**How to Reach Your Sales Goal This Year**

**By Brian Jud**

If your 2020 New Year’s resolution was to “lose weight,” you already reached it if you lost even one pound. If your goal is to sell more books than last year, one more book sold will accomplish that. In both cases, your intention was probably to do more. These resolutions demonstrate the importance of writing specific, measurable goals, and then having a plan in place to reach them. How much weight do you intend to lose? How many books do you intend to sell this year? How will you do it? Be precise, and you are likely to do what you really want to achieve.

Once you have set your goal for how many books to sell this year, act on these recommendations to make you more likely to reach them:

1. Know and define your target readers using the Five Ws technique: **W**ho are they? **W**hat benefits do they seek, and in what form do they want your content delivered? **W**here do they shop? **W**hen do they buy? **W**hy do they need your content?
2. Companies in search of new reserves of oil and natural gas conduct years of research to find potential deposits. They only drill where those resources are most likely to be found. Follow their example by looking for your potential buyers where they are most likely to be found. For example, if you have a children’s book try selling it to non-bookstore segments such as daycare centers, children's libraries, children's museums, home-schooling groups, PTAs, Collective Goods, government agencies, military schools, mom's organizations, work-at-home moms, toy stores, airport stores, supermarkets, discount stores, etc. Make your book available where your target readers shop.
3. You are not selling books but selling how your content meets readers’ needs better than other options. Have good content that is based on what your readers want to buy.
4. How is your content different from or better than what exists? Go to a bookstore or search Amazon.com for competitive titles. To have a chance of success, a new product (including a book) should have at least three recognizable advantages over its competition. And every book has competition, regardless of its content. In retail sales you have competition for shelf space, media placement, airtime, readers’ wallets, reviewers’ time, etc. In non-retail sales you are competing against budget money, coffee mugs and other sales-promotional products. Know the value of your competition to your prospective buyers, and how your content compares.
5. Have a quality product, which includes professionally edited text and marketable cover design (front, rear and spine) and page layout.
6. Have reasonable expectations. Recognize that the world does not care that you wrote and published a book – you must make them care, and that could take years of consistent promotion.
7. Work with distribution partners to get your book into retail stores (bookstores and non-bookstore retailers). Recognize that retailers do not sell books – they display products that are profitable to them (if your book does not sell, it is returned). Your must have a “knock-off factor,” a reason why they should place your book on the shelf instead of one that is there now.
8. Implement an assorted promotion mix using publicity (press releases, media appearances, social media), advertising (paid and bartered in niche media), sales promotion (coffee mugs with your book’s cover on them, pens, pads, business cards, etc.) and personal selling (personal presentations, in-store events, trade-show displays, etc.): online and offline.
9. Run the numbers, considering the variety, volume and velocity of revenue. Create forecasts and goals for the remainder of the year, with quarterly reviews to assess progress. What will it take to be profitable and are you willing to do what it takes to make it happen? You are no longer an author, but an entrepreneur running a business.
10. Consider selling through and to non-bookstore buyers. These could be retailers (airport stores, supermarkets, discount stores) and non-retail buyers (corporations, associations, schools, military, libraries).

You may think it is too late since your book is already published and you cannot change the content, design, form or distribution. In that case, you have a big decision to make. Will you continue selling what your readers do not need, in a form they do not want and in a place where they do not shop? If so, you are less likely to reach your goals. Or, will you revise and republish your content, deliver it in the form in which buyers want and have it available in the places they shop? Hopefully, you have the right product currently available where your buyers shop, priced competitively and supported with “perpetual promotion.” In whatever situation you find yourself, decide on how to proceed, and then do it.