

**the  
amazon  
bestseller  
plan**



First Published In Great Britain 2006  
by Lean Marketing Press  
[www.BookShaker.com](http://www.BookShaker.com)

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# Endorsements

*Debbie Jenkins and Joe Gregory are a formidable marketing team. I have benefited greatly from their knowledge and expertise. Buy this book and you will too!*

**Simon Hazeldine, author of 'Bare Knuckle Selling' and 'Bare Knuckle Negotiating'**

*Debs and Joe have come clean to reveal the secrets behind their recent attention grabbing campaigns to create best sellers. Clear, well written and hugely informative, this book is a must read for all authors who dream of being successful.*

**Guy Ellis, author of 'Tales of Talent: A Modern Fable for Today's Leaders'**

*Wow - what an amazing piece of work! If you want inspiration, read on. If plans are your thing, they are here too. This book simply explodes with knowledge, experience and know-how! There is no black art or jargon, just a down to earth approach of follow these steps and you will succeed. Well done guys.*

**David Miskimin, co-author of 'The Coaching Parent', [www.thecoachingparent.com](http://www.thecoachingparent.com)**

*What a fabulous book! It's like a paint-by-numbers kit for creating a masterpiece, with every step fully detailed and explained - in this instance, creating a bestselling book.*

**Annie Meachem, author of 'Attraction Marketing: How to Attract All the Perfect Clients You Want'**

*Achieving bestseller status for this book was simply advanced networking on a large scale. The success of this campaign, masterminded by our publishers, is proof that it pays to grow your business through positive referral.*

**Andy Lopata, co-author of '...and Death Came Third!'**

*I think it's an excellent guide on how to make your book (and in fact any product!) a bestseller. And it's written with such enthusiasm, that it's inspired me to take up the reins of my own marketing campaign right now!*

**Barbara Buffton, author of 'Follow Your Dream: Become Your Own Career Coach and Get The Job You Love'**

*I thought the plan was a great one, and it showed that you don't need to invest in expensive advertising and PR to get your book into the best seller list on amazon.*

**Tracey Lawton, [www.traceylawton.com](http://www.traceylawton.com)**

*As a writer and author I thought the launch of the book and the best seller plan was both imaginative and highly effective and the best seller plan something that other authors and publishing houses may well copy in the future.*

Stephen Harvard Davis, [www.stephenharvarddavis.com](http://www.stephenharvarddavis.com)

*Getting a book high in the Amazon rankings in a single day is a remarkable feat, and shows the power of Internet marketing, combined with a great network. If I was looking to achieve the same thing, I'd call Debbie Jenkins immediately.*

Alan Stevens, [www.mediacoach.co.uk](http://www.mediacoach.co.uk)

*What a great way to prove that new marketing ideas can be outrageous and successful! A simple plan of building a great offer, with real value to everyone involved (a WIN-WIN-WIN-WIN situation; author, readers, publishers, bonus partners) and a simple system to make it all work, and in 24 hours!*

Nial Adams, [www.positive-response.net](http://www.positive-response.net)

*How To Get An Amazon bestseller is typical of the boldness and rigour of Debbie Jenkins and Joe Gregory!*

*It's bold because if you write a book about being ranked high on Amazon and it doesn't sell, you might look a tad foolish. Do they care? I don't think so. Because these guys are into learning and sharing what they learn! It's rigorous because they've developed their method and evaluated its success intensively.*

*I was fascinated by reading the inside story of their successful campaigns to do what it says on the tin. I was impressed by their honest recording of what went well and what went not so well. I was made to think hard about what I'm prepared to do to promote my own books.*

*It's a must-read for any author seeking to promote books in the current publishing climate. Even if you don't decide to use the method in its entirety, the book is stuffed with valuable advice and tips. Another bestseller on its way up I reckon!*

Alison Clark, author of 'How to Stop Flogging a Dead Horse'

*The campaign was highly targeted to include those people most likely to buy the book and who knew other interested people. It was all put together to make it easy for the people who wanted to help promote the book.*

Mindy Gibbins-Klein, The Book Midwife™, [www.bookmidwife.com](http://www.bookmidwife.com)

*We live in a world that is dominated by huge companies that spend a fortune telling us what to think and buy. There are face creams that make you look younger, processed supermarket food that tastes delicious, not to mention cars that look sexy because a French babe shakes her arse about. It's all a complete load of rubbish. This makes the success of Lean Marketing's bestseller plan even more satisfying. It's a group of individuals recommending a product they consider to be of value to people they trust, and who trust them. The big corporates would kill to have this sort of grass roots influence.*

