

# 203

things I've learned about  
writing, marketing and  
selling books

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(yet another) ebook from The Nametag Guy  
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Greetings!

My name is Scott.

I wear a nametag 24-7 to make people friendlier.

(Have been since November 2, 2000.)

Although this idea started out as sort of an experiment, I've somehow managed to leverage it into a **full-blown career**, consisting primarily of:

- 1) Writing books (5 real ones, 5 electronic ones)
- 2) Publishing columns (2 blogs, 100+ articles)
- 3) Giving speeches to companies and organizations worldwide (200 or so)

...on topics like being approachable, becoming unforgettable and making a name for yourself.

Lately, a lot of people have been asking me questions about:

- Writing books.
- Marketing books.
- Selling books.

Kind of a broad range of topics, huh? So, to make things easier, I just decided to write an ebook on it. Enjoy the typos!

-Scott

Author/Speaker/That Guy with the Nametag

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1. The media does not care about you.
2. Your interviews on TV and radio will be a lot shorter than you expect. Talk quickly, succinctly and use sound bites.
3. Be ready to answer the question, "Any final words for our listeners/readers/viewers before we go?"
4. Your book is not news. 485 of them come out every day. When it comes out, tie it to an event or hot media story.
5. If you don't want to make this a CAREER, don't bother.
6. Put your mug on the cover of your book. Sure, it's a bit egotistical, but it sells. Not to mention, when you show it to people on airplanes, they'll say, "Wow, you really DID write that book!"
7. **Punch people in the face with your credibility.** What I mean by that is, every time they see your book, come to your website, etc., they should see something right away that screams "THIS GUY IS AN EXPERT. HE IS SMART AND SAVVY AND CREDIBLE BECAUSE OTHERS (MEDIA, CLIENTS, ETC.) SAY SO.)"
  - a. Example 1: if you've won an award, get that baby on the very first opening home page of your site
  - b. Example 2: if you've done big media like USA Today, CNN or Wake Up Fenton, put those logos on the home page
  - c. Example 3: if you've been inducted into Ripley's Believe it Or Not or Guinness Book, get those logos on your homepage, book cover, marketing materials, etc.

PUNCHING IN THE FACE = "Hey you! Over here! Look at this NOW!!!"

8. Which leads me to: give free books to everybody. EVERYBODY. Because you never know.
9. Nobody cares what you did. They only care what you learned.
10. Short sentences. Short paragraphs. **BOLDFACE AND CAPS.** *Italics.* Don't be afraid to use them. Read any Tom Peters book and you'll see what I mean.
11. They aren't buying your book; they're buying your voice.

12. Who said contractions were a no-no? I love 'em.
13. Clip art tends to make books look cheap and self-published. Even if they are self-published, your goal is to NOT MAKE IT LOOK like the book was self-published.
14. Which is why it's always always always worth it to hire an amazing designer and pay her thousands of dollars to make your book a work of art. NEVER SACRIFICE cost for beauty. Don't brag about how cheap you got your book printed, brag about how amazing it looks.
15. Read Dan Poynter's book, *The Self-Publishing Manual*. Twice.
16. Don't sell your book to fellow authors. Trade.
17. An amazing title can sell a crappy book.
18. And once you have a title, the book is basically done.
19. Every time you think, "Man, that would be a great title for a book!" write it down. Keep a list. Or else someone else will take it.
20. Register [www.thetitleofyourbook.com](http://www.thetitleofyourbook.com)
21. The day you write a book is the day you become a speaker. Better get good at it. Because a lot of authors suck at it.
22. Typos are ok. Don't worry. Stephen King has typos. And your readers will find them and email you and get mad at you. I say, "Success is NOT perfection." You can even tell people, "There are 4 typos in my book. Find all of them and I'll send you a free copy for a friend!" People will actually look for them. Which means they read EVERY word. *Nice*.
23. Bulk sales = your goal. Think: what group of people or company or organization needs 500 copies of this book? Start by sending them a free one.
24. Unless you get a SWEET offer from a big publisher who is giving you lots of money and nation-wide distribution, **self-publish**. You get all the money, don't have to wait 3 years to get your book done, you own the content, don't have to sacrifice your integrity and don't have to deal with all the hoops and bullshit that comes with using a big publisher. Even if you DID get a big publisher, you'd have to do all the marketing anyway.

25. However, if you really, really want to work with a big publisher, that's cool. Let me just brief you on **what you're in for**: first, you need to write a "book proposal," (not a book, just an idea for a book). Then you have to sell that idea to a "book agent." If she buys your title (which she probably won't), she then has to sell it to a publisher. If they buy your title (which they probably won't), they start telling you how to write, design and market your book according to what sells in that genre. See, publishers don't care if your book is good; they only care if it will sell. And this whole process I just illustrated takes about 3 years before your book is in your hot little hand. Kind of a long time to wait, huh?
26. Get over the fact that a lot of people who OWN your book won't actually read it. Sad but true. Something like half of all books purchased are never read, according to Dan Poynter.
27. Who, by the way, also told me that 1/3 of all books bought in the WORLD are by 55+ folks. Embrace the geezers.
28. If you ever go to a local book fair in the parking lot of Macy's and see a copy of your book for \$1, try to laugh it off. (Ahem, hypothetically. That...um...never...happened...to...me... ☺ )
29. On a TV interview, NEVER hold up your book to the camera. They hate that. Either someone will do that for you or an image will appear on screen.
30. Smile when you do TV interviews. It's amazing how many authors don't do this.
31. Speaking of smiling, I once did an interview for the AP. My photographer met me at a coffee shop to snap a few pics for the story. After it was over he said, "Wow Scott, it's nice to see an author actually smiling." Yep. He actually said that. Are you smiling?
32. And by the way, get rid of that old, outdated picture of you from 1994 where you have big hair and your right hand holding your chin because that's the way the teenager at Glamour Shots told you to pose. Get a picture that actually looks like the REAL you. People shouldn't see you in person and exclaim, "Wow! You look nothing like your picture!"
33. If you want to be a great writer, be a great date for your reader. Thanks, Vonnegut.
34. Write only with your pen dipped in your own blood. Thanks, Tolstoy.

