in New York City—formerly vice president of Simon & Schuster who sent my Alaska book around and the comments that

came back were ‘Great writing but she is not known’” (M. Rivers, personal communication, October 18, 2008). Third, having not only a target audience but also a target sales goal helped. The most books sold of the five writers interviewed was by Michael who sold over 35,000 copies, and he was the only one who had sales goals while the rest did not. Lastly, all of the five interviewees either did not have a marketing strategy or lacked the effort. This suggests that they left it to hope: a hope that a book will sell itself because it is well written or is a good story. To sum it up: They wrote their stories, but they forgot to write their success plan.

### ALTERNATIVE UNDERSTANDING

What is to be understood is beyond the voice and written responses, but the feel of each interviewee’s tone. Of the five cases, there was an overall consensus of wanting to have sold more copies. Who would argue with more copies? Yet, the researcher did not sense a desire to sell from the interviewees and there was a lack of ambition of aiming for a large goal like a hundred thousand copies. Why is that? The researcher felt that they either did not have an understanding of the market and how publishers deal with most authors and their books, because most publishers spend little if any money marketing the majority of books published, or the authors felt that chances of selling in the tens of thousands was simply not likely to happen for them and they left it to chance.

For most writers, writing a novel requires an intimate passion with the characters and storyboard; unfortunately, most writers do not carry that similar passion toward finding ways to sell the book that they have worked so many long nights for. Rather, most writers tend to keep to themselves and find selling their work to be another enduring process. The researcher will differ in his marketing efforts for *Dead Promise*, and hope that distinction will make all the difference to achieving the sales goal of one million copies.

An ideal way to strengthen this research could have involved interviewing high profile cases such as renowned bestselling or financially successful writers such as J.K. Rowling, Stephen King, Tom Clancy, and others followed by discussing with well established marketing experts in the literary industry. Additionally, conducting interviews with big name publishers, bookstore managers, agents, and distributors would have strengthened this study.

### *Summary of Data Interpretation*

The data gathered did not enlighten any new ground-breaking information; rather, the data reaffirmed the key ingredient of why marketing is vital to any product's success. Michael, the interviewee with the most books sold, highlighted the effort key to create a buzz about the book, but his drawback is finding the time to market his books due to age. Another, Rivers, appeared pessimistic about her sales due to poor experiences. She continues to write because she can, and is good at it.

The biggest strength of this data was it recognized the importance of having a marketing plan and implementing it. Additionally, the positive reviews and advices from three different marketing individuals provided confidence with the marketing plan. The weaknesses of this study revolved around the lack of bestselling authors and bookstore managers that the researcher initially and ideally had desired to interview but was unable to due to time and resource constraints.

### *The Marketing Plan*

Kremer (2006) emphasized, "A marketing plan is essential to any success" (p. 26). The two ingredients to marketing are: promotion and distribution. This means getting the word out and then putting the product into the customer's hands. It is then imperative to create a buzz around the book and the author because 80% of all books are sold by word of mouth. Promotion

starts months before the release of a book and it is important to keep people updated on the status or events related to the book (Kremer, 2006).

Having a target market is great, but an author must realize that the market can take its own course. If this happen, the author must ride the wave of the market meanwhile reach out for other markets such as clubs, foreign countries, and different formats like audio books.

The marketing plan (see Appendix D) identified the various audiences in segmented categories such as the Hmong community, schools to universities, book clubs, and strategies to connect to each market. The plan described the Executive Summary, Challenge, Situation Analysis, SWOT Analysis, Target Market, Goals, Marketing Strategies, Implementation Tactics, Budget, and Evaluation of Results (Short-term and Long-term projections). Other parts of a traditional marketing plan were left out because of relevance such as: Climate, Collaborators, and Customer Analysis. The key here is to identify goals, strategies, and execution of the plan to achieve the vision described in the Executive Summary. The plan will start a buzz from person to person and throughout communities where sales increase over time. Hence, an endogenous shock

After the expert panel's review, the marketing plan included an in depth description of the ideal customer by demographic, psychographic, behavior, and geographic. This enabled the author to conceptualize a more defined market, and recognize potential customers that stem from the ideal customer based on activities, behavior, social events, and location. A chart was later designed to better organize each specific marketing strategy, which functions as a checklist. This enabled the author to visualize and be accountable for the first step leading to the final step of selling one million copies. Overall, the expert panel saw the plan as a great effort in marketing a first novel, reassuring the effectiveness of the marketing plan.

