

13 AUDIO SESSIONS

WORKBOOK & ACTION PLANS



The Buzz Seminar

MASTER CLASS

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The Buzz Seminar

Master Class Workbook

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READ THIS FIRST

The Buzz Seminar Master Course is not a "Christian" training. It was created for *all* writers and bloggers regardless of their spiritual or theological perspectives. Frank put the Buzz Seminar Master Course together in 2014, and the resources have continued to be updated since that time. The political, theological, social, or moral views of the other presenters are solely their own and do not represent an endorsement from Frank.

What each presenter taught *in* their respective sessions *is* approved, since the subject matter is strictly on writing and blogging. However, *what* the presenters may believe or practice on *other subjects* today is not a reflection of Frank's views or his endorsement. At the time the Seminar was created in 2014, each presenter was a person of faith and held to Christian values. But what they may hold to today on those issues doesn't affect their training sessions below, which again, is non-spiritual, non-political, and non-religious in nature. Keep this in mind as you read the workbook.

Also, at the time this book was created, all the links to various websites worked. However, websites come and go, so it's possible that some of the sites no longer work. Just a heads up.

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1. HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

The first audio in this course includes a personal welcome by Frank Viola and an Introduction from the live Buzz Seminar by Mike Morrell.

The way to use this workbook is simple.

- * Listen to each audio as you look through the corresponding chapter in this workbook.
- * After you finish each audio and chapter, do the action plans in the worksheets.

The course contains 568 minutes of audio teaching. That's approximately 9.5 hours.

Listen, and then work through this workbook. And most of all, apply everything you learn.

Also, the **Kindle** and **Nook** versions of this workbook are contained on the CD as well as the **PDF** version.

Enjoy the course!

The Buzz Team

2. HOW TO BUILD YOUR HIVE

by Frank Viola

In this seminar, we will give you the skeleton. We will give you the tools. But you will have to build the person.

Consequently, it's up to you to take action on this training. Education is meaningless without action.

Quick Testimonial: I started my blog - frankviola.org - in June 2008. It was a hobby back then. I blogged periodically and wasn't intentional about building my blog community.

At the end of 2011, I discovered that people could earn income from blogging. So in 2012, I became intentional about blogging and building a blog community.

My goal was to become a professional blogger by December 2013. I didn't keep stats from 2008 through 2010, but they were abysmal.

In 2011, my blog received 1.2 million pageviews and 119,000 unique visitors.

In 2013, it received 4.7 million pageviews and 800,000 unique visitors with over 80,000 monthly readers.

Some Metaphors:

The *honeycomb* is your blog. It's a place in cyberspace that you own and control.
The *hive* is your community.

In keeping with the Buzz theme, you are the *queen bee*. Queen bees are servant-leaders.

Queen bees produce the eggs that become workers who build the hive and gather pollen and nectar, which creates the community.

Your main goal = to build your hive and create a high-quality honeycomb and to bring as many people to your honeycomb as possible.

Some Definitions:

"plugging" is when you promote your own work.

"hype" is when you exaggerate your own work.

"buzz" is when other people fervently spread your work.

How to Build a First-Class Honeycomb (Blog)

1. Get a self hosted Wordpress.org blog. (Not Wordpress.com, but Wordpress.org.) Wordpress.org allows you to use Plugins.

Plus you own the blog. I recommend Bluehost for your hosting service. It's as low as \$4.00 a month. Go to buzzseminar.org/resources for the link

Password: 99997777

2. Figure out what your blog will be about. It should be based on one or more of the following:
 - a. your expertise (what you do better or know more about than most people)
 - b. what you are learning (if you're not an expert yet, position yourself as a student. Take your readers on the learning journey with you.)
 - c. your passion (what gets you excited and makes you come alive)
 - d. your art (you see beauty in things that others don't)

With over 300 million blogs on the Web today, the more narrow your niche, the better your blog will do.

Look for the unexplored niches, the micro-niches. They will have less competition.

TIP: There are tons of people in every niche on the Web. You just have to find them.

Every blogger uses the same ingredients; it's the recipe that makes each one distinct.

Examples: There are only 7 notes, but look at what Beethoven, Chopan and Mozart did with those 7 notes. Look what Adele, Elvis, Celine Dion, The Beatles, Michael Jackson, Garth Brooks . . . name your band or artist . . . did with them.

They all used the same elements, but the mixture and formulate was vastly different.

Jimi Hendrix had a unique blend of blues and psychedelics with his own unique theatrical dramatics.

Led Zeppelin had a unique blend of rhythm and blues, rock, and folk.

Lynyrd Skynyrd had a unique blend of blues, rock, and country music.

Frederick Buechner said, "Vocation is the place where our deep gladness meets the world's deep need."

Your mission is where your passion collides with a felt need among a specific group of people.

Go to buzzseminar.com/resources for books that will help you find your mission.

You need to find out *who* your target audience is and you need to learn how to speak their language.

3. Craft a mission statement and put it on your about page.

Your mission statement should be benefit oriented.

"I help [specific group of people/niche] to better [what your writing equips them to do]."

Example - my mission statement:

My mission is to help serious followers of Jesus to know their Lord more deeply, to gain fresh perspectives on old or ignored subjects, and to make the Bible come alive.

TIP: Don't rip off someone else's brand or style. Be yourself. (If you become a wanna-be, you'll fail. Plus you'll tick off a lot of people.)

4. Choose a name for your blog.

a. use your own name. Ex. frankviola.org

If someone is already using your name for a domain, you could use RealJoeSmith.com or TheRealJoeSmith.com or JoeSmithWriter.com / JoeSmithsBlog.com

Many bloggers use their first and last name. You'll want to have that anyway even if you name the blog something else.

b. use your niche name. Ex. BeyondEvangelical.com / TheDeeperJourney.com

Features of your blog name:

- a. easy to pronounce.
- b. memorable.
- c. easy to spell.
- d. true to your content (describes you or your brand).

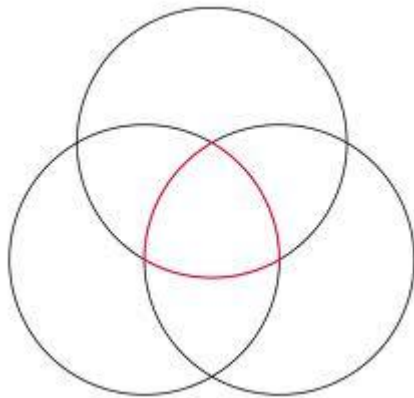
.com and .org are preferred, but also grab .net if you can.

A great book for naming things is on buzzseminar.com/resources.

5. I recommend StormHill Media. They can design and set your blog up on Wordpress.org.

6. For Banners & Feature boxes. Check out someone on Fiverr: fiverr.com.

7. The Blog Trinity: Design. Content. Community



The Truth: Content is king. Design is king. Community is king.

You can have great content, but if have no community (readers), you'll fail

You can have great content, but if the design is poor, you'll fail.

You can have a great community, but you'll lose it if you don't have a good design or great content.

Design

Characteristics of a good design:

- * professional-looking
- * clean
- * easy to read

- * I recommend Studio Themes - find the link at buzzseminar.org/resources

- * Brand Colors. Use 3 colors that coordinate. Use the same colors for your social media pages: FaceBook, Twitter, etc.

- * My 3 colors for frankviola.org are green/brown/white

- * Recommended Fonts: Georgia font for text; Serif font for headings.

* Add a search window widget at the top right or left sidebar (this comes with Wordpress).

Content

Characteristics of great content:

a. make it remarkable. Your content is so good that people remark on it to their friends.

b. be consistent.