35. Once you write one book, you WILL want to write another. Books are like potato chips and tattoos. Can't have just one.
36. Ebooks are great, but don't try to play them off as "real books."
37. Speaking of ebooks, I would recommend at least one free downloadable ebook a year and post it on your website/blog. It gives value, increases traffic and often results in future sales via click-throughs. And if you're reading this and you don't know what a blog is, email me right away at [scott@hellomynameisscott.com](mailto:scott@hellomynameisscott.com). Let me help.
38. **Best Writing Advice I Ever Got:** writers write every single day, stop planning and just write, use lists for creative prompts, give yourself idea quotas, writing is the basis of all wealth, find your voice, don't be afraid to break the rules of grammar.
39. Every book you write needs a sticker on the front. Not an actual sticker, per se, but some little box or call-out star or blurb that says, "Featured in..." or "Winner of..." or "Foreword by..." Anything. Just get a sticker. It automatically gives more credibility to your book.
40. Shorter chapters = better. Ever read *The Davinci Code*? Exactly. So did almost a billion other people. Why? Short chapters.
41. Include appendices, bonuses and extra pages in the back that both add value and promote your other stuff, i.e., speaking programs, workshops, order forms, bulk discounts, etc.
42. Amazon.com takes half your money and is kind of a pain in the ass to work with, but the bottom line is, people won't think your book is a real book until it appears on Amazon. And God help you if you don't have a picture of your cover on your Amazon page. Decreases purchase probability by 75%.
43. You don't need a publicist. Trust me on this one. I've been featured as a guest AND as an expert on hundreds of media outlets, including the big ones: CNN, USA Today, WSJ, etc. Look, I'm not trying to brag. All I'm saying is, you don't have to be big to do big things. You can get media coverage yourself. *Of course, you have to be remarkable and cool and unique.*
44. However, I actually hired a publicist for a short time and that person didn't get any coverage for me. Meanwhile, I got three HOT interviews with big time publications **all by myself**. Publicist, schmublicist.

45. Before you write a new book, spend some time on Google and Amazon to see what else has been written on that topic. Especially check your working title to make sure it hasn't been taken. Although, if it has been taken, you can still use it. Can't copyright a title.
46. Any time you write an article (you *do* write and publish articles regularly, don't you?) be sure to **cross sell**. At least once within the text, say stuff like, "When I was researching for my latest book," or "One of the questions my book answers is," or "my readers often ask me..." Don't sell too much; just make sure that when anyone reads your article, they know what else you do.
47. When you write your book, do the same. Cross-sell other media like articles, speeches, workshops, etc.
48. Speaking of articles, a lot of authors whine, "But I don't have time to write a book!" Really? Fine. Do you have time to write ONE PAGE A DAY? If so, great. Do that for a year. That's 250 pages. That's a book. You've got no excuse now!
49. A WHOLE PAGE A DAY? ARE YOU NUTS? (Well, actually, I am; but that's not the point.) Try 5 minutes. That's all I ask. Each day. Do that every day for a year and that comes out to about 21 hours. Piece 'a cake!
50. Write on day one, edit on day two.
51. Write like you talk and your readers will listen. Be sure to read your work aloud before publishing it. Don't be afraid to begin sentences with "and," "because" and other words you're not supposed to begin sentences with.
52. And don't be afraid of ending sentences with preposition like I did in the last sentence. Your English teacher isn't around anymore. It's ok.
53. Spend lots of time in Borders. Look at what's hot. Notice trends. See what works and what doesn't work. Get to know the staff there. Even if they don't carry your books, they're still good people to know.
54. Which reminds me: don't kill yourself trying to sell your books in bookstores. Without a large distributor, it's tough for self-published authors to even get their books in stores anyway! Trust me, you won't sell too many anyway. Because bookstores are lousy places to sell books. Any self-published author will tell you that.