**Russ King, Freelance Writer, [www.russwrites.net](http://www.russwrites.net)**

*It worked!!*

**Roger Harrop, Academy for Chief Executives Speaker of the Year,  
[www.rogerharrop.com](http://www.rogerharrop.com)**

*Great book that everyone in the book business should have and above all use. I found the advice very easy to follow and once implemented it works!*

**Fabrizio Poli, author of, 'Your Attitude Determines Your Altitude',  
[www.fabriziopoli.com](http://www.fabriziopoli.com)**

# Acknowledgements

Before we decided to stop selling our time and focus on selling books we commanded impressive day rates of £2,000 and more.

Now, I don't tell you this to impress you, but more to highlight the fact that anyone even considering making a living out of selling books - needs to sell a lot - and is probably a little bit crazy!

To make the kind of money we were used to selling books (that may only provide £5 profit each) is more challenging than many people think.

For a start, you have to sell a lot of books (400 in fact), just to make the same £2,000 we could earn in one day consulting. In addition, you have to do all the work up front and then hope enough people will actually buy what you've created to make the hours spent labouring over your masterpiece worthwhile.

“So why do it then?” You may ask.

We love books! We love the capacity for people to share ideas that can literally time-travel and impact the lives of people many years from now. With a book you can impact far more people than you ever could selling time. Plus we're probably a little bit crazy.

Well, despite the challenges we think we've cracked it. The book sales are coming in thick and fast and we're having a ball!

So many people have made our new publishing adventure worthwhile that it might take a book to thank them all, so we'd just like to thank: all of our brilliant “muddy boots” authors; the team at Lightning Source Inc for creating a printing service that enabled us to publish 32 books in less than 2 years; Chris Kinsey at Lightning Source for generously sharing his vast knowledge on the publishing industry with a couple of ignorant “marketing bods” like us and finally our partners, Marcus and Julie for enabling us to do what we love and allowing us to take a massive (temporary) pay cut to do it.

Plus, we mustn't forget to thank you for having the audacity to go for a bestseller yourself; the process might be simple - but that's no guarantee it's going to be easy.

**Debbie Jenkins & Joe Gregory, August 2006**

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# What's It All About?

## *Introduction*

Thousands of pounds are squandered every year by big publishers, corporations, movie studios, record labels and even smaller firms in an effort to “shout louder” than their competition in order to sell their products and services.

For some, if their pockets are deep enough and the thing they’re shouting about is half way to being unique or great, they will just about be heard over all the noise and make some serious money.

For the rest... well, they can shout and scream their little hearts out but one thing is certain. Nobody will be able to hear them amidst all the other noise makers who have bigger lungs and have paid for bigger megaphones.

Shouters spend vast quantities of money on advertising in an effort to interrupt people long enough to pay attention.

This is an old, outdated model of marketing that favours the strong (meaning the rich get richer) and it’s getting harder to be heard as more and more people join the chorus!

So what’s the alternative?

How about a quiet word in your prospect’s ear from a trusted friend? An event, offer or bargain so remarkable that people just have to pass on the news? Something that spreads like a positive rumour or legend about your product?

This approach enables you to infiltrate the noise, guarantees attention and increases response. People are more likely to trust the opinion of their friends than they are a guy standing in the street hawking his wares!

This book shows you how “strategic whispering” can powerfully launch your book without the need for a big mouth or a big budget.

We look forward to hearing your own success stories soon and helping you to succeed in your own profitable joint venture campaign!

Debbie Jenkins & Joe Gregory, *The Renegade Publishers*, [www.bookshaker.com](http://www.bookshaker.com)

## ***Why Should You Listen To Us?***

On Wednesday 5th April 2006 we made “...and death came third!” by Peter Roper and Andy Lopata an “instant bestseller” using the power of networking and good old fashioned “ethical bribery”!

Using our plan, the book stormed onto Amazon.co.uk's Hot 100 (number 83) by 8.20am and then rocketed to the top 10 (achieving number 2) by noon (a spot it kept for well over 24 hours after).

In all we sold over 2,000 books in a single day, making more than £30,000 in sales. That's in just ONE DAY!

2 months later we thought we'd try it again. This time with an audacious plan to get two books at the same time into the Hot 100 list at Amazon.co.uk. We worked with Simon Hazeldine and his books “*Bare Knuckle Selling*” and “*Bare Knuckle Negotiating*” and at the beginning of July 2006 these two books hit numbers 7 and 14 (respectively) on the Amazon.co.uk charts.

