

Authors Community



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Identifying Your Ideal Reader

by Randy Ingermanson

(The following is excerpted from "Finding Your Audience and Category," Chapter 3 of WRITING FICTION FOR DUMMIES)

. . . Enough about you. Now it's time to think about your reader (that's reader in the abstract sense -- you'll have more than one in real life). You're going to find a publisher willing to invest in your book only if you can persuade that publisher that there are readers who'll want to buy and read it.

Many writers think that to get published, they need to appeal to a huge, broad target audience. Ultimately, yes, you'd like to have a lot of readers. But at the beginning of your career, you need to think narrow rather than broad. The early marketing has to focus on somebody. A marketing plan that targets everybody is going to be incredibly expensive, and it's also likely to dilute the message.

Your book's overall appeal will depend on how well you write your story, not on the size of your target audience. What small niche of readers can you interest better than any other author in the world? These few readers will burn hottest when you light your marketing flame. If you can find them, they'll help you find a broader audience.

This section helps you envision your ideal reader. If your ideal reader is a lot like you, you'll understand your reader's mindset well as you write. If your ideal reader looks nothing like you, that's fine -- as long as you do your homework and figure out how your target reader thinks.

These questions may be the most critical ones you consider: How do your ideal

readers think about the world? What captures their interest? Are your ideal readers:

* Religious or not particularly so? If religious, are they Christian, Jewish, Muslim, or Buddhist, for example? If not religious, are they agnostic, atheist, or just not interested?

* Political or not especially so? If political, what party are they affiliated with? Are they conservative or liberal? Militarist or pacifist?

* Well-educated, or not inclined to consider education a priority?

* Interested in auto racing? Molecular biology? Parenting? Immigration issues? Submarine technology? Erotic liaisons? Hegelian philosophy? Gambling? Camel milking?

You have a profound opportunity to define your ideal reader in a way that excites your publisher. If you can show that you've identified some core group of readers who will love your novel, then you've found an audience worthy of a focused marketing plan. Here are some novels with well-defined target audiences:

* Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* was targeted at readers skeptical of the official history of early Christianity. The novel combined lightning action with a series of intellectual puzzles that captured the imagination of the target audience and led to incredible word-of-mouth publicity.

* William P. Young's *The Shack* took aim at conservative Christian readers wanting answers to the tough theological question "How can a good and all-powerful God allow evil?" The novel touched the hearts and minds of these readers, leading to explosive sales. Note that these two novels target completely separate audiences. The marketing campaign of each one was designed to appeal to a core audience, not to some vague "everybody."

Both campaigns were far more effective because they were focused . . .

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Memories, Memories Web-Ed Class
LIVE! November 3rd 11 am Eastern/10 am Central

by Kathrin Herr

What's the difference between a memoir and an autobiography?

You might have suffered some unbearable pain or struggled with an almost impossible goal or calling. Telling that story could be a life-giving message to another who is facing the same challenges. Kathrin Herr's specialty is helping authors perfect and polish their memoirs. Learn how to tell your story not only effectively, but with passion and clarity.

Kathrin will cover:

- Developing your "Why" for writing your story
- How to start writing and finish a draft
- How to structure your draft into a story people want to read (discussing theme, your author mission statement, developing your characters, and structuring your timeline)
- How to find or work with an editor on your memoir
- Publishing Considerations and why I recommend self-publishing
- How to get your book read--general marketing advice for memoirists

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My mom used to say, "He who toot-ith not his own horn, the same shall not be tooted." I have a huge problem with this, which is why marketing my own stuff doesn't go so well. However, please let us know about your stuff! Awards? Book sales goal reached? Works in Progress? Milestones? Something you'd like tweeted?

[Let us know here!](#)

[Writing a Memoir?](#) Give us some highlights here. Start a thread, ask a question, let's talk about it before the Web-Ed class.

[CRMs What are they and how do they help?](#)

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Blog Highlights

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by *Richie Billing*

There's always a horse in a fantasy book. So I decided to do a bit of research on the trusty steeds that carry us fearlessly into battle, and this is what I found...

[Time Management God's Way](#)

by *Gina Burgess*

If you really want great time management. Before you get out of bed, give the day to the Lord and ask Him to manage your time for you. Sounds too simple to be true, right?

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