55. Plus, when you start getting into consignment inventory and stuff like that, you'll probably never see that money. And if you do, it won't be for about 6 months, and it will only be about 45% of the total sales after the retail discount. Think online. Think events. Think bulk orders. Don't sweat the bookstore stuff. It's a pain in the ass anyway. Hell, Borders still hasn't paid me for a book order from 2005!
56. I once bought a book that had blank pages in the middle. The author never knew about it until a year after the book was released. PROOF: people don't actually read every book that is bought. *Interesting.*
57. Women buy 90% of the books in the world. Just thought you should know.
58. If you've written a book, people will automatically think you're cool. Even if you're not, even if you don't think it's a big deal, it is to most people. Just thought you should know.
59. Which reminds me, USA Today did a study in 2004 that indicated that 8 out of every 10 people want to write a book, but **LESS THAN ONE ACTUALLY DO IT**. Why? 1) They don't have the discipline, 2) They don't think anyone will read it or like it, and 3) They don't know where to start. What's stopping *you* from writing *your* book?
60. If it's procrastination, then read *The War of Art*. One of ten books that changed my life.
61. Reverse shoplifting is when self-published authors take their own books and sneak them onto the shelves of Borders. I once saw a Borders employee take the book off the shelf, complain to her manager that it wasn't in the system, then throw the book away. Stores hate this. Don't do it.
62. The author of the book *1001 Ways to be Romantic* handed out free copies of his book to everyone waiting in line for the Jay Leno show. Leno then showed the book on air to 10 million people. *Are you doing stuff like that with YOUR book?*
63. People often ask authors, "So, how many copies have you sold?" It's kind of a rude question, like asking, "So, what're you pulling in this year?" Still, be prepared with an answer.
64. FYI, I have no answer for that question. I give away so many books for free, who the hell knows. Between my first three books over my first four years in business, I'd say I sold about 15,000. BUT, and this is a BIG but: **number of copies sold isn't what everyone uses to define success**. Visibility in the media, speaking fee, busy schedule, that's what's more important to me, at



least. So don't hang your hat on "selling millions of copies." You probably won't. Most self-published authors sell 10,000 per book over its lifetime.

65. Speaking of big butts, let's talk about Oprah: **get over it**. Your book on Oprah doesn't mean success. It's nice, but it happens to less than 1% of all authors. Don't hang your hat on it. And don't even try to call, email or get in touch with someone from that show. Now, I know all your friends keep telling you "I know someone at Oprah, you should call them!" Don't. It doesn't work that way. I know lots of authors who've been on Oprah. Here's the deal: you don't call her; she calls you.
66. That brings up an interesting point. When my first book came out, I did a boatload of media appearances. The problem was, I didn't have my business totally together to leverage those appearances. For example, I was on a TV show for five minutes watched by millions of people, and I was never smart enough to say that I also gave speeches. *D'oh!* So, what do you think happened? *That's right: nothing.* I didn't book any speeches or sell many copies.
67. On the other hand, I did earn a lot of credibility and recognition, which might have actually been more valuable in the long term. Still, the point is: if you're going to get yourself and your book on the media, you better be ready. I wasn't and I regret it. So, just remember: **it's called a media blitz because it happens fast.** You could easily secure one big interview and 10 minutes later, 10 other shows/stations/papers might call you for more interviews. Be ready.
68. When it comes to media, the key word is: leverage. Slap a sticker on the cover of your book that says, "Seen on CNN." *That's leverage.* Record the interview and make it available to watch as a macromedia flash clip on the media page of your website. *That's leverage.* Compile a "clip sheet" of all the cutouts of the articles reporting how great your book is. *Leverage.* On the "about the author" section of your book, be sure to mention that you've been "featured as an expert on..." etc. *Leverage.* See what I'm saying? Media appearances **MUST** (and **CAN!**) last longer than those precious few on-air minutes! Go to my Media Room at [www.hellomynameisscott.com](http://www.hellomynameisscott.com) and you'll see what I mean.
69. You **DO** have a Media Room on your author website, don't you?
70. Wait a minute. You **DO** have an author website, don't you?!

71. One time I got a call from GMA (Good Morning America), CBS Early Show and the Today Show within 5 minutes of each other. I agreed to CBS (which was the lowest rated of all three); then the other two wouldn't have me. It's called "exclusivity." I totally blew it because of my lack of media experience. STUPID!
72. OK, one last thing about the media. (I know I've been blabbing about it for a while now.) For years everyone kept saying, "Scott, you should be on Oprah!" And as much as I wanted to agree with them, I couldn't. I hoped to God that Oprah DID NOT CALL. Because I wasn't ready to leverage such an appearance like I am now. Ask yourself honestly: *If Oprah called you tomorrow, would you really, really be ready?*
73. It's a hell of a lot easier to make one's book a best seller than it used to be. (Especially on Amazon.) In fact, I think it's almost a joke when you see the words "best seller," because a lot of authors know how to manipulate the system.
74. Then again, it all depends on what your version of "success" is. Me, I really don't care about writing a best seller, although that would be nice. Bet I could charge a lot more for speaking fees, though. ☺
75. Speaking of best sellers, great story: I bought a book once and on the cover it said, "The World's Best Selling Book By Paul Arden." Naturally, I bought it because, although I'd never heard of the guy, I figured, *Hey, it's a best seller, right?* Wrong. Let me repeat the heading: *The World's Best Selling Book By Paul Arden*. It means that, out of all of the books Paul Arden has written, this particular one is the best seller. Hot damn! That is sneaky, huh? Shit, maybe I should try that.
76. Two words: *James Frey*. Don't be stupid. Don't make stuff up unless you write FICTION.
77. Which reminds me: *The Davinci Code* was a FICTION book. So why did all those religious people get mad? I don't know, I just think that's weird.
78. Read Stephen King's *On Writing*. Another one of those books that changed my life.
79. When someone opens your book, the VERY FIRST PAGE they should see after the cover is "Advanced Praise for..." or "What people are saying about..." These are testimonials from other authors, professionals, big shots, celebrities, your parents, etc. Have as many of them as you can. That way, when someone opens your book, the first thing they see is a bunch of other people saying that your book is great. *Social Proof baby!*