A week later our third campaign was launched, with a slightly different focus, this time to reach 1 million people. The book was “*The Soul Millionaire*”, written by David Scarlett. It reached number 17 on Amazon.co.uk with a 1-week long campaign.

So, we've tried this a few times now, with varying degrees of success. Most importantly we've measured, monitored, improved, changed, tracked and innovated at every stage.

And perhaps even more importantly than that, everything we did is included here for you to see, read and draw your own conclusions from. We haven't hidden anything. All our mistakes, the outtakes, the negative stuff - it's all here. You don't have to guess “what happened next?” - we tell you the whole truth, warts and all.

This book lets you quickly get to the stage we're at, without going through all the heart and brain ache, so that when you launch your book, you can be sure of success.

## ***Why Get A Bestseller?***

The credibility gained from having a bestselling book is huge. Just some of the benefits include; increased opportunities to upsell other books, higher speaking, consulting and training fees (bestselling author is a badge of authenticity to many), increased press interest and something great to add to your business profile, CV and business cards.

In fact, being able to call yourself a “bestselling” author raises you to a whole new level (whether perceived or real) in your marketplace.

This approach even works with existing books that just didn’t sell. So whether your book has been doing the rounds for a few years or whether you’re looking to launch your book soon, the steps involved will work for you too.

Now, we’ve only tried this with non-fiction books, but the steps outlined should work with fiction books too. You will need to think more carefully about the targeting. And of course, there’s a much greater chance of having a hugely successful runaway seller, as the target market for fiction is usually larger than for non-fiction!

And if you’re just at the “thinking about writing a book” stage then read *The Book* on page 7 first, before you even write another word!

### ***But, Is It Really A Bestseller?***

When Andy and Peter had their first telecall with us to discuss their book (“... and Death Came Third”), Andy asked a great question: “Can you make this book a bestseller?”

At the time we were coy - a bestseller from whose point of view? Wikipedia<sup>1</sup> says that the term bestseller “*is not usually associated with a specified level of sales, or considered of superior academic value or literary quality, it simply implies great popularity.*” So whose definition of best seller should we be aiming for? And who would be the judge of our success?

During the campaigns we’ve been attacked a number of times about the validity of “bestseller status”, with the argument usually resting along the lines of: “cheating the Amazon results for a day or a week doesn’t make your book a bestseller, it just means you can sell lots of books in a short space of time.” Well, what’s the problem with that?

But anyway, try telling the popular music-combo Elmo & Patsy that their one hit wonder in the 80’s, the hugely popular (no really!) *Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer* wasn’t a bestseller! Or, Mac and Katie Kissoon with *Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep* in the 70’s. (If you’re anything like me you’ve now got “*Woke up this morning and my momma was gone, Ooooo, Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep, Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep Chirp!*” spinning through your head! Sorry!)

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1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/bestseller>

Other people suggest that the only way to really have a bestseller is to have your book listed in a “proper” list like the Forbes 100, or The Sunday Times 100, or The Dog Lovers Weekly 100 - hey, who cares. The goal is to sell lots of books and be publicly recognised for it.

One of the arguments for having your book listed in the “proper” bestseller lists is that you can’t “buy” your way in. Get real! Do you really think Harry Potter books get to number 1 with NO marketing budget? That Bloomsbury just published the first book and hoped that because it was “really lovely, and a jolly good read”, that everyone would buy it and make it into an instant bestseller? No, they marketed it. Ruthlessly, to kids! They spent money (lots of it) and they got a great book into the bestseller list, which made way for more books to be sold (to kids!) Books are business - plain and simple.

And finally, on this subject of “is it really a bestseller, aren't you just manipulating the rankings?”, consider this: every time you go into your local bookstore, and marvel at the displays of “bestselling” books, some publisher has probably paid a mint for their book to be on show. In fact some bookstores (WHSmiths for one) won't put a book on it's recommended reading list UNLESS the publisher pays - £50,000 PER WEEK! So if you're wondering if you're being manipulated, wonder no more.

Until the definitive definition (shoot me for the grammar!) of “bestseller” comes along, then we're going to use this one: In the Amazon Top 100 for any length of time. It works for us. You can make your own definition up!