## DISCUSSION

Many writers dream for their story to be heard, be read, and talked about. However, many do not spend the energy to sell their books. It would have been ideal to have also interviewed bestseller authors to gain their hindsight in this research in order to compare and contrast. Hence, the researcher could draw a contrast, and perhaps then provide a more accurate conclusion as to how and why.

Interviewing bestselling authors would have enabled a different perspective. Such effort would have been time consuming and difficult given resources unavailable to the researcher. The researcher had preferred doing live interviews because of visual cues, but it became difficult to find the time, the authors, and location to fit both the researcher and interviewee's schedule.

The case study approach allowed the researcher to view each interview as a separate case for empirical study, and gave flexibility to the researcher by asking follow-up questions at times differed to each interviewee. For instance, by following up the researcher learned that Vang owned her own business, which catered to assisting individuals with writing. With the phenomenology approach as secondary tool, the researcher did stay in contact with the interviewees Vang, Michael, Webster, and Rivers over the course of finishing this paper to extend the study of their viewpoints and for additional advice. There was nothing significant from the extended communication except for receiving encouragement and reemphasizing what was already shared from the initial interview.

Throughout this study and at the advice of a friend who is a private marketing consultant, the researcher purchased the two following web domains: <http://www.patchxiong.com> and <http://www.deadpromise.com>. The researcher began using <http://www.myspace.com/planetpatch> and other blogging sites such as <http://www.hlub.us> to promote *Dead Promise*. So far, it has

proven effective with two invitations: one for an open reading at the Intermediary Arts Center in Minneapolis, MN and at University of Wisconsin-Madison. By word of mouth, the author was also invited as a guest speaker to Century College regarding the upcoming novel.

There is not one specific path to success. Even if a writer was taken by a large publisher, it still does not translate to a successful writing career. On the other hand, someone like Christopher Paolini who started out self-publishing was able to succeed. His novel, *Eragon* sold millions of copies and made millions of dollars (Mehegan, 2008, para. 3). If the writer is able to position him or herself effectively, such success is possible. Additionally, the intangible traits of persistence, promotion, and word-of-mouth will be instrumental.

After the researcher spoke with friends and family, the following ideas and tips were incorporated into the marketing plan: book clubs as a target group, emailing lists, creating as much buzz as possible before publication date, and marketing himself along with the novel. It is clear that a book's success will depend on the author's ability to market the book and market him or herself.

This report's author is aware of his unique upbringing, struggles, and background that he will bring out some of his innermost personal tragedies and accomplishments while promoting *Dead Promise* to further gain the attention of the reading public and media outlets like *Oprah*, *New York Times*, and many more. It is turning personal mishaps, losses, and suffering to strength, gain, and growth. The theme is to inspire the mass with his story. When readers hold *Dead Promise*, they are holding an inspiration, a dream turned into reality by a former refugee and a former suicidal patient.

Every person who has read the *Dead Promise* manuscript has been impressed; many are excited that someone they now know is publishing a novel. The author has designed and printed

his own business cards from home to give to people and for people to give to others. Two Asian restaurants that the author regularly goes to have shown interest in helping promote *Dead Promise* at no cost by posting flyers provided by the author. The author will plan on utilizing other businesses to spread the word.

During the months from March to November, 2008, the author had started using the Internet to promote *Dead Promise*. He became active on two Hmong blogging sites: <http://www.hlub.us> and <http://www.hmoob.com>. Two sample clips are available through these channels. Comments from readers and fans have been well received, including pledged orders totaling over three hundred and forty copies as of the date of this paper. Blogging has been inactive from November, 2008 to March, 2009 because of the efforts on devising the marketing plan and finishing this paper. The effectiveness of blogging and word of mouth has been both positive and cost-effective. It was because of blogging that an invitation was secured to speak to the Asian students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on November 15, 2008. Personal networks have provided an invitation for an open-book reading at the Minneapolis Intermedia Arts Center on November 13, 2008. As of March 11, 2009, there was another invitation to speak at Century College in Oakdale, Minnesota on March 25, 2009, and for compensation.