80. Never, ever, ever, ever, **EVER** (did I say ever?) leave the house without one of your books. Keep them in your bag, office, briefcase, cars, purse, whatever. You never know. Always have one accessible for impromptu give aways.
81. Include cover shots of your book(s) on your business cards. That way if someone asks, "So what are your books?" you can just show them. It's pretty cool to see the reaction of someone who SEES you're an author, as opposed to just telling someone you are. "Yeah right, I'll bet you wrote a book," they think. **LESSON: SHOW, DON'T TELL.**
82. I know I already talked about this, but I **STILL** can't believe there are authors out there who **DON'T** write every day. Dan Brown (Davinci Code) is up at 4 AM every morning writing. *When is your writing time?*
83. Get a laptop. Inspiration comes unannounced.
84. If you don't want to make this a **CAREER**, don't bother.
85. Writers are readers. (At least, they should be.) How many books did you read last year?
86. Gotta read fiction, too. I don't do it as much as I should, but I'm telling ya, there's nothing like reading some **SWEET** fiction (Paulo Coello, Tom Robbins, Stephen King, etc.) to inspire you and get your creativity rolling.
87. **Spell check doesn't catch everything.** I'm sure there are typos in this ebook you're reading right now. (I don't care. This ebook is free anyway.) Remember: success isn't perfection.
88. The more books you've written, the more books you will sell overall. So keep writing! Writing is the basis of all wealth! Thanks again, Gitomer.

#### **SUB-SECTION on AMAZING AUTHOR WEBSITES**

89. Without a website, an author is unknown.
90. Without a website, an author sells fewer books.
91. Without a website, an author has limited web presence.
92. Without a website, an author has limited media presence.
93. Without a website, an author can't maximize his or her creativity, expertise and talent.

94. Authors have websites for the following reasons:
- To sell books and/or products
  - To be viewed as experts
  - To support their platform
  - To accumulate fans
  - To maintain a baseline of all marketing communication
  - To be easy to get in touch with
  - To maximize their web and media presence
95. Let's face it: people judge books by their covers. In fact, according to Amazon.com, customers are four times as likely to purchase books if they can see the cover art. So be sure to include images all over your site. And, include a few high resolution, downloadable pictures of YOU, as well. Book buyers love putting the author's face with the book. And this will make it easy for other people to cut and paste those pictures on their sites and promote you, your work and your website.
96. Most authors write articles, special reports and other publications related to their area of expertise. On your site, make these publications FREE to the public for reading and downloading. Be sure to include a quick byline and reference to your books at the end of each publication. Now, many Internet experts will disagree with this idea. Some experts say, "Never give anything away for free." I say: give value first, show people your work is incredible and turn them into fans. Then you will keep them around forever.
97. You need to create community via your website. This is the number one way to accumulate fans. Publish a blog, ezine, a newsletter, a forum, a message board or link exchange on your site. And make sure people see a link to your "community builder" on every page.
98. MEDIA ROOM: this page will include most of your downloadable pictures, biographical information, press releases, media appearances, personal FAQ's and possible interview questions. The purpose of this page is to make it easy for people from the media to interview you, promote you and write articles or reviews about your work.
99. Readers like the idea of emailing, calling or contacting the author personally. Even if you can't respond to every single inquiry, it's still important to be accessible. Too many authors are stereotyped as being unapproachable. So, make this contact information visible in the same spot on every single page.
100. Excerpts from your books and sample chapters are perfect ways to share your writing with people who come to your site. This is an especially effective way to sell books, because after reading a snippet of your work,

people will want more. I suggest offering the first chapter or two of your book(s) as a downloadable PDF. And don't forget to include a short note with a link to the sale page at the end of the sample!

101. Most authors are also speakers, workshop leaders or seminar hosts. This occurs for several reasons. First of all, books don't pay the bills (unless you're JK Rowling or Bob Baker.) Secondly, speaking validates the author's expertise and promotes his or her books. Thirdly, speaking has the potential to pay significantly more money than writing; does especially if your work is well known. So, spend some time organizing your writings into modular speaking programs that offer additional value beyond a book. Then position those speaking services on your site on a page called "Speaking Engagements" or "Public Appearances." If you want another ebook called "234 Things I've Learned about Creating, Delivering and Marketing Speeches," email [scott@hellomynamescott.com](mailto:scott@hellomynamescott.com) and I'll send it to you ð

### **GOOD GOD, GINSBERG!! ENOUGH ABOUT WEBSITES!!**

102. OK. No more web stuff for a while. Next item: get involved with SPAN, PMA, local publishers associations, writers guilds and other organizations where you can learn, network and grow as an author. Take a board position. Get active. One of the best things I ever did for my writing career was to get involved and start hanging out with (and gleaning from) fellow authors. Ahem, Bob Baker.
103. *Publisher's Weekly* is a great magazine.
104. Read Dave Barry's stuff. First of all, it's hilarious. Secondly, it's brilliant. Thirdly, the guy knows how to break the rules of writing better than anyone.
105. There are people out there called "book coaches" who offer services for creation and marketing for your book at an all-inclusive fee. I don't have any experience working with one. I have heard good and bad stories; so, like anything, just be sure to do your research before taking one on.
106. There is a lot more money in speaking than there is in writing. I'm not saying you should become a speaker, I'm just saying.
107. Media coverage online (in blogs, articles, etc.) often leads to coverage in print media. I once got a blogger to review my latest book on her blog. Two days later I was on the front page of my local paper. *Sweet*.