Frequency:

In the beginning, I recommend you blog 5 days a week with one post per day IF YOU CAN SUSTAIN THAT. I'd do that for 3 to 6 months. This increases your traffic dramatically.

I did this for a year. It increased my traffic in a big way, but it was too much for some of my readers so I dialed it back to 3x a week. I blogged 3x a week for a very long time. Recently, I started posting 2x a week - Monday and Thursdays.

Don't blog too much - more than 1 post per day is too much. And don't post too little - less than one post a week is too infrequent.

The most important thing is consistency: Let your readers know when you will blog and keep to it. Consistency builds credibility and trust.

c. Length of posts - 300 to 800 words. Some posts should be 1,000 to 3,000. The search engines love long posts. But they will burn out your readers if you mostly write long posts. So I suggest 80% of your posts stay under 800 words. And 20% of them be 1,000 words or more.

CHEAT SHEET - 35 Ways to Come Up With Good Content

- 1. Watch a movie.** Inspiration for allegories, metaphors, and analogies.
- 2. Read a book in your niche.**
- 3. Read other people's blogs.**
- 4. Keep up to date on news and online trends.** Use these resources to track current trends (the websites were functioning when this document was written).

popurls.com

google.com/trends

news.google.com

Connect the trend to your blog themes. Make the story have something to do with your niche. Ex. Let's say that Justin Bieber is in the news. A blogger who specializes in writing can craft a post called *What Justin Bieber Can Teach You About Writing*.

- 6. Assault the norm.** Think outside the box on a subject.
- 7. Tell a tear-jerker.**
- 8. Review the newspapers.**
- 9. If you're a person of faith, ask God for ideas and inspiration.**
- 10. Write a story about a specific struggle you've had and how you solved it.**
- 11. When you get up to 1,000 subscribers, take a "sense of the hive"**

Meaning: Ask your audience what their biggest struggle, frustration, or problem is. Do a survey once a year with your readers. For polls, I recommend surveymonkey.com.

- 12. Riff on a popular post written by someone else.** Provide your own commentary on someone else's post. Be sure to link to their post that you're commenting on.
- 13. Talk to a friend.** Lots of my ideas are born in my conversations with friends.
- 14. Make a prediction.**
- 15. Create a Vlog** - a video of yourself talking about a subject.

16. Highlight someone's comment in a previous post in a new blog post and expand on it.

17. Interview yourself. Make it humorous.

18. Answer a question from one of your readers.

19. Write an "advice for" (a specific group) or "how-to" post for your readers.

20. Talk about a lesson you learned from a particular event in your life or someone else's life.

21. Ask your readers to give their opinion on a controversial subject. People like to give their opinions. It makes them feel valued.

22. Review a book.

23. Review a product or a service that would be of interest to your readers.

24. Create a resource post that curates content from other sites on the same theme.

Ex. "Articles on How to Lose Weight Without Counting Calories" or "How to Make New Friends" - add links to many different articles on the Web.

25. Interview someone you want to learn from.

26. Change your view and explain why you changed it.

27. Write a "it's not your fault" post.

28. Write a "I'm on your side" post.

29. Write a post based on an experience that's powerful and deeply personal to you.

Ex. Losing a Friend.

TIP: If you post something personal, set wise boundaries. Authenticity doesn't mean you "show off" the dirty details of your life. Transparency isn't the same as over-sharing. You will repel many readers if you give TMI. Blathering in detail about your bad habits or personal screw-ups is off-putting to most readers. Again, the blog is about them, not you. When you share personal stories, be tasteful, concise, and spend most of your time on the point that will benefit your readers.

- 30. Post a quote from a famous person and expand on it.** Or just write the quote without comment.
- 31. Watch how popular bloggers write and learn from them.** But don't rip them off.
- 32. Take a stand on a controversial issue and argue it with passion and unassailable logic.**
- 33. Buy a special calendar and make it your exclusive blog/editorial calendar.** Plan ahead. This gets the juices flowing and keeps you on point.
- 34. Write a second post extending a previous post you wrote.** Ex. On my Patheos blog, I wrote a post called "The Swearing Christian" and asked my readers if they thought a Christian should use profanity. Sometime later, I followed it up with my 13 cents on the subject.
- 35. Every quarter, write a post highlighting your top posts for the quarter.** After a year or two, move to every six months or once a year. Ex. "My Top Posts for [the year]."

Community

The key to your success = Gaining email Subscribers to your blog. This is far better than RSS subscribers. Email is more personal and it reaches more people than an RSS feed.

Services:

Feedburner: It's free, but cumbersome for email. It's fine for RSS. I started using it for email on one of my blogs so I'm stuck with it.

MailChimp: You can set it up for your blog subscribers. It's free for the first 2,000 subscribers. See buzzseminar.org/resources to start using MailChimp.

AWeber - Endorsed highly, but I've never used it.

The Perfect Hive-Build Strategy

Your goal is to generate a community of loyal subscribers who will regularly read your content and enthusiastically spread it to their friends.

To create your Hive:

1. Provide an Incentive for people to subscribe to your blog. The incentive must have value. It has to be something *you* would want. An irresistible offer. An opt-in magnet.

Examples:

- * a free eBook

- * a free audio or video seminar.

- * a free resource list

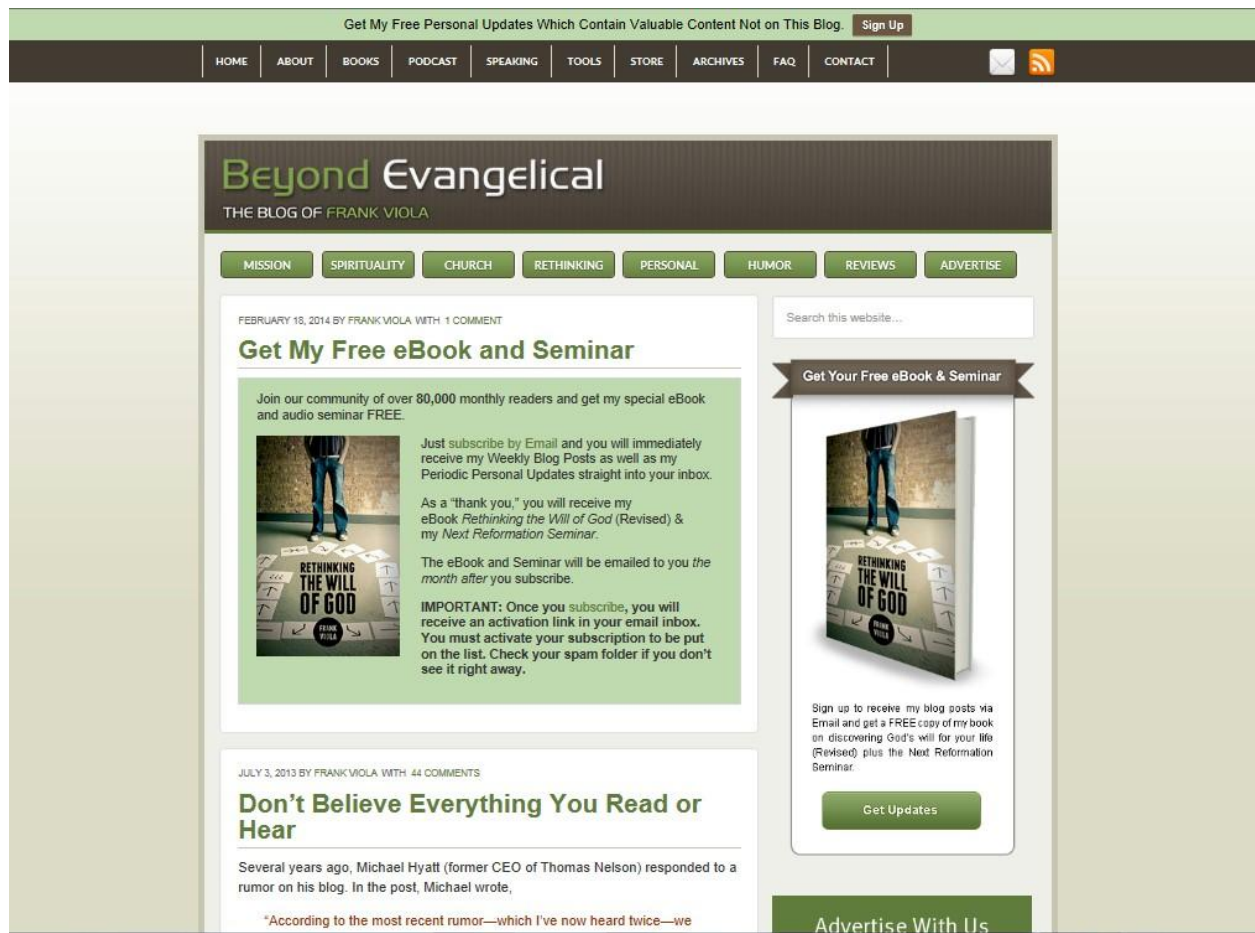
(I provide a free eBook and audio seminar - people can't get them anywhere else. They must subscribe to my blog to get them.)