The author of this research decided to go with Infinity Publishing because they are reputable and respected in the industry. Also, through Infinity Publishing “the author controls the content and retain all the rights” (Kremer, 2006, p. 61) to the book. Author-originated also known as print-on-demand (POD) is the best of both the self-publishing and traditional publisher routes in that it is not expensive like self-publishing and has benefits of mainstream publishing (Kremer, 2006, p. 62). Infinity Publishing also partners with Ingram, an international book distributor that usually ships out orders within 24-48 hours. They will make the book available on

Amazon.com, Borders.com, Bbotw.com, and other channels. Additionally, “Infinity Publishing is the industry-acknowledged trendsetter in author-originated publishing” (Kremer, 2006, p. 62). They make the process of publishing affordable at a one-time setup fee of \$499. Copyediting is \$013, which amounts to \$730.37 for *Dead Promise*. Compared this to the price of two local professional editors at \$2000-\$4000, author-organized publishing is cost-effective meanwhile allowing the writer to reap 30% of retail orders and 15% of wholesale orders (Infinitypublishing.com, 2007, par.3). Compared this to a traditional publisher, the author would have to attain a literary agent, which would take time to research and more time to submit to. Rejections for first-time authors are high and are all too common in the industry. In all, Infinity Publishing puts the author in control of the fate of his first novel, rather than someone else, and allows the author to print copies according to demand. If the success is huge, this may garner the attention of a large traditional publishing company, which he can take advantage of since the agreement with Infinity Publishing is non-exclusive, including cancellation at any time. This means the author can go with another publisher at any time for any reason.

The POD publisher that this writer considered was BookSurge which is owned by Amazon.com. However, the decision was to go with Infinity Publishing was a result of two things: 1) They have a stronger reputation and 2) they also have many success stories. One such success story from Infinity Publishing is Terry Shulman, author of *Something for Nothing: Shoplifting Addiction to Recovery* appeared on *Oprah*. He initiated *Oprah* by submission to one of the producers. “After seven years of on-and-off writing and having been turned down by fifty publishers, Infinity Publishing helped me realize my dream in November 2003” (InfinityPublishing.com, 2007, par. 3).

The author did not take Infinity Publishing's marketing packages because each contained the same materials with a difference in quantity: business cards, posters, postcards, bookmarks, and two books: Dan Poynter's *The Self-Publishing Manual* and John Kremer's *1001 Ways to Market Your Book*. The author already used such books in his marketing plan.

After the expert panel's review of the marketing plan, the author made some additions, which include: defining the ideal customer, explaining the competition, and describing each implementation method in more detail. The expert panel's overall impression was that the plan was organized and effective. One of the two reemphasized the value of word of mouth and finding ways to drive people to the writer's website.

#### CONCLUSION

This Senior Project enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of the publishing and marketing process of a book. Although many authors do not make enough to live on their craft alone, such is achievable. A step in such direction requires a major marketing effort and long-term commitment from the writer. An author knows how enduring the process can be to write and publish a book; therefore, he or she must also realize the endurance needed for selling. Most great achievements require great effort. Writing is its own process, getting a book published is another process, and marketing is another entirely different process. Together, all are important to a book's success.

A well written book or engaging story does not guaranteed success. Although a book must be of a certain quality in writing and storytelling, there must to be a long-term marketing effort if the author desires to make a living writing. The author must be willing to take any angle that makes one visible from the rest of the thousands of writers. If that requires losing personal privacy, then one must be willing to make the sacrifice. The ability to speak and connect to an

audience will prove to be a significant asset. Success and recognition will come with more transparency than the average citizen and such transparency can be used to leverage sales.

The author must be able to shift from the writing role and play the promoter's role because of the intimate knowledge of the work. As Kremer (2006) said speaking to the author, "You must be committed to what you are selling. You must believe in it" (p.25). A buzz must be generated early in advance of publication date, and the researcher has already begun by emailing, talking to people, and blogging online at every opportunity. Excitement can be contagious, and the author should be most excited about the book.

As a result of this study, the researcher has taken and continues to take every opportunity to mention his craft and the upcoming novel in as many markets and individuals he encounters. For instance, one of the new targets is to make *Dead Promise* a required reading in school and university curriculums. All the while, the researcher is creating new relationships that he hope will further spread the word of the book. It is *viral marketing* (Kremer, 2006): spreading something exciting from one to many individuals at an exponential rate. At the end, there is no guaranteed, but with a marketing plan, and a better understanding of the writing industry along with a personal commitment, *Dead Promise* is now in a better position to succeed. After all, no one deliberately plans to fail, rather, fail to plan.