Alright folks, I totally lied. Time for more web stuff. (And if you're annoyed with all this web talk, that's not good. The Internet = the future of publishing, the future of speaking, the future of books, and pretty much the future of everything. Don't evade it.)

Here we go...

108. Don't just tell people to go to, or "to check out" your website. Tell them WHY to go: videos, free articles, and pictures, whatever. "The most important word in marketing is 'because.'" Thanks, Shel Horowitz.
109. Give them a reason to "check back," periodically. Your schedule. Your counter. And not how many people have been to your website, something cool. Think McDonald's: 87 BILLION BURGERS SERVED.
110. Publishing articles online is quicker and easier to get drive traffic because readers click your link at the end of it. You publish in print, you create another step that people don't want to (or have the time to) take to get to your website. Start with [www.ezinearticles.com](http://www.ezinearticles.com). That website has made me a lot of money.
111. Forget about query letters. Things of the past. Waste of time. You'll get more publicity, sell more, drive more traffic and build more community by starting a blog.
112. And if you do, you better **blog every single day**.
113. Hang on. Let me say that again: YOU BETTER BLOG EVERY DAY. *But I don't have the time! I don't know how or want to start a blog!* you say. Tough. You need to do it. Like, today. Here's why: I didn't know a damn thing about blogging until someone else blogged about my site and I got one million website hits in the span of a week. (Eep!) So, I asked around, read a few books and got started and learned as a went. (*P.S., That's how most bloggers got start anyway.*) Thus, I started blogging in October 2004. That makes me about a two-year veteran of blogging at the time of my writing this ebook. Go to [www.hellomynameisblog.com](http://www.hellomynameisblog.com) to see how cool it is now.
114. QUICK LESSON on the ROI of blogging:
  - a. I once posted a question on my blog: "What's the most important word in marketing?"
  - b. 35 people contributed their entries. I compiled them into an article.

- c. That article was reprinted a few dozen times around the Internet, even once or twice in some print publications.
- d. Someone from a marketing association read it, emailed me and booked me to give a speech. For free. And everyone in the audience (500 people) got free copies of my book.
- e. I gave the speech and booked 10 gigs as a result.
- f. One of those gigs was with a huge association, another free speech for 3000 people.
- g. 3000 people that all book speakers.
- h. From that speech, I sold about 300 books and booked 14 new clients, one of which is a speech where I will be sharing the stage with Jim Collins.

All from that one little blog post. Which took five minutes and no money.

Why aren't you blogging every day? WHY?!

115. And therefore, I will defend the following sentence to my death:

BLOGGING EVERY DAY = THE BEST THING I'VE EVER DONE FOR MY BUSINESS

- 116. Dead serious. I can trace hundreds of new relationships, new books, dozens of speaking engagements, tens of thousands of dollars and MILLIONS of website hits just from my blog. Do it.
- 117. Get your butt on MySpace.com. 130 million people can't be wrong. (That number as of October 2006. By the time you're reading this ebook, it's either doubled or self-destructed.)
- 118. Get your butt on Squidoo.com.
- 119. Get your butt on YouTube.com.
- 120. Have an email signature that gives people a reason to go to your site.
- 121. H.I.T.S. is an acronym for "How Idiots Track Sales."
- 122. Have pictures of you with your clients, readers, audience members, fellow authors and celebrities on your site. People need to see you doing what you do.

123. Publish an ezine with half of your article in the email, the remainder as a click through on your site.
124. Include "Send This Site To A Friend" type boxes on your pages.
125. Go to [www.websitesthatsuck.com](http://www.websitesthatsuck.com) and make sure they look nothing like yours.
126. Three words: Other People's Blogs. Read them. Comment on them. Subscribe to them. Get them to link to your site.
127. Share link love to others FIRST. Don't expect them to reciprocate. Just do it first.
128. Email complete strangers who work in similar fields as you. Introduce yourself and tell them that, as a fellow Professional Whatever, they'd probably be interested in your site. (This is my fav. Great way for "Internetworking.")
129. Use digg and delicious. If you don't know what they mean, find out.
130. On your blog, post stuff that **takes a side**. Don't be scared. Controversial = comments. Pick a lane. If you aren't being criticized, you're doing something wrong.
131. If everyone says you're out of your mind, you might be onto something. Thanks, Canfield.
132. Post your photos on Flickr or other photo sharing software.
133. By the way, I hope I'm not boring you. If so, maybe this will help you wake up:

## **SEX SEX SEX SEX SEX SEX SEX SEX SEX SEX**

134. If you don't exist on Google, you don't exist. Which is why you need Google alerts on your full name, your area(s) of expertise, YOUR BOOK TITLES, company name, and any other relevant search term. If you don't know what a Google Alert is, just Google it ☺
135. People surfing the web HATE flashy ads, banners, or any of that other annoying pop up crap. Just remember that while designing your website. If you want ad revenue, think "sponsor" and not "advertisement."