## ***Why Amazon?***

With online book shops increasingly being the place where most book sales are made, we decided that Amazon represented one of the most visible and credible places to get a bestselling book for our authors. Also, Amazon's Hot 100 List (which is where bestselling books are featured) is updated dynamically every hour providing us with real-time information to gauge our success. And the rankings are based on number of sales and not how much you're willing to bribe them for.

You could choose a different list to use. It really doesn't matter, especially if your goal isn't the “bestseller” status. In fact, if you're more interested in selling books and making profit you could even sell via your own website.

When our goal is to “only” sell books we use our own website to send

buyers to, that way we get to keep (and share with our author) more of the profit, by keeping 3<sup>rd</sup> parties out of the game.

## ***What About “Amazon Campaign Fatigue” - Aren't People Jaded By All This Hype?***

Is there such a thing as “Amazon campaign fatigue”? I don't know. What I do know is that there are a few people out there knocking the whole idea. These people tend to fall into one of 3 main categories: 1) they don't have a book themselves, 2) they have a book that doesn't really sell, but don't have the gumption to try and make it a bestseller. After all if they fail they might look stupid! 3) They believe that if a book is good enough (like theirs, of course!) that it will become a bestseller all on it's own - yeah right!

Some people are quietly appreciative of the whole idea, for example one well known coach gives these top 10 reasons why you should do a campaign:

1. It gives you a deadline.
2. It gives you public accountability.
3. It can be a lot of fun.
4. It will boost your energy and give you more drive.
5. Credibility.
6. Exposure.
7. You get bragging rights in your marketing materials.
8. You give others a reason to talk about you to their lists.
9. It's good practice.
10. You can sell a lot of books.

Strangely, this very same person says she would never do one herself. How did she come to that conclusion?

So, how can you overcome “Amazon Campaign Fatigue”? Simple, by not calling it an “Amazon campaign”. There is no need to tell the world that you're trying to get to the top 10 on Amazon. They don't need to know (unless it's part of your marketing strategy to tell them). Tell people what's in it for them and they won't care if you want to get to the top of the Amazon listings or to the top of dog lovers weekly!

Remember, this is a marketing campaign and your goal to sell box loads of books. So with that in mind the usual rules of marketing should prevail.

## ***Finally, Do You Have What It Takes?***

If you're thinking any of these thoughts:

Everybody hates me...

What if people don't like my book?

They're all out to get me...

I'm not well connected enough...

I'm not respected or famous enough...

Nobody understands me...

Why does this always happen to me...

Nobody loves me...

Who can I trust?...

I can't do that!

I never get any luck...

Someday...

But what if?...

People might laugh at me...

Then, you need help!

No seriously, these types of thoughts will ensure you waste your time with a bestseller campaign. Some of the thoughts are addressed throughout this book which will help you get rid of any worries that are founded in reality. But if you're a negative type thinker then you'll get a negative type result.

You might want to try the self-test on page 71: Should I Do An Amazon Bestseller? to really work out if you do have what it takes!

There's also a set of skills required. Either your own skills, or those of people you "employ" to help you with the campaign. This set of skills is included as an appendix, Skills Required on page 110.

# Preparation

All good plans require preparation. A bestselling book campaign is no different. The quality of the preparation will determine the quality of your results.

## ***The Book***

Arguably the single most important aspect of your campaign is the book. More specifically the marketability of the book.

The books we selected were:

1. “... and Death Came Third” - Andy Lopata & Peter Roper - business book on networking and public speaking.
2. “Bare Knuckle Selling” & “Bare Knuckle Negotiating” - Simon Hazeldine - selling and negotiating systems for business people.
3. “The Soul Millionaire” - David J Scarlett - self help book with mass appeal.

It’s interesting to note however that non-fiction, and in particular, non-fiction *business* books, aren’t seen by many as the easiest kind of books to make into a bestseller. In non-fiction, self help books with a general appeal to a mass audience will typically be an easier choice - for obvious reasons - there are more prospective readers. More details about these books, the respective campaigns and the actual results can be found at the end of each chapter in the Case Studies sections.

## **WHAT MAKES A GOOD BOOK?**

Not all books are destined to be an Amazon bestseller. In fact not all books are destined to sell at all. The selection of book is vitally important if your plan is to work. Not all books are created equal and not all authors will have the right connections to call upon for support.

***Not All Books Are Created Equal.***

For a book to become a bestseller it needs:

1. To either a) solve a big problem or b) make a compelling promise that a good number of people are interested in.
2. To be written by someone who knows their stuff and has credibility already within their network/subject area.