There are still much research left to gather regarding effective methods of marketing a book. Nonetheless, this research has greatly positioned the author to have a chance of succeeding; the author has collected the core marketing strategies to create a buzz, and the importance of a marketing engine, which is driven by the readers or fans via word of mouth. Two such channels are: utilize the power of the Internet and become an inspirational public speaker. Although the researcher has incorporated a marketing plan, the intangible elements are just as important as the

tangibles such as maintaining a positive outlook, perseverance, hope, and determination. There is where having feedbacks and encouragements are priceless. Already, feedbacks are being generated via the author's website: <http://www.patchxiong.com>.

The literature review showed that anyone can become a bestseller, and also revealed that hard work is necessary. The large part of this effort comes back to marketing. What the literature review lacked was having a scholarly article on marketing a book, which the researcher was unable to find. Having another empirical research to compare this one to would have helped strengthen this study. Nevertheless, at the end, there is no perfect plan, but the expert panel's review is a reassurance that the plan is effective. If the author of this research implements the plan accordingly, selling one million copies is very possible.

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APPENDIX

*Appendix A: Interview Schedule*

**ROAD TO ONE MILLION: A MARKETING PLAN FOR *DEAD PROMISE***

1. Describe the process used to publish your last book.
2. What was the most effective means of marketing your book(s)?
3. Who was your target audience and what did you do to reach them?
4. Please tell me about your sales goal, and did you achieve it.
5. What have you learned about marketing your book?
6. What were some of the challenges you faced and how did you overcome them?
7. What are some common pitfalls in the publishing and marketing process?
8. What makes a book sell and what doesn't?
9. What do you think of e-books or audio books: Is it a growing market or just niche?

*Appendix B: Letter of Consent*

LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Road to One Million: A Marketing Campaign for *Dead Promise*

I am currently a student at Alaska Pacific University (APU) conducting a senior project. I would like to secure your voluntary participation in my research. You may choose to stop your participation at any time without penalty. All information will be handled in a confidential manner and identifiers will be removed in any materials that are circulated beyond the investigators. I expect that your participation will take approximately 60 minutes:

The purpose of this research is to market and sell one million copies of a first novel, *Dead Promise*. In doing so, the researcher is conducting interviews to explore and identify the most effective methods to promote and market a first novel.

The researcher will conduct interviews with five published writers, and location will be based on the convenience of the interviewee’s discretion. If it is to take place at the interviewee’s business location, the appropriate steps in securing permission such as a consent letter will be signed by all parties as necessary. It will be a one-on-one interaction either in person, phone, or email. For a live interview, a digital voice recorder will be used. When the senior project is done, all recorded sessions and identifying paperwork will be deleted.

Additional time may be requested by the researcher if the researcher needs to ask follow-up questions or to clarify responses.

A copy of this letter with the investigator’s signature is yours to keep. If you have any questions about how this investigation is to be conducted please contact me: Patch Xiong at (907) 239-3106 or planetpatch@yahoo.com, 1515 Atlantic St., St. Paul, MN 55108 or if you require additional information please contact my Faculty Advisor: Carole Lund at (907) 564-8212 or clund@alaskapacific.edu, 4101 University Dr., Anchorage, AK 99508, Attn: Business Administration Department.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) agree to participate in the project as described to me.

\_\_\_\_\_ (signature) \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

\_\_\_\_\_ (signature of Investigator) \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

*Appendix C: Demographics Form*

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender  
 Female       Male
3. What is your marital status?  
 Single       Married       Separated       Would rather not say
4. Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_
5. Level of Highest Education  
 Less than High School       High School Diploma/GED  
  
 Some College       Bachelors Degree       Pos Grad
6. What is your favorite book genre? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Who are some of your favorite writers?
8. What are some of your favorite books?
9. Do you prefer writing freehand or using a pc/laptop?  
 Freehand       Computer/PC       Other
10. Do you currently have a personal website that promotes you and your literary work?  
 Yes       No       Plan to       Don't need to
10. How many books written by you have been published? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Is your most recent book(s) fiction or non-fiction? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Approximately, how many copies of your book(s) have been sold? \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix D: The Marketing Plan*

ROAD TO ONE MILLION: A MARKETING PLAN FOR *DEAD PROMISE*

*Executive Summary*

The goal is to sell one million copies of a first novel, *Dead Promise*, by Patch Xiong. The audience will be treated to an engaging story meanwhile being exposed to the Hmong people and their plight in history, which is told to the reader throughout the novel.