136. Right now I'm on a plane flying to San Fran to give a talk. And I just realized something: airplanes = great writing time.
137. Buy every book, read every article and learn every possible thing you can from Sam Horn. *Damn is that woman sharp!* Sam Horn. Got it? She rocks.
138. I've never attended BEA (Book Expo America), but everyone says you have to attend at least once in your writing career. Great experience, great speakers, greater networking and even greater learning opportunities.
139. I said this earlier, but I thought you could use a reminder: 485. That's the number of new books that come out every day. That's 177,000 a year. *What makes your book unique? And why would anyone want to buy it?*
140. You'd be amazed how many "authors" don't even write their own books. They use ghostwriters, of course. Now, this isn't anything new. And I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that. But for me, I just couldn't do it. Doesn't seem right or authentic or real or cool. Which reminds me of a story. Once after a giving a talk, a woman who wanted to buy my books asked me, "So, Scott, did you actually write these books?" And my answer was, "Um, yeah - who else would have written them?" Now, I wasn't trying to make her feel dumb, but I just thought it was an odd question. Which means readers are more skeptical than authors realize.
141. Getting your book to be used as a college textbook is difficult, but if you can pull that off, then MAN: you're my hero!
142. If someone was reading your book on a plane, what is the probability of *the person sitting next to them* asking, "Excuse me, but what book is that? I'm intrigued!" People do this all the time. That is, if the book is remarkable and cool and word of mouth worthy.
143. If someone was reading your book on a plane, what is the probability of *that person* saying to their neighbor, "Excuse me, but have you read this book yet? It's amazing!" People also do this all the time. That is, if the book is remarkable and cool and word of mouth worthy.
144. There is nothing new under the sun. The only new thing your book can bring to the table is the lens through which you view (and encourage the reader to view) an old idea.
145. I've given talks at events and sold out of books in the back of the room. Certainly it's a great compliment when that happens, but then again, I left money on the table by not bringing enough inventory. Sure, I took orders, took people's money and shipped the books the next day, but like my Dad once told me, "You can't sell from an empty wagon."

146. When someone buys your book over the Internet, ask yourself, "When I send the book, what else could I include with the book that could encourage them to buy something else?" Order forms? Brochures? Business cards? Pamphlets? You have a captive audience of someone who likes you, your writing and your book. May as well leverage it!
147. I've never done the "translate your book into four languages" thing, but I hear you can get some good money out of it. Plus it lends to your credibility to say it's been translated. Honestly, I don't know how one goes about doing that, but it sure sounds cool. I'd recommend it.
148. *Ripley's Believe it Or Not* featured me in one of their books, which was totally cool. But the thing was, they never called, emailed or even got my permission to do so. In fact, they got my hometown wrong! They said I lived in "St. Louis, Illinois"! Ha! Anyway, I didn't get upset, I got smart. So, I figured, *Well, if Ripley's doesn't need my permission to be quoted in their book, I guess I don't need their permission to use their logo on my website, marketing materials and the cover of my books for the rest of my career!*"
149. Maybe this is just me, but in the history of my writing career, ONLY ONE PERSON has ever ripped out the order blank from the back of my book, sent in a check and bought an additional copy. All I remember is that it came my friend Jeff's Grandma. She wrote me a handwritten letter and told me what a nice young man I was and included an old picture of her and her grandson. Pretty cute. Other than that, order blanks = worthless.
150. Books are heavy when traveling.
151. Think back to the last 10 books you bought. Did you read a review? Hear about them from friends? Buy a random book from a store? See the movie first? This is a great exercise to get you thinking like your reader. Try to imagine the situation in which someone would hear about, and subsequently buy your book. (This exercise also works with CD's and movies.)
152. Whenever I'm selling my books in person - from the stage, at the back of the room, in a booth - I always say something funny during a buying atmosphere to make the person feel comfortable. My favorite line is, "If you buy it today, I'll even autograph the book so you can sell it on Ebay!"
153. Which reminds me, I once saw my book for sale on Ebay. For two dollars. (sniff) So, do you know what I did? I bid \$250 on it. Then bought it. *That's marketing baby!*