TIP: If you don't have an incentive, build your blog and subscribe list anyway. Follow the motto: Launch now, improve later.

I suggest you have 3-5 strong posts on your blog before you officially launch it and make it public.

2. Eight Locations for Your Email Opt-ins

The Home page - 4 locations. A designer created the feature box on the right. (This was my site before 2023, but it still has the same features today.)



Position 1 - WP Front Notification Bar Wordpress plugin.

Position 2 - The email subscriber form icon to the left of the RSS feed icon.

Position 3 - Blog post that's a "sticky post."

Position 4 - The feature box on the top right hand sidebar.

The "About" Page - 2 locations.

[Get My Free Personal Updates Which Contain Valuable Content Not on This Blog.](#) [Sign Up](#)

Beyond Evangelical

THE BLOG OF FRANK VIOLA

[MISSION](#) [SPIRITUALITY](#) [CHURCH](#) [RETHINKING](#) [PERSONAL](#) [HUMOR](#) [REVIEWS](#) [ADVERTISE](#)

About

Hey, how's it going? I'm Frank Viola.

I'm happily married, a father, a cat owner, the author of *God's Favorite Place on Earth* and *From Slavery to Here*, a speaker, a writer, and an entrepreneur. I love movies, music, and NY style pizza.

But this blog isn't about me, it's about you.

My mission is to help serious followers of Jesus to know their Lord more deeply, to gain fresh perspectives on old or ignored subjects, and to make the Bible come alive.



If you are someone whose heart cry is: "There's got to be more to the Lord, to the Christian faith, and to church than this," then this blog is for you. Let me explain . . .

Most Christians know that something is wrong with contemporary Christianity. They want to break free from the tyranny of the status quo. The two alternatives that dominate Christian culture today is spiritual complacency on the one hand or performance-based religiosity on the other.

Modern-day Christianity is 10 miles wide and one inch deep.

I've created this blog to break through to a higher and deeper expression of the faith . . . one that digs below the surface and moves beyond the shallow.

[Subscribe Today](#) 

The Deeper Journey

The blog is designed for Jesus followers who don't feel comfortable with the Conservative Right or the Progressive Left, but who are looking for a more authentic, biblical expression of the Christian faith that contains and ignites passion for Jesus.

Here are the seven themes I write on, all of which are related to "The Deeper Journey."

- > God's Grand Mission
- > The Deeper Christian Life
- > Missional Organic Church
- > Rethinking the Status Quo
- > Personal
- > Humor
- > Reviews

My books provide my best thinking on knowing Jesus more deeply, gaining fresh perspectives on old (or ignored) subjects, and making the Bible come alive.

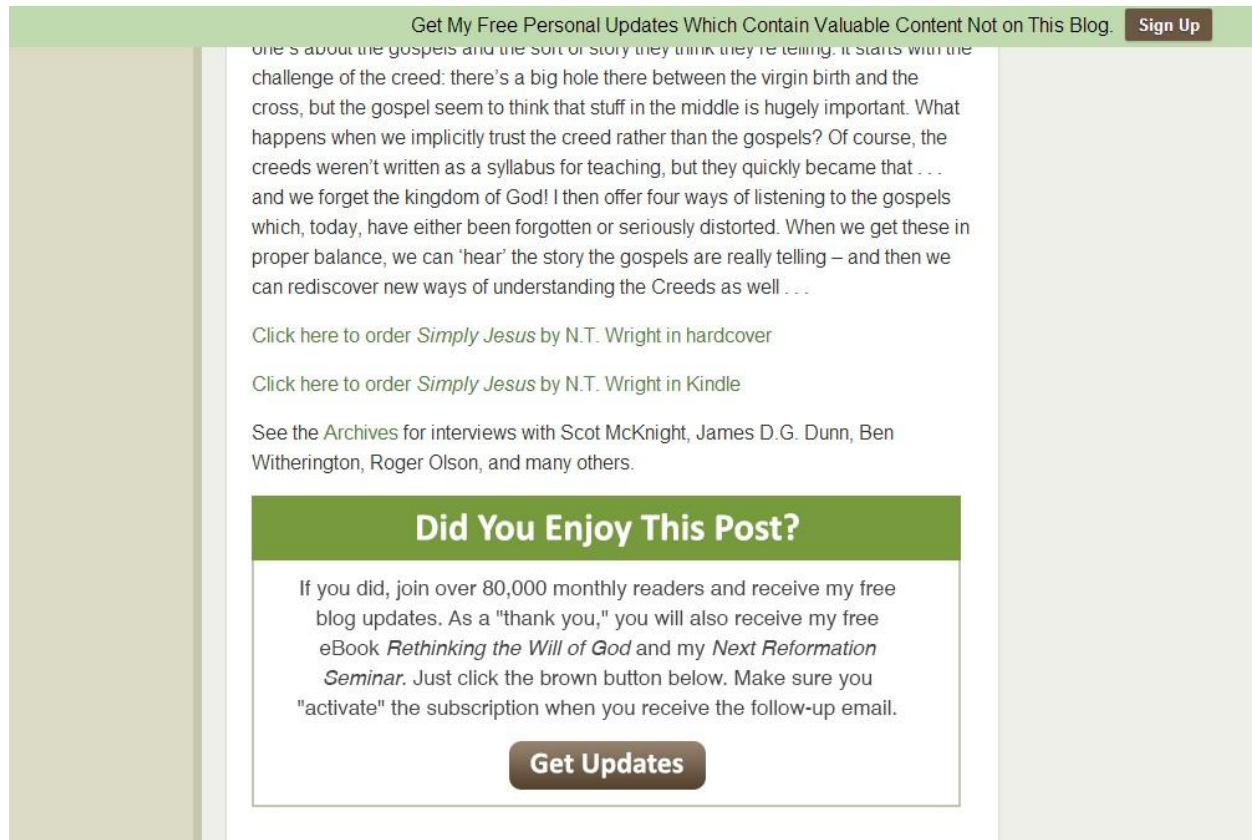
[Click here to see my complete book catalog.](#)

Periodically, I feature book reviews and interviews with other authors, as well as helpful resources that I come across. (This breaks the "echo-chamber" phenomenon that's in the bloodstream of the blogosphere today.)