The effort is to create a “buzz” using traditional and nontraditional marketing methods. Xiong’s aim is to make his name a brand that people can identify with. *Dead Promise* along with all his future works will feature a unique design border to signify Xiong’s work that is similar to the designs from traditional Hmong needlework.

*Dead Promise* will be published via author-originated publishing, also known as print-on-demand (POD), which is an evolved method of self-publishing because the author controls the content, earns a higher profit per book, and retains all the rights. According to Kremer (2006), Infinity Publishing is “the industry-acknowledged trendsetter in author-originated publishing” (p.62). They are also a distributor that will make the book available on Amazon.com, Borders.com, and other sellers.

Xiong’s marketing efforts will start with a penetrating internet presence via a website, word of mouth, blogging, social networking websites, and literary-related websites.

Another focus will be spent on hitting *Oprah’s Book Club* and other popular lists. Traditional methods will also be implemented such as mass mailing, business cards, and ads. Xiong will focus on relationship building with the community and community leaders by appearing as a guest speaker at organizations and events.

Currently, there is no prominent Hmong novel or Hmong novelist and opportunity is now. Xiong will take advantage of the opportunity to become the first successful Hmong novelist, including the first Hmong *New York Times Best Seller*.

The book and the author will be marketed collectively via the internet. A key strategy is to focus on building relationships. Success will be measured in units within a set timeframe: sell one million copies by the 36<sup>th</sup> month from launch date.

### *Situation Analysis*

There are two types of sales trends for successful books: 1) A sold-out event at launch followed by very strong early sales and 2) A slow early start but then catches momentum and sales improve over time.

The goal with *Dead Promise* is to get the best start as possible. This means spreading the word months before the book is out: viral marketing. The author expects to have a healthy pre-sales of 2000 copies followed by a continuous growth.

**People:** Xiong's primary targets are for ages 16-35 and 60 plus. The theme of love and tragedy is common for many individuals, and Xiong hopes to capture the mass readership across the globe. Creating a buzz is creating relationships with people, and Xiong will focus on creating lasting relationships with readers, community leaders and organizers, writers, business owners, and others.

**Product:** The quality of the product must be great. To ensure such quality, Xiong has continued to get 30 random feedbacks during different phases of the manuscript. Then 24 advance reading copies will be sent to different organizations and individuals for review. The background of reviewers are diverse, which include writing instructors/professors, strangers, published writers, students, community leaders, and family members. There is no monetary compensation but much appreciation and a complimentary (autographed) copy of the published novel.

**Pricing:** The author is going through Infinity Publishing who recommends a listed price of \$13.95 for pages up to 224 pages at a size of 5.5" X 8.5" (*Dead Promise* is about 220 pages). Because the author wants the book to get into readers' hands, Xiong will push the price to be competitive and reasonable at \$12.95.

**Placement:** Infinity Publishing, who partners with Ingram, an international distributor, maintains a set quantity in its warehouse so orders can be shipped within 24-48 hours. The key channels are: Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, Borders, and the author's website: [www.patchxiong.com](http://www.patchxiong.com)

**Promotion:** Author and book are promoted collectively. Xiong has a unique upbringing and personal tragic story that will be brought to light alongside the unique folklore that is *Dead Promise*. Xiong will focus on making friends while promoting the novel in the process.

Copies sold on the author's site will be autographed and include a free bookmark showcasing the author's bio and upcoming books. All pre-orders (before launch date) will receive a free gift that is a small book of inspirational poems written by twenty different poets. The poems will be collected via a public submission. While there is no monetary compensation there is recognition. The book of poems titled, *My Serenity*, will be printed at a local print shop.

A letter and advance reading copy will be sent to *Oprah's Book Club*, *Publishers Weekly*, *New York Times Book Review*, *USA Today*, and others.

### *SWOT Analysis*

#### ***Strengths:***

- A unique folklore popular in Southeast Asia but unknown to the mass audience
- Catching title that is also fitting for the story
- Themes that people can relate to: love and tragedy
- A unique border/cover design that will be a trademark of the author's books
- Internet
- Author's name is unique and marketable

#### ***Weaknesses:***

- First-time author
- Capital
- Resources
- Not many know of the Hmong People
- Lack of data on the Hmong reading market

#### ***Opportunities:***

Recently, a Hmong memoir, *The Latehomecomer* was released to very positive reviews. Another book that brought the Hmong people to public is: *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, but it is written by a non-Hmong person who is Anne Fadiman. Another book is *Bamboo Among the Oaks*, which is an anthology written by multiple Hmong writers.