154. If you don't want to make this a CAREER, don't bother.
155. Creativity Books. There must be hundreds of them out there, and whenever I read a new one, my mind starts coming up with great stuff. DeBono is good, but hard to read. Roger von Oech also good.
156. Smiling for three seconds. Not just every time you walk into a room, but especially when you get on stage. Three seconds. Before you say a word. It's amazing how that captivates an audience. Smile = silence = WOW.
157. Ask, Why Me? To customers, to the media, to everyone. You must find out what you did right so you can repeat it in the future.
158. The word "shit." When used correctly, it works really well. Because, as we all know, there's nothing like a nice shit.
159. Subject line on emails. You may as well have fun with this. 54 characters max. That's all people see anyway, (before they delete your email, that is).
160. Whenever I don't know what to write, I sign my books, "You're a great kisser!" or "Thanks for saving my life!" You should see the reactions I get. Especially from men. More importantly, you should see how many *other people* my readers then show their books to. *Nice*. Think they would've shown it to their friends if it said, "Best wishes, Scott"? What do you write on your autographs?
161. Use Fed Ex. Face it: The Postal Service sucks. (I'm referring to the company, not the band. Ben Gibbard rules.)
162. I'm amazed how many authors don't include their website on the back cover of their book. *Not smart*.
163. OK. Moving on. So, my first book was about nametags. So, for the first 1000 or so copies, I included two free nametags in the back of every book. People loved it, told everyone about it, and it actually became a great little word-of-mouth marketing technique. Of course, I had to manually insert each of those little buggers in the back of each book, which was a total pain in the ass. Still, it got people talking. *What could you include in the back of your book?*
164. Struggling to find marketing ideas? Two words: Dollar Store.

165. Another good idea that I'm not a big fan of, but a lot of other authors seem to like is: **put your book cover on stuff**. Shirts, mugs, hats, pins, whatever. Hey, it could only help, right?
166. J.K. Rowling wrote *Harry Potter*. The books made her millions. Then again, the movies and merchandising made her 100's of millions. Maybe even billions. Now, I doubt another author will ever come along and have the same amount of success she had, but it brings up a good point: *what ELSE could your book be made into?*
167. I've read maybe 1500 books in my lifetime. Many of them were boring. LESSON LEARNED: don't be boring. You'll be in the minority.
168. Sex sells. (See #133.)
169. If you're just like everyone else, what do they need you for?
170. "Authoring" a book means your name is on the cover. "Writing" a book means your name is on the cover AND you actually penned the content. Major difference between the two. Listen closely to what you hear people say. It's pretty deceptive.
171. According to the *New York Times Bestseller List*, the book titles that garner the most success have the following three characteristics:
- a. The titles were metaphorical instead of literal
  - b. The first word was a pronoun, verb, adjective or greeting
  - c. The title consisted of either the possessive case with a noun, both an adjective and a noun, or the word patter, "The...of."
172. And now, a short list of 19 things most self-publishers shouldn't waste their time, money and effort doing because they won't sell any copies or make any money by doing them:
- a. **Publication dates** - nobody cares when your book actually came out, pick a date
  - b. **Book reviews** - they're tough to get and, unless they're from PW, forget about leveraging them
  - c. **Selling their books in stores without a major distributor** - huge pain in the ass and not worth the time
  - d. **Press releases** - your new book is NOT news - 485 per day, remember?
  - e. **Consignment** - another waste of time and money, especially because you sometimes never see the money
  - f. **Advertising** - a dead medium

- g. **Selling your books to libraries** - they buy few copies and the people who read books in the library are doubtful to buy copies for their friends because they are, as a whole, old and technologically ignorant. (Sorry. Harsh but true.)
- h. **Direct Mail** - another interruption marketing method that, while it might work based on numbers, is another waste of money.
- i. **Book clubs** - once again, don't waste your time trying to get 18 women from the Jonesboro, Arkansas Gardening Club to buy your book for their monthly discussion. It isn't gonna lead to anything.
- j. **Getting your books in little novelty stores** - they won't buy many copies, nor will they sell many
- k. **Getting a publicist** - waste of money. You'll get more press blogging about your book. I know I did.
- l. **Book fairs** - you stand in a booth like a putz for 6 hours and sell maybe one book. When you could have been online generating buzz about your business.

173. Every single day, do five things that promote you, your company and your product. That's 25 a week. 1,250 a year. I'm telling ya, this stuff adds up.

174. Figure out what your #1 goal is. Then put a post-it note on your desk that asks you, "Is what you're doing right now consistent with your #1 goal?" If it's not, do something else. Nice little time management technique.

175. **Punch people in the face with your credibility.** What I mean by that is, every time they see your book, come to your website, etc., they should see something right away that screams "THIS GUY IS AN EXPERT. HE IS SMART AND SAVVY AND CREDIBLE BECAUSE OTHERS (MEDIA, CLIENTS, ETC.) SAY SO.)"

- a. Example 1: if you've won an award, get that baby on the very first opening home page of your site
- b. Example 2: if you've done big media like USA Today, CNN or Wake Up Fenton, put those logos on the home page
- c. Example 3: if you've been inducted into Ripley's Believe it Or Not or Guinness Book, get those logos on your homepage, book cover, marketing materials, etc.

**PUNCHING IN THE FACE = "Hey you! Over here! Look at this NOW!!!"**

176. When you write books, create additional related products and the like, **THINK MODULAR**. It's not a chapter, a track, a section, a segment of your speech, an article, a blog post; it's just a module. Modules are generic units of content that are transferable between media, i.e., speeches,

books, audio products. So, make sure everything you do is created in that unit FIRST, from which you can recycle, reuse and reproduce.