[Subscribe Today](#) 

The 7th location: At the bottom of your posts, create a call-to-action opt-in box for people to subscribe.

Social Proof: Show the # of subscribers when you exceed 10k. If you have a blog with many posts, find your 5 most popular posts and insert the box below them. Also add it to all new posts.



The 8th location: A Mobile/Rotating Opt-in form on other sites:

Ex. Post an excerpt of your free resource on other blogs and webzines along with the opt-in at the bottom of the excerpt for those who want to get the entire resource.

3 OTHER WAYS TO BUILD YOUR EMAIL LIST (YOUR HIVE)

1. Use a Pop Up Plugin. (These sites were working as of 2015.)

- * [Dreamgrow's Scroll Triggered Box](#).
- * [Optinmonster](#) - paid - optinmonster.com. I have friend who swear by this, but I've never used it.
- * [Hybrid-connect](#) - paid. I tried it, but it was too complicated for me, so I canceled.
- * [BounceExchange](#) is a premium paid service. I've never used it, but some high profile bloggers do. It's expensive, but they will customize a quote for you.

* [UpPreve](#) - free plugin - side bottom slider popup. This features your previous posts.

TIP: If you use a popup, don't make it appear as soon as people hit your blog. Make it wait for a number of seconds or have it appear after they read 50% or so of a post.

Before using a pop up on your blog, I'd wait until you build up 500 to 1,000 subscribers first and have an incentive to give away something of value to those who subscribe.

2. Use the Comment Redirect Plugin. When a visitor leaves their first comment, they are redirected them to a landing page that thanks them for the comment and tells them why they should subscribe.

You can also use a plugin called [Thank Me Later](#) which sends them an email thanking them. However, I've never used this one, but other people I trust recommend it.

3. Submit a Free eBook You Wrote or an Audiobook of Yours to Noisetrade.com.

[NoiseTrade](#) used to offer free books to their audience. Advertise with them so your product goes into their newsletter. (This feature may not be available anymore.)

TIP: For my main blog - frankviola.org - I don't have a Twitter or FaceBook box on the blog. My goal is to build my email list. FaceBook and Twitter are channels to bring people to the blog and not the other way around.

My sidebar is for:

- * **the search window**
- * **a feature box opt-in form**
- * **a banner for advertisers**
- * **a banner for my most popular posts**
- * **banners for my books**

3. CHEAT SHEET: 43 HARD-WON TIPS FOR BLOGGING

by Frank Viola

1. Use Subheadings, Numbered Lists, Bullet Points, and Short Paragraphs (3-4 sentences). Cherish the line break. When it comes to blogging, brevity rules. Edit ruthlessly. Reduce as much as you can. And cut until there's nothing left to cut. Why? Because most people scan blogs.

2. Use Proper Grammar and Spelling. Misspelled words and bad grammar communicate that you're not terribly educated, and hence, people shouldn't take you seriously. Typos are inevitable. But poor grammar and a lot of misspellings hurt your content and message.

Common mistakes wherein the grammar Nazis will slam dunk you:

your vs. you're

it's vs. its

there vs. their

loose vs. lose

different from vs. different than - the former is correct (different from).

affect vs. effect (affect is a verb; effect is a noun)

who vs. whom

(**who** wrote the letter/**he** wrote the letter)

(for **whom** should I vote?/should I vote for **him**?)

3. Don't Obsess Over Statistics. It takes time to grow your hive. Check traffic once a week, no more.

4. Use Titles That Are Magnetic. Writing good titles is an art. The title is your advertisement to get people to look at your post. Good title-writing is a skill. With time and practice, you'll hone the craft. Resources for writing great titles:

See the titles for writing great headlines at buzzseminar.org/resources

Also, upworthy.com uses attention-getting, juicy, compelling headlines.

5. Speak To Your Readers Directly. It's best to use "you" when you are writing your posts. Talk to your readers as if you are having a conversation with them over coffee. This personalizes your posts and makes them more readable.

6. Don't Talk Too Much About Yourself. Most people are naturally self-absorbed. Thus your readers are more interested in themselves than they are about you. The exception is if you're a celebrity. Then they want to know how many times you floss your teeth!

7. Allow Engagement, But Moderate Comments. You will attract haters, especially if your blog is successful, popular, and is influencing people. Learn to deal with haters wisely. See *Haters Gonna Hate: How to Deal with Haters & Three Kinds of Critics and How to Deal with Them* at buzzseminar.com/resources

TIP: Make it easy for people to comment. Don't use the CAPTCHA technology which prevents spam bots. Instead use the [Askimet plugin](#) to cut down on spam comments.

IMPORTANT: Never allow a person to put a link in their comments which attacks or slanders another person. By doing so, you're providing a platform for the slander. Defamation is a serious legal issue as well as a moral one.

8. Participate in the Conversation. If you allow comments on your blog, respond when necessary. You may not have time to respond to *every* comment. But do your best to respond to the comments that contain questions directed to you. Strive to be a good, accessible host. Your readers will appreciate it.

9. Never Post a Link to Your Own Blog While Commenting on Another Person's Blog. This is perceived as self-promoting and you will be scorned for that.

10. Make Sure Your First Paragraph is Strong. By "strong," I mean compelling, grabbing, interesting. Most readers will decide to read an entire post based on the title and the first paragraph. So you can't afford to make it weak.

11. Rarely Use Exclamation Points. The ! used to communicate passion and emphasis. Today, it communicates anger or shouting. So use them sparingly.

12. Think Through the Ramifications Before You Post. Once you click the "publish" button, your post becomes visible online for the whole world to see. Don't post when you are angry or upset.

13. Keep Your Posts on Message. Avoid rambling. Stay with your idea from beginning to end.

14. Never Defame Another Person. Defamation of someone's character is a serious matter. Not to mention that it has legal ramifications. You'll lose readers fast.

15. Link to Others When Appropriate. If you are mentioning another post or article written by someone else, link to it. Mentioning it without a link is a violation of web etiquette, and it won't reflect well on you. But be sure you link to high-quality content.

16. Never Copy and Paste Someone Else's Blog Post on Your Blog. This is stealing, plain and simple. And it shows laziness on your part. Instead, you can quote or excerpt up to four paragraphs from their post, then provide a link to the whole post.

17. Create a Series. When you have a ton of material on a specific topic, and it's too much to fit into a single blog post, create a series of posts on the topic that build upon one another over a period of days. However, for every post, be sure to link to the next post in the series. Failure to do this will frustrate your readers.

18. Keep a Blog Queue. This is also your idea swipe file. This comes in handy for "emergency posts" also. Inspiration can hit you at any moment, so keep a pad and pen handy at all times. Convert your written thoughts into a blog queue. This has been an enormous help to me in my blogging journey.

19. Mix It Up (Use Variety). Change the pace of your posts using audio, video, interviews, reviews, stories, essays, numbered lists, surveys, etc.

20. Be Relatable. If readers feel -- "I'm a lot like you" -- after reading your posts, you've done well.

21. Write to Meet the Needs of Your Readers. Write to benefit them. To add value to their lives.

22. Aim to be Compelling - Thoughtful - Entertaining - Educational - Instructive - Unique and Interesting. Use humor and wit. Give people value. Make your blog useful. As the queen bee, you're a servant-leader. If you steward this position properly, people will buzz about your work.