Still, in today's market there is no recognizable or mainstream Hmong novel or writer. The opportunity for a Hmong novelist and successful Hmong novel has yet to happen.

***Threats:***

Every book is a competitor, fighting for the same bookshelf and reading time from an individual. The more direct competition is in the fiction genre. In terms of storyline, the closest competition here is not another book, but two movies of a similar folk tale. A Thai movie called, *Nang Nak*, which is professionally produced and made. This film was targeted directly to the Thai community. Another local film, *Nkauj Nyab*, which is a recently released Hmong movie also shares a similar theme but is specifically targeted to the Hmong people, particularly the older generation. The most significant difference with *Dead Promise* is that it is a Hmong story catered to the general and popular audience, which is reflected by its writing and dialogue style. Also, the way the story unfolds is vastly different than the one found in *Nang Nak* and *Nkauj Nyab*.

*Target Market*

The markets are: the Hmong Community and the age group 16 to 35 years old. Again, there is no prominent Hmong novel in the current market that is about the Hmong or written by a Hmong author. It is an untapped market. Secondly, the strong theme of *Dead Promise* is romantic love, and the people between 16-35 is the age range where love is most high-flying and bliss—where one usually starts thinking or is searching for the significant other. There is one disadvantage, and that is: there has not been a study conducted to figure the percentage of English speaking or Hmong readers in the United States. Therefore, Xiong does not know the size of the Hmong reading market. Sometime in the future, Xiong will release a version translated in Hmong, Spanish, and other languages.

The other group is females ages 60 and over because many in this age group are more likely retired with more time to read books.

Another target market is the various school districts across the United States. Xiong wants *Dead Promise* to become a part of the reading curriculum, particularly in the creative writing and related courses.

## THE IDEAL CUSTOMER

*Demographics:*

Age: 17-27

Income: Less than 35K/year

Occupation: Student or Intern

*Psychographics:*

Lifestyle: Dating or married and enjoys reading

Beliefs: Non-denominational, or open-minded individual with belief in a higher being

*Behavior:*

Sociable, serves on committees, or active in school clubs or community organizations

*Geographic:*

Twin Cities, MN; Fresno, CA, Denver, CO; Anchorage, AK; and New York, NY.

*Goals*

The goal is to sell one million copies of *Dead Promise* within a 36-month period.

1. Sell 2,000 before launch date
2. Sell 25,000 by 6th month from launch date
3. Sell 100,000 by 16<sup>th</sup> month launch date
4. Sell 500,000 by 24<sup>th</sup> month from launch date
5. Sell 1,000,000, by 36<sup>th</sup> month from launch date

*Marketing Strategies*

1. Online Presence:
  - a. Blogging Communities: Stay active on blogging sites that hit target audience.
  - b. Social Networking: Promote on MySpace and Facebook
  - c. Website: Have author's webpage: [www.patchxiong.com](http://www.patchxiong.com)
2. Flyers, Business Cards, and Free Bookmarks: Local restaurants, libraries, and businesses
  - a. Bulk Mail
  - b. Email Lists

3. Advertisement: Display website decals on author's vehicle, place ads on local and community newspapers, and purchase radio or air time.
4. Speaker: Appear at local community offices, schools, universities and colleges, and writing and book clubs.
5. Establish Effective Relationships: community leaders, business leaders, leaders from non-profit organizations, literary agent, publisher, distributor, and bookstores.

*Note: Xiong will always carry *Dead Promise* business cards with him and continue to talk of the novel to people he encounter, asking for them to spread the word.*

### *Implementation of Marketing Strategies*

#### **1. Online Presence:**

##### **A. Blogging**

Task	Description	Person Responsible	Completion Date
a)	8 Asian blogging sites	Patch	3/1 5/09
b)	6 local blogging sites (Twin Cities)	Patch	3/22/09
c)	6 literary blogging sites	Patch	3/29/09

##### **B. Online Presence: Promote book and create fan base**

Task	Description	Person Responsible	Completion Date
A	www.patchxiong.com	Patch	3/24/09
B	www.myspace.com/planetpatch	Patch	9/05/08
C	www.facebook.com	Patch	2/09/09

