

# **Authorpreneur**

## ***Build the Business Behind the Book***

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Authorpreneur  
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*For Sam,  
Of course.*

## Part 1

# Getting Started

*Often I feel that projects overwhelm us when we look at how many hours are involved until completion. But just getting started is usually not that difficult.*

Emily Giffin, author

# Chapter 1

## What is an Authorpreneur?

*However, don't let perfectionism become an excuse for never getting started.*

Marilu Henner

**Authorpreneur.** The concept is obvious, and I've been explaining it to all of the authors I work with for at least ten years now. "I am looking for authors with an entrepreneurial spirit," I've said countless times. Now, someone has coined the perfect word: Authorpreneur. And I'm officially appropriating it and offering you my own definition.

*Authorpreneur: A writer who understands that to be a successful author in today's market you must work diligently, every day, to write new material and promote that material and your brand to the reading public.*

The day of the self-published author is here. And it's here to stay. The number of authors who are self-publishing has increased over 400,000 per year for the past several years. The latest statistics I've seen show that about 2 million books are currently published in the United States each year—and a vast majority of them are self-published.

Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP), Amazon's direct publishing service, produces the vast number of these books. Most of their

services are free, making it easy for anyone to publish a book without putting up any money. That means that many would-be authors think that they can literally do it all themselves at no cost. But as competition increases, the more difficult it becomes for readers to learn about new books they want to read, and so they tend to stick with the tried-and-true authors with which they are already familiar.

There are many parts to moving from an author to an Authorpreneur. But before you can even begin to learn the practical things you need to know about the business of publishing, you must undergo a shift in your attitude.

***You must learn to think of yourself as a small business owner.*** This can be very difficult for some authors. They see themselves as “creatives,” people whose main purpose is to produce something beautiful, thought-provoking, or informative, something that makes the people who read what they have written better for having done so.

I agree. This is one of the many reasons why I work in the field of publishing. But there is a next step that many authors fail to appreciate. It is that just like that tree falling all alone in the forest, if no one reads your work, no one is inspired by it. It’s simply not enough to write a great book and place it on Amazon hoping that people will find it.

Think of Amazon as the warehouse in that famous last scene from *The Raiders of the Lost Ark*: a vast repository with millions and millions of books, so many in fact, that it is almost impossible to find one single book hidden amongst all the others. Books published on Amazon don’t go away. In fact, it’s rather difficult to make a book you would like to go away completely disappear. ***That means that each year two million additional books are added to the already tens of millions of books listed on Amazon.***

I don’t give you this statistic to scare you into never publishing another book. I give it to you so that you can understand that to be

successful, you must be the author who does a little more. Often, new authors, just like other new business owners, start out trying to do everything at once—and everything by themselves. They soon realize that this is just not possible, and one of two things happens. They either get discouraged and give up, or they realize they need an organized plan and possibly some additional help if they are going to make their business grow.

The first step in becoming an Authorpreneur is to come up with that plan, and the first step to developing that plan is to know your purpose.

## Chapter 2

# Developing a Business Plan

*There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.*

Colin Powell

## What is a Small Business?

I think one of the problems that many authors have in seeing themselves as small business owners is that we think of the phrases “small business” and “small business owner” in terms of the U.S. Small Business Administration’s standards. Basically, the SBA defines a small business as one with fewer than 1,500 employees and a maximum of \$38.5 million in annual receipts. The SBA even has a table of standards breaking down “acceptable” sizes of small businesses by industry. These standards are often about defining a business as small, medium, or large, and have more to do with government and industry regulations than anything else. But since that is often how we hear businesses discussed on the news, we begin to think of business as only a manufacturer or a brick-and-mortar retail store. And that limits the way we think about what being a business owner means.

There is no one-size-fits-all standard for being in business. To



me, being a business owner and running a business is all about attitude. *I would define a business owner as a person who uses their own initiative to create and sell a product or a service.*

You know you have the initiative, and you know you have the creativity. If you didn't, you wouldn't have managed to write one or more books. So now let's put your creativity and initiative to use to sell more books.

## What is Your Purpose

Just like an outline for your book, you need an outline for your business. And before you can create the outline for your business, you have to *know your purpose*.

If you have read any of my other books on writing and publishing, you are probably getting very tired of hearing about your purpose by now. But it holds true in everything you do, so why would it not hold true in writing a book and becoming an Authorpreneur?

Ask yourself, why do you want to become an Authorpreneur? Why do you want to take the next step? Why do you want to move from writing a book or two, dabbling in marketing, and getting a few speaking engagements here and there to working at writing and publishing as your business?

One of your purposes is certainly money. If it wasn't you would be giving your books away free. But what other purposes do you have for what you do? One of the purposes of my business is to educate authors and help them to write better books as well as to learn how to better market their work so they, too, can sell more books.

Take a moment now and write down your purposes in becoming an Authorpreneur.

## Your Vision, Your Goals, and Your Plans

I asked an author recently if she had a business plan. She replied that she had “a vision board” and a list of goals. Every day she recites her goals and “puts them out to the universe.”

That’s great as far as it goes, and I firmly believe in having your vision and goals in front of you every day. But without a plan, how will you ever reach those goals? It’s fine to say, “I have a goal to sell 1,000 books this year,” but without a strategy to do that, it’s just not going to happen.

Many years ago, I developed a vision for my future. It was very simple: “I want to earn enough money on my own that I will never have to work for another boss again.”

At the time, my vision was vague. I didn’t know exactly what “not having another boss” would look like. But it became my guiding mantra for the next few decades until I sat back one day, looked at my life, and realized that I had accomplished my goal.

No, my career doesn’t look anything like I thought it would. It has taken a lot of twists and turns. At the time I developed my vision, I had a vague idea of becoming a freelance writer. It never occurred to me that over the years I would eventually own a local magazine, that the newspaper and magazine industry would be totally changed by the internet, or that I would become a book publisher. But somehow, at the end of the day, I’ve managed to create a career that allowed me to be my own boss, just like I originally said.

## From Vision to Goals

Vision is the long-term concept or dream that guides what you do. To achieve that vision, you need long-term and short-term goals. Where would you like to be in ten years? In five years? Next year? What will it take for you to get there?

At the time I first created my vision my son had just been born. My first business goal (I had a lot of other parenting and life goals, but this book is about the business of writing.) was to create a core of freelance writing connections that would allow me to continue to

work from home once my son was in school fulltime. This goal led me to becoming the owner of a local magazine. It was not a huge financial success, but it was a stepping stone. After just a few years I sold the magazine and became a columnist for the local daily paper. When I made the deal with the newspaper editor, I stipulated that I would be a freelancer, a “1099” employee, and I would never have to come into the office. It was the 90s. I was a pioneer!

## From Goals to Plans

What’s the difference between a goal and a plan? *A goal is the result we want to achieve. The plan is how we are going to get there.* You need a plan that will outline exactly what you want. I suggest creating a yearly plan. Start with your overall vision, add your goals, then make a list of the tasks you need to do to accomplish your goals.

Here are some examples.

### **Goal 1: Complete and publish two books on Amazon KDP this year.**

Plan:

- Write for three hours daily
- Find a graphic artist for my book covers
- Find a new proofreader to look for typos
- Book One will be published by May 1
- Book Two will be published by Oct. 1

### **Goal 2: Up my game on social media**

Plan:

- Post to Facebook daily
- Research BookToks. How many posts per week are ideal?
- Get a TikTok account and start uploading BookToks.