23. Never Use Your Blog as a Bully-Pulpit. Some bloggers use their blogs to attack other people by name or implication. Never vent your personal gripes, bruised ego, or hurt feelings on your blog. Be taller than that. Don't live in the gutter. You will repel readers fast. And eventually the "true believers" will also depart. This is a misuse of your blog. It

makes your blog about *you* instead of about your readers. And it only makes you look pathetic and small.

24. Reach Out to Other Bloggers in Your Industry. The secret to having a successful blog is not only writing brilliant content, but having well-connected friends.

Target 5 to 10 successful bloggers you'd like to get to know in your niche:

THIS IS ON THE PAR WITH THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS: Your first email to a fellow blogger should only be about one thing: *How you can help them*. Get to know their work, give them a sincere compliment, then figure out how you can help them and pitch that generous idea to them.

* You can also connect with bloggers at social media events like the live Buzz Seminar.

25. Have a Contact Page on Your Blog. Include an email address or form where people can contact you.

26. Create a Powerful ABOUT Page. The "About" page is one of the most viewed pages you will have.

Include a photo.

Include a quick bio. A few sentences or a paragraph.

Include your mission statement.

Include the themes/subjects you write about.

Include a link to popular posts and important posts.

Include an opt-in subscribe form two times.

27. Be Patient. Building a successful blog takes time, hard work, and discipline. If you write compelling content consistently, you'll be able to build an audience.

28. Don't Try to Please Everyone. You won't. Follow your own compass.

29. Write your goals and dreams down for your blog and follow them. Goals are dreams that are written out.

30. Don't repeat the same points in post after post. Be diverse.

31. Target Certain People With Some Posts. Write a post targeting a certain group of people, or mention that group, then send the link to that group. Ex. For "Bono on Jesus," I sent the link to Bono fans as well as Bono himself via Twitter.

32. Have Only One Blog. Most bloggers can only manage having one successful blog. I am one of the few bloggers who manages to have two successful blogs. But don't follow my example. If you do, wait until your first blog earns good income and it's been online for at least 4 years. I created my first blog in June 2008 and I started the second one in October 2012 (Patheos).

The exception here is if you have a personal blog and a separate blog for your business that's *drastically different* from your personal blog.

33. Use Internal Links. When you have a long post, provide internal links to other posts on your site so that you don't have to repeat content.

34. End Posts with An Open-Ended Question. This encourages comments.

35. Utilize Quotes to Set Ideas Apart. People love good quotes.

36. Use the Genesis 404 Plugin. If a person types in the wrong url on your blog, they will be redirected to a page that has a search window where they can search your blog for what they are looking for.

37. Don't Engage in Black Hat SEO Techniques. Never pay to have your blog on a directory and never buy backlinks for your blog. You can get penalized by the search engines for doing this.

38. Keep Your Goal in Mind: Traffic -> Conversions -> Referrals. THE MOTIVE - Influence & Impact

You want to gain as much *traffic* to your blog as possible.

You want that traffic to *convert* into subscribers.

You want those subscribers to *refer* your blog to their friends.

All of this is to influence and impact as many people with your message.

39. Make Your Blog a Priority. It's your chief method for building your hive.

40. Create a FAQ Page. I'd do this after 6 months to a year of blogging. You can view mine at frankviola.org/faq. This saves me a ton of time answering questions from readers by email.

41. Create an Archives page. I do this manually because I want it to be categorized. This is a great resource for readers. Takes time, but worth it. See mine at frankviola.org/archives.

42. Don't Pay for FaceBook's "Promote This Update" Ads. They don't work in my experience. If you want to use FaceBook ads, take Amy Porterfield's course. That's the gold standard on how to use FaceBook ads effectively.

43. Resist Discouragement. The blogger's chief enemy is discouragement. Don't expect too much too quick.

Worksheet 1

It's up to you to take action on this training. Education is meaningless without action.

Action Plans

1. Write down 5 goals for your blog and give specific dates when you plan to reach those goals.
2. Who is your target audience? Be as specific as possible.
3. How is your new blog distinct from the other blogs that exist for that same target audience?
4. Where will you find those in your target audience online and on-the-ground?
5. What pressing problem that people have will you solve?
6. What pain will you remove?
7. What specific value will you add to people's lives?
8. Work on creating a mission statement using the criteria given in this session.
9. If you don't yet have a blog, get your domain name with Bluehost and get a Studio Theme - use the links at buzzseminar.org/resources
10. What tips from the "writing good content" cheat sheet will you put into practice this month?
11. What tips from the "hard-won advice" cheat sheet will you put into practice this month?

4. FINDING YOUR UNIQUE BLOG PROFIT PATH

by Michelle Shaeffer

Three Key Questions

1. Why isn't it working yet?

If you've tried different strategies and they haven't worked yet, usually it's because the path you see working for someone else to monetize their blog isn't the right fit for where you're at or who your readers are.

2. Which money path *is* right for you?

To discover the best option for your blog you need to look at who you are and what you enjoy, what your audience cares about, how much traffic you have, and more. Be sure to take the free quiz to see which path makes sense for you.

3. How does your thinking need to shift?

You've got to look at your blog as a business. Get serious about committing time daily to it and going "big" if you want to turn it into a full time income and a business that will support you.

The Key to Making it All Work

You've got to understand that your audience (your readers) are looking for solutions. If you can show them how to solve a problem, you can make a sale, whether that's of your book, your services, a product you advertise or are an affiliate for... you're in the business of solving problems!

The Five Blog Money Paths

It's smart to consider all the profit paths as combining multiple paths is a great strategy. But master one path first, get income coming in, and then add in others.

Path One: Sell Attention (Advertising)

#1 Rule: Ads need to match your audience's interests and needs!

Step One: Know Your Options

For banner ads and text links you can sell based on:

- CPM: Cost Per Thousand Views
- CPC: Cost Per Click
- CPA: Cost Per Action

Ad types may be:

- Contextual: based on the content on your page
- Retargeted: based on websites your visitors have viewed before

You can run ads that are:

- Network Managed
- Network Managed, Owner Approved
- Owner Managed

WATCH the terms (can't say "please click this link", limits on ad blocks, prohibited content types, required placements, or non-compete clauses)

Step Two: Do Your Research

Research other blogs and websites in your niche for ideas:

- What are their rates?
- Who's advertising on their sites?
- What networks are they using or are they running their own ads?

Why to run your own ads:

- Better rates
- Better match
- Build relationships with advertisers
- You've got to reach out

Types of Advertising to Consider Offering (ALWAYS disclose!):

- Sidebar

- Below posts
- Popup
- Header bar
- Footer bar
- In text
- Intersitial
- RSS feed
- Emails (solo mailing, within newsletter)
- Sponsored posts
- Review posts
- Highest traffic pages of your site
- Targeted posts or resource pages
- Sponsored Posts
- Paid Reviews

Step Three: Create Your Media Kit

Note: You can find some of your data with [Quantcast.com](https://www.quantcast.com), [Alexa.com](https://www.alexa.com), [Google Analytics](https://www.google.com/analytics) or [CloudFlare](https://www.cloudflare.com), or by surveying your readers with a tool like [SurveyMonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com). (These sites were working when this document was written.)

About Your Site

Include details about your blog, what you write about, and the coolest features (popular posts, tools, checklists, resources, etc).

About Your Readers

Who are your readers and why do they read your blog? Research and share the demographics and psychographics of your audience.