#### **2. Flyers and Business Cards**

Task	Description	Person Responsible	Completion Date
A	Direct Mailing: 1000 to female book buyers	Patch	5/30/09

	Direct Mailing: 1000 to book buyers ages 18-35 and 60 plus.		
B	Post flyers and business cards at local restaurants	Patch	5/23/09
C	Post flyers and business cards at local businesses: Laundromats, dry cleaners, and libraries	Patch	5/23/09

### ***3. Advertisements***

Task	Description	Person Responsible	Completion Date
A	Website decals on car windshield, side doors, and rear bumper	Patch	5/25/09
B	Small ads on local newspapers	Patch	5/27/09
C	Purchase airtime on local radio	Patch	5/27/09
D	Booth at 4 <sup>th</sup> of July Hmong Soccer Tournament	Patch	7/04/09
E	Booth at Hmong New Year	Patch	11/28/09

### ***4. Speaker***

Task	Description	Person Responsible	Complete By
A	Setup guest speaker with 10 local universities or colleges	Patch	5/28/09
B	Setup guest speaker with 4 high schools	Patch	5/28/09
C	Setup guest speaker with 4 middle/jr. high schools	Patch	6/11/09
D	Setup guest speaker with 4 local writing clubs	Patch	6/11/09
E	Setup guest speaker with 4 local book clubs	Patch	6/18/09

### ***5. Establish Effective Networks***

Task	Description	Person Responsible	Completion Date
A	Community Leaders	Patch	5/15/09
B	Book and Writing Clubs	Patch	5/15/09
C	Managers of local book chain stores: Barnes & Noble, Borders, and others.	Patch	6/14/09

*Budget*

## Marketing Budget

Marketing Strategy	Estimated Cost	Notes
1. Blogging	\$0.00	Requires time and effort
2. Online	\$700.00	Setup fee for website. \$50/ month for hosting
3. Press Release/Flyers and Business Cards	\$500.00	Stamps, ink, paper, envelops, and mailing labels
4. Ads	\$2000.00	Print ads, decals, booth, and air time.
5. Guest Speaker	\$0.00	None
6. Relationships	\$200.00	Lunches
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,400.00</b>	

## INFINITY PUBLISHING BUDGET

**One-time setup fee** (non-exclusive): **\$499**

**Copy-editing fee:** \$.013 per word

.013 x 56,676 = **\$736.79**

**Advance Reading Copies** (24 books): \$274

Total Expense: \$4909.79

**Retail Price:** \$12.95

**Profit at Retail:** 30%= **\$3.89**

**Wholesale Price:** \$7.77

**Profit at Wholesale:** 15%: **\$1.94**

**Copies Sold for Breakeven:**

At retail: **1263** = \$4913.07

At wholesale: **2531** = \$4910.14

*Bestseller Strategy*

- Send letters and advance reading copies to major independent and chain stores in major cities: This will remind the stores to fill out the bestseller surveys. Send letters multiple times to remind them.
- Send letters and advance reading copies to major media: Remind *Publishers Weekly*, *New York Times*, and *USA today*, *Oprah*, *Montel Williams*, and others that *Dead Promise* is a potential bestseller.
- Follow up above with phone calls.
- Send news release to the places above and others of the growing success of the book. Create excitement.
- Enter book in award competitions
- Setup author tours either by travel or by video conferencing.
- Get on a major TV shows such as *Oprah*, *Montel William*, *Good Morning America*, and others. (Books sell from 600,000 to 1.2 million copies within a few weeks being on Oprah.)
- Get on radio talk shows
- Get on other lists: regional bestseller lists, wholesaler and retail lists, and magazine bestseller lists.
- Publish during the off season: Most big publishers launch their titles in fall and beginning of the year. July and August are slow months for publishers meaning there are less competition.
  - Anticipated date of release: Father's Day, June 21, 2009.
- Pre-sell to major book clubs and prepare distributor and sales reps to support the book.
- Slow but steady: Make Xiong's readers his marketing team. Give discounts, reader appreciation, and incentives (Kremer, 2006, p. 47-51).

*Evaluation of Results*

Success is measured in units of sales against time. Sales will be monitored on a monthly basis and flaws will be reviewed, corrected, and streamlined. Xiong will seek the feedback of marketing and sales professionals when necessary. By doing this, Xiong can rectify and implement the most effective marketing efforts toward achieving a sales goal of one million units by or before year three.

MARKETING PLAN REFERENCES:

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