177. Do not underestimate the local.
178. Just because you know how to use a hammer doesn't mean you can build a house. LESSON LEARNED: hire a professional designer for your materials.
179. Print copies according to what you NEED, not according to what you HOPE to sell.
180. I once heard an editor from *Publisher's Weekly* say, "If there's nothing else out there like your book, maybe there's a reason for that." Now, I know this is contrary to my whole idea of uniqueness. It actually hurt a little when she said that. Still, it's a realistic - although cynical - point of view to have.
181. 90% of new restaurants fail within their first year because someone out there said, "You know, I like to cook. And people enjoy my food. Maybe I should start a restaurant!" LESSON LEARNED: just because you know the trade, doesn't mean you can run the business. HIDDEN LESSON LEARNED: authoring books = a business.
182. Most important word for any author to know: PLATFORM. It is:
- a. what helps sell your book
  - b. the way you reach readers
  - c. your expertise on your book's topic(s)
  - d. a network of notoriety and exposure
  - e. communicate with your audience
  - f. that which gives you access to sales
  - g. what you stand for in the marketplace
  - h. where you speak your mind beyond what's already been said in your books
  - i. where you inform your fans of future books, appearances, projects, news, etc.
  - j. your network
  - k. your place in the world
  - l. your accomplishments
183. WHY DO YOU NEED A PLATFORM?
- *To sell books* - it's tough to move 10,000 copies from the back of a cave.
  - *More media interviews* - if they see you've got a platform, they will gladly book you for their shows because they know

people will tune in and, of course, know about your interview ahead of time

- ***Credibility is king*** - every time you try to make a deal that books a speech, sells copies, secures a TV movie about your life, etc., the potential client is going to ask the question, "Have people heard about you?" Platform = people hear about you.

184. Think about Oprah. She writes a book...and BAM!! Millions of sales at the drop of a hat. Now, is it because her books are "good"? Doubtful. It's because of her platform: TV show, magazine, reputation, Harpo Productions, etc.

185. My friend Susan Falter Barnes says, "Author Platforms have to be this century's biggest catch-22, because how can your work actually get known unless you impress all those folks listed above?"

186. Good point, Susan. Well, here are some great ways to start building your platform that fly in the face of the CATCH-22: blog daily, publish an ezine, speak for free.

187. Of course, the best platforms (that have to be earned, of course) are radio programs, weekly columns in papers, TV shows, movies, etc.

188. THINK **RACHEL RAY**: she might be an annoying little troll, but boy does she have one HELL of a author's platform. TV shows, DVD's, books, a magazine, products, EVERYTHING!

#### **And now a few great tips from THOMAS WINNENGER...**

189. The narrowness of your niche exacerbates the popularity of your celebrity status

190. It's not the book that makes us a celebrity, it's the concept we manage around the book that does it

191. A celebrity is a person whose arrival is anticipated

192. If you want to get hot, why not get something that's hot and attach it to you

193. Do you want to "just write another book" or do you want to write a book that augments your celebrity status?

194. You can't make yourself a celebrity, you can only create an environment where it can happen to you

195. A book is not a book - a book is a CONCEPT for driving your celebrity status
196. People don't want to rent a car; they want to get out of the airport. Think about it: what does your book REALLY DO for the readers?
- (END OF THOMAS WINNENGER SECTION) ---
197. Some people put out "updated editions" or "second editions" of their books. In my opinion, this is a TERRIBLE idea.
198. Let's say you write a book called "Secrets of Skateboarding Success." It does well. Sells a few thousand copies. Then, two years into it, you decided to revise it, add (some) new content and re-release the book as an "updated version" or "second edition."
199. What you've just done is eliminate the need for your first book. Not good.
200. See, you're a writer. So you should always have new ideas, content, stories, material, etc. You may as well come out with ANOTHER skateboarding book that is called "Secrets of Skateboarding, Volume 2" or "Part 2" or whatever, that way it's a whole new book. You don't diminish the value of book #1, plus, you can sell that to everyone who bought the first one.
201. Therefore, if you have lots of books, don't make them all "new editions." Make them volumes or series so they seem different enough that even if someone had the others, they STILL needed to buy the new one as well.
202. LESSON LEARNED: Series. Volumes. Not "editions" or "revised." Just make a new book, baby.

And, my final piece of advice before I finish up...



203. If you don't want to make this a CAREER, don't bother.
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(I think I might have already mentioned that once or twice)

\* \* \* \* \*

**FINAL WORDS:**

My name is Scott Ginsberg: author, speaker, entrepreneur and that guy who wears a nametag 24-7 to make people friendlier.

At this very moment, it's 1:27 PM on Sunday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

Which makes me 26 years old.

Now, I tell you that because of something that happened 19 years ago:

When I was 7 years old, my second grade teacher made me stand up in the middle of the class and answer the question, "Scott, what do you want to be when you grow up?"

You know what I said?

"Author."

**Friends, this is what I do.** I write books. I was born to write books! And I'm not saying I have all the answers; I'm not saying I have all the money; and I'm not saying I have all the best selling titles...

...but I think I've learned some pretty important stuff along the way. So I hope these 203 ideas helped you a lot, and perhaps scared you a little.

Holler at me if there's anything else I can do to help.

See ya!

-Scott

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Scott Ginsberg, aka "The Nametag Guy," is the author of five books and a professional speaker who helps people maximize approachability, become unforgettable and make a name for themselves. To book Scott for your next association meeting, conference or corporate event, contact HELLO, my name is Scott! at 314/256-1800 or email [scott@hellomynameisscott.com](mailto:scott@hellomynameisscott.com)