Include details like:

- Age
- Sex
- Income Level
- Education
- Has Children
- Browse from Home/Work/School

Site Metrics

- Monthly Unique Visitors
- Monthly Page Views
- Average Time on Site
- Subscribers on List
- Subscribers to RSS Feed
- Alexa Rank

Social Media Reach

Include links to your social media profiles and stats for the number of followers or connections you've got on each.

Testimonials

Include reader and/or advertiser testimonials.

Featured Past Advertisers

If you've had advertisers, add their logos or other info here.

Advertising Opportunities

Details of your banner ad spaces available (for example: sidebar ad, 250x250, every page of the blog \$x/month) and any other advertising options (such as RSS footer ads, etc)

Contact Information

How to get in touch with you.

Examples:

- Fast Company http://mediakit.fastcompany.com/resources/FC_MediaKit.pdf
- Entrepreneur.com
- More Great Examples <http://monetizepros.com/blog/2013/seven-examples-of-media-kits-that-make-it-rain/>

Step Four: Get the “Tech” Setup Done

If you're going with network managed ads, you'll need to follow the directions to copy and paste their code into your site where your ads will run. Often this is in a widget in your header or footer.

If you're going to go after your own advertisers and manage ads yourself, it can help to install a plugin to manage ads and collect payments.

Check out the mindmap for links to plugins and resources for this step.

Step Five: Get Advertisers, Collect the \$\$

If you're using network managed ads, they will take care of ads sales and recruiting advertisers. You may have the option to approve/disapprove potential advertisers so keep your eyes open!

If you're managing your own ads, it's time to get creative and start brainstorming who you can approach...

- The peanut butter and jelly strategy
- Competitive research
- What are your readers already buying?
- What are you already recommending?

Three Ways to Get More from Your Advertising:

- Work out barbers
- Look at long-term agreements
- Package services (ad + product review + link in email)

How can you build value for advertisers?

- View it as a partnership!
- Look for ways to stand out and feature them so you're their favorite blog to advertise with

Path Two: Sell Other People's Stuff (Affiliate Marketing)

#1 Rule: What you promote needs to match your audience's interests and needs!

Step One: Understand How Affiliate Marketing Works



You might get paid based on:

- Sales through your link (most common)
- Actions through your link (like new leads/subscribers)
- Clicks of your link (least common)

There are ALWAYS rules to how you can promote. Be sure you read the terms and follow conditions of any program you sign up for.

Step Two: Research Who/What You Want to Promote

How to brainstorm products/services to promote:

- The peanut butter and jelly strategy
- Competitive research

- What are your readers already buying?
- What are you already recommending?

Networks vs. Indie (Independent) Programs:

- Networks like [CommissionJunction](#) and [ShareASale](#) offer less risk
- Indie programs are run by the product/service provider directly and more likely to be supportive/responsive

Note: Check out the mindmap for resources to find products/services to promote!

Three Key Rules for Success as an Affiliate Marketer

1. Only promote things you love (and have tested or used yourself, or trust the source).

I won't promote something I haven't tried, or someone I haven't had experience with. When I promote something as an affiliate I need to know that I'm sending folks to something valuable that works.

2. Only promote things that make sense (and that your readers would be interested in).

Anything you promote needs to connect with what your readers are interested in.

If your blog is about public speaking, it probably doesn't make sense to promote a product about how to learn Spanish. But it could be a good fit to promote a product about how to look good on stage, create a signature speech, network at events, get speaking gigs, market yourself, publish a book, or similar things speakers would be interested in.

3. Build value around the promotions.

Anyone can send an email with a link that says, "Hey, buy this because I get paid if you do!"

One great way to both build value and attract traffic interested in buying a product, is to write a detailed review or step by step guide to using the product or service you're promoting. Share your top tips for how to get started with it, or how to get results with it.

Step Three: Decide How to Promote

A Few Promotional Ideas to Consider:

- Sidebar ads or links
- Below posts ads or links

- Popup ads or links
- Header bar
- Footer bar
- In text links
- [Interstitial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interstitial_webpage) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interstitial_webpage
- RSS feed
- Emails (solo mailing, within newsletter)
- Review Posts
- Step by Step Guides
- Resource Page
- Interview the company or service/product creator
- Create a case study of how you used the product and your results

I won an affiliate contest with these strategies: [How I Won the CommentLuv Affiliate Contest](#)

Tip: Look for resources from the product/service you're promoting. Smart companies will give you banner ads, social networking status updates, ready to go emails and blog posts, sometimes even videos or other resources you can use!

Step Four: Review and Power Up!

Watch your results. Use a plugin like [Pretty Link Lite](#) to track how many clicks your affiliate links get. See what your audience responds best to. Then adjust your game plan!

Five ways to increase your results:

- Do giveaways and games to feature products
- Write detailed guides (search engine traffic magnets!)
- Create how to videos (post on YouTube, link back to the blog post you shared them in)
- Offer freebies related to what you're promoting (with PLR, it's easy!) and have people opt-in for the freebie, then show them the affiliate product and create a follow up email sequence
- Add a bonus to what you're promoting

Always keep working to build your audience – the more engaged your audience is, the bigger it grows, and the better match you can make between audience desires and products you promote, the better results you'll get with affiliate marketing.

Bonus Step Five: How to Turn Product/Service Reviews Into Money

Are you writing reviews on your blog? It can be a great way to get noticed and make some money.

Start by thinking about your ideal reader and what types of things you can write reviews about that they'd find helpful. What tools do you use that they'd like? What books or magazines? Are there particular products or services they'd love?

Next, there are two ways you could approach what you decide to review to start with, and you'll actually want to mix these but staying aware of what the goal for each is.

1) Review What's Hot for Search Engine Traffic

Check out the most popular websites where people order and review the type of products you want to feature.

I'll use Amazon as an example. Go look at what the most popular products are right now. If they're "hot" then people are searching for them and you can capitalize on that and get some search engine traffic by reviewing those items.

2) Review for Connections and Exposure

Look for small to medium sized independent businesses who manufacture products you want to review. They may send you a free item for review and even publicize a positive review (it's good for them). So when you approach them keep that in mind.

After the review is live, these are the people you want to make sure you let know they're welcome to quote you and encourage them to use that review.

Make your goal to build relationships with companies who can get you noticed by your ideal readers as a trusted voice providing reviews in your community.

Now here are 8 ways to turn those reviews into big exposure and cash:

1. Each product you review (assuming it's positive, that is!) contact the product manufacturer and let them know you've reviewed their product, send a link, and mention they're welcome to use your feedback as long as they note your name and business.
2. When you review the products be sure to put the name and company in the title, body of the post and your tags – it'll help you get found in the search engines.
3. Re-purpose those reviews and submit them on the manufacturer's websites or places like Amazon, and check the terms to see if you can post just an excerpt and a link to your review (many won't allow that but some will) either way you can sign the review as something like "You, Your Blog Name" and people who like your reviews will Google to find you.

4. Where possible/appropriate also include a video and upload to YouTube then embed on your blog. Use the product name/manufacture along with the word review in the title and keywords as well as description, in the description include a link to your review on your blog so you get found more both in Google and in YouTube searches.
5. Create one page on your blog dedicated to sharing your reviews then each review you do, add the title, excerpt and photo of the item, and link to the full review. On that page let companies know how they can send you an item for review, and readers know how they can suggest an item for you to review.
6. Engage your readers by adding a “What should I review next?” link at the end of any reviews you write that goes to a form inviting them to suggest a product for you to review. You can use this to get freebies by contacting the product maker and letting them know you write a blog about XYZ, where you included trusted product reviews for your community and that you’ve received a request to review XYZ. Some will send it to you free in exchange for your review (which you must disclose in the post). Some won’t but it doesn’t hurt to ask and get your name in front of them as a resource for getting the word out about products they offer. If they say no you can ask if there’s a different similar item they’d like you to review for your community, too.
7. Look for twists you can put on a typical review that will get it shared more because it’s more useful and interesting. So instead of “why this product works/doesn’t work” how about “10 Perfect Uses for...” or “3 Big Lessons I Learned From...” If it’s a tool or resource, then instead of typical review offer a guide or checklist of how to use it. For example, I created a how to video for Piktochart that got 6,600+ views on YouTube.
8. Don’t miss the opportunity to use your affiliate link when you review products or services!

Bonus tip: as a next step, look at print or digital magazines or other publications that print reviews or firsthand experience stories. Once you’ve got a few reviews up on your site, start getting touch with them and looking for ways to get your reviews featured places beyond your site, too.

Path Three: Sell Information (Your Own Digital Products & Workshops)

Step One: Decide What Problem to Solve

What Problems Can You Create a Virtual Product or Training to Solve?

What's one problem your readers have that they're already looking to you for advice or resources around? Can you turn that into a product or training for them?

Ways to research this:

- What's the most popular post on your blog?
- What questions do you get asked most often?
- What are readers searching for to find your site?
- Survey your readers
- Look at your competition
- Browse best sellers on Amazon or similar websites

Step Two: Decide What Type of Solution to Create

Do you want to create a physical product? Virtual product? Audio? Video? eBook? Don't start with an 8 week video course if you haven't tested an eBook or an affiliate product to see if your audience is interested!

(Note: Check out the mindmap for product creation resources and more ideas.)

Before you move forward you must make these decisions (please note, for the purposes of this guide you have already decided WHAT you want to teach and WHO you want to teach it to):

1. Is this an evergreen or date-based training?

Evergreen means a new person can purchase the training anytime and start at the beginning of your training series working through it individually.

Date-based means you will be teaching the course live on specific dates and people work through the training as a group on the same schedule (think traditional college classes).

2. How will you accept payments?

[PayPal](#) is the fastest, easiest way to get started accepting payments online. You can accept both one-time payments and recurring subscriptions (\$X per month).

For setting up a merchant account, I recommend [PowerPay](#). This is not required to get started!

3. How will you deliver your content?

Teleseminar is audio only (no slides) and one of the simplest options. You can use a service like [FreeConferenceCalling.com](#) to deliver and record your trainings.

Written Content like PDF files and worksheets. You can save each module as a PDF file and use a [dropbox.com](#) account to save and share your files. You'll need the Dropbox public link to share them.

Webinar includes audio plus slides (and sometimes Q&A with students). The best option for getting started is [InstantTeleseminar.com](#) because it will create your web pages for both live calls and your replays.

4. Which autoresponder service will you use?

You need an email autoresponder service. There is no way around this so just decide on one. [The Marketing Mentors](#) uses and recommends [InfusionSoft](#). If you're just getting started check out [GetResponse](#) but [AWeber](#) is also good. If you absolutely need a free option, look at [MadMimi](#).

5. Are you committed to making this happen for yourself and the clients you serve?

Why would I ask you that? Because I want you to stop and promise yourself right now that you will make fast decisions and take action today to get your course or workshop out into the world.

Don't allow yourself to be overwhelmed or frustrated by this guide or the different options in it. Answer the 5 questions above, then PICK ONE OPTION from the two that follow and go with it.

Here's an Overview of the Process You'll Create for Each Training or Course You Want to Deliver:

Before you jump into the options below, here are some definitions you need to know to understand what you're reading, especially if this concept is new to you.

Sales Page: This is a page that describe the benefits of enrolling in your workshop or training and includes details people need to know before they buy, testimonials, guarantee, etc. On this page you will also have a "buy now" button that allows people to click to purchase.

Shopping Cart: This is the service that allows you to accept online orders securely. Some shopping carts include payment processing, but not all. Examples: InfusionSoft or 1ShoppingCart.

Payment Processor: This is the service that allows you to process payments and accept credit cards or other online payments securely. Some payment processors also include a shopping cart, but not all. Examples: PayPal, Square, PowerPay.

Thank You Page: After your clients purchase your course, you'll send them to a "thank you" page where you confirm that their enrollment was successful and let them know what to expect next. This will be similar to the email you send through your autoresponder.

Autoresponder or Mailing List: A service you pay monthly (or yearly) for that collects email address of your subscribers and allows you to send email to all of them at once. It also allows you to create more than one list so you can have a list of just people who paid for a course and set it up so only you can add people to the list or so only paid participants can add themselves. We recommend GetResponse.

Module: A training, lesson, week, or however you choose to divide and identify the pieces of content/training you are sharing. Your workshop or course likely has several pieces that you want to deliver weekly or on a schedule.

PDF: Portable document format, the easiest way to share written content with your students in a format they can save and print. This file is a PDF file. You can create them easily in most word processing programs by choosing "Save As" and then PDF. You can also use a free program like PrimoPDF.

Step Three: Decide How to Sell & Deliver It

You need four pieces:

- A sales page describing your product

- A shopping cart (this gives you your “buy now” button and allows your customers to securely purchase)
- A way to accept payment (PayPal is great to get started)
- A thank you page to deliver your product (create a hidden page on your blog – do NOT set it to private, just keep it off your menu)

If you start with a simple eBook, checklist, or guide, I recommend e-junkie.com as a super easy way to offer it for sale on your blog. You can also check out the mindmap for ideas.

If you decide to do a group workshop or multi-module training, check out udemy.com or one of the two the models below.

Option 1: Deliver It All By Email

How It Works: Each time a new client enrolls in your workshop or training, they're added to a special private mailing list (this can be by hand or automated, depending on the tools you choose). Then each lesson is automatically delivered by the mailing list. Each email includes a link to their PDF lesson.

What You Need:

- your sales page
- a way to collect payments (PayPal is great!)
- autoresponder service (GetResponse, AWeber, etc)
- your content in PDF format
- Dropbox account to share your PDF files

The Step by Step - Preparation:

1. Create your sales page
2. Create your thank you page
3. Create the "buy" link/code in your shopping cart and add it to your sales page (set the URL after purchase to go to the thank you page you created in step 2)
4. Create a new list in your email list manager
5. Create a welcome email that confirms enrollment in the course and lets participants know what to expect
6. Create a series of emails equal to the number of weeks or modules you would like to deliver. If you have PDF files, upload them to Dropbox and add the public share links to your emails.

TIP: If your course is live and date based, then schedule them for the dates you'd like (usually these are called broadcasts). If your course is open for enrollment anytime, then schedule the emails based on days since they were added to the list (usually these are called autoresponder sequences).

The Step by Step - Delivery:

1. Each time you receive an order, login to your autoresponder and add the new client to your mailing list. You can set this up in AWeber or MailChimp.
2. Your autoresponder service will then deliver each module to your client on the schedule you created when you created the emails.

Option 2: Deliver It With a FaceBook Group

How It Works: Each time a new client enrolls in your workshop or training, they're added to a special private mailing list (this can be by hand or automated, depending on the tools you choose) and your private FaceBook group. In your FaceBook group you can share links to module PDFs, your call dial-in information or webinar access info, and other resources as needed. You also add an interactive element for clients to support each other.

What You Need:

- your sales page
- a way to collect payments (PayPal is great)
- autoresponder service (GetResponse, AWeber, etc)
- your content in PDF format (upload directly to "Files" in FaceBook group)
- teleseminar or webinar service, if needed
- a closed (not private) FaceBook group

The Step by Step - Preparation:

1. Create your sales page
2. Create your thank you page
3. Create the "buy" link/code in your shopping cart and add it to your sales page (set the URL after purchase to go to the thank you page you created in step 2)
4. Create a new list in your email list manager
5. Create a welcome email that confirms enrollment in the course and lets participants know what to expect, directing them to the FaceBook group for interaction with you and receiving their course modules/links.

The Step by Step - Delivery:

Each time you receive an order, login to your autoresponder and add the new client to your mailing list. Be sure the first email in your sequence invites the new

client to join your FaceBook group! Then you can share your files and links within the FaceBook group for each training. Just upload under “Files” and let your group know to find it there.

Step Four: Promote It!

The fastest way to get the word out about your new product is to get others to help you share it. Who can you approach that would be interested in allowing you to guest post and share your link? Or host a promotional webinar or teleseminar for you? Recruit affiliates and promoters!

A Few More Promotional Ideas to Consider:

- Create a promotional preview webinar
- Sidebar ads or links
- Below posts ads or links
- Popup ads or links
- Header bar
- Footer bar
- In text links
- Emails (solo mailing, within newsletter)
- Do giveaways and/or games
- Publish extracts from the product as blog posts or share it with your list
- Create how to videos around the topic of your product (post on YouTube, link back to the product)
- Offer freebies related to what you’re promoting and have people opt-in for the freebie, then show them the product and create a follow up email sequence
- Add a bonus to the product as a time limited option

Always keep working to build your audience – the more engaged your audience is, the bigger it grows, and the better match you can make between audience desires and products you create, the better!

Path Four: Sell Your Brain (One on One Consulting or Coaching)

The Fastest Way to \$\$ For Most Bloggers

This path requires only two things: a problem you can solve and a way you can accept payments.

Have you considered offering “pick my brain” sessions for your readers? Just choose an amount of time and a price. You can keep things simple with a PayPal button for payment. Once they’ve paid you schedule the session then show up and answer their questions.

Or, what services could you offer? Do you know how to setup a blog? Create a household chore system that works? Build a business around knitting? What have you done successfully that you can share with others?

Here’s how to make it happen:

1. Decide on your offer and price.

Think about the questions you’re asked most often or the biggest challenges/problems you solve. What do your readers struggle with?

Look around at similar blogs in your niche to see what products or services they offer that are similar. It may make sense to model those.

Check Amazon and search the topic of your blog. What are the best selling books right now? That’ll tell you what “hot topics” are.

2. Create a page on your blog offering your “brain” for rent.

a. Give it a cool name

b. Follow this format:

i. Hey, if you’ve got problem X...

ii. Here’s what causes it... and why it hurts...

iii. Here’s the solution (nutshell it)...

iv. Here’s why/how I can help you...

v. Look, I've helped these people (testimonials or some social proof)...

vi. Get in touch with me (contact form or buy button)...

3. Now go tell people it's available!

Start by adding a link to your new page to the main menu of your blog as well as your sidebar. Next...

1. Connect with friends and colleagues and let them know you're available to help people with... Ask who they know that could be perfect.
2. Email your list (no matter how small) and let them know you're available, link to your new page (and/or email them an "invite your friend" suggestion and let them connect you with referrals.)
3. Connect with professional groups or associations your ideal clients belong to and offer a free talk or resource, they can share you with their members.
4. Think who offers a good complimentary service to yours (who else do your favorite clients hire or work with?) and reach out to them with an offer to cross-promote.
5. Network online - show up in meetup groups, FaceBook or LinkedIn groups, forums, and anywhere else your ideal clients are in groups to get yourself in front of them.

Path Five: Sell Your Biz (Build Your Existing Business)

You've got a business. Your blog's job is to BUILD that business! It should be making everything about your marketing easier... attracting your ideal clients... building your authority... gaining you more visibility... and allowing you to create great content you can share on social media and elsewhere online.

Step One: Connect your blog to your business and have the right pieces/pages in place.

This might sound obvious... but can your blog readers easily find your business? Have you made it IMPOSSIBLE to miss the fact that you offer products or services for them?

Is your blog incorporated into your marketing plan so it supports your big picture efforts? Here's how to do that: [How to Create a Monthly Content Plan for Your Blog](#) (Search this on Youtube)

What pieces do you need in place?

- ✓ Opt-in box on EVERY POST
- ✓ Link to your products/services on EVERY POST
- ✓ Feature case studies/testimonials
- ✓ Make it easy to contact you and/or order
- ✓ Make it easy to share you

Step Two: Be super strategic about setting goals for your blog overall as well as for each individual post.

What are your goals for you blog? Have you defined them clearly? If you don't know your goals, your blog may frustrate you simply because you have no way to measure its results or success!

Here are some possibilities (and ideas of what to measure and track so you know how you're doing)...

- Build a Platform
- Create a Community (Time Spent/Bounce Rate)
- Drive/Attract Traffic (Stats)
- Build Your List (Subscribers)
- Create Discussion (Comments)

- Social Sharing
- Build Business/Sales (\$\$\$)
- Content Creation (Book)
- JV/Partnership Invitations
- Media Requests
- Authority/Reputation
- Get a Message Out (Downloads & Views)

What's the point of that post you just wrote? Do you want it to build your list? Encourage people to share you? Attract potential JVs or affiliates? Get people to contact you for a strategy sessions? What's their next step?

DEFINE what the results are that you want and then make sure your content guides people that way. ASK them to share. TELL them why to subscribe (and put the box RIGHT THERE). INVITE them to contact you and give them a link to your strategy session page.

Step Three: Focus on Attracting Your Ideal Clients and Building Credibility with Them

Want a blog that attracts and engages the right readers? Then you've GOT to understand your readers!

Get inside their heads, think about what motivates them, what their goals and dreams are and write posts that connect to that.

The easiest way to do this? LISTEN.

Don't assume you know what your readers are struggling with or want to know. Stop and listen to what they're talking about.

- Check FaceBook groups, forums, Twitter, other social networks and Q&A sites like Quora to see what questions they're asking.
- Talk with them one on one. Pay attention to the way they answer questions you ask or ask you for help.
- Watch what's popular on big blogs—which posts are getting lots of shares, comments, and engagement?

Create an Empathy Map:

And be sure you're creating the kind of content that builds your credibility by showing you know how to solve their problems:

- 1. Create tutorials, “how to” posts and step by step guides.** Share detailed information that gives your readers actionable content they can implement and get results from.
- 2. Curate great content from other sources.** Share the best resources (books, websites, blog posts, tools, etc.).
- 3. Host challenges and competitions.** Inspire and motivate your readers, create community for them, and position yourself as a leader.
- 4. Design tools and templates.** Give your readers an “easy button” by creating the tools and templates they need to apply specific strategies or tactics in their life or business.
- 5. Share in-depth case studies.** This is a great way to showcase your clients—or your own—success. Dig into how you accomplished something and the steps you took, tools you used, and what results you got.

Step Four: Repurpose the content you create!

Every post you write should turn into content you can use to share on social media, turn into a free download to attract subscribers, feed your ezine/list content, or be used again in other ways. Recycle!

Here are some different content formats/ideas you can use:

Written Content:

- blog posts
- guest blog posts
- newsletter articles for your ezine or list
- articles for reprint (like EzineArticles.com and WAHM-Articles.com)
- FAQ page
- customer welcome kit
- instruction sheets
- forum posts

- autoresponder series
- eBook (for sale or free)
- short report (great for getting list opt-ins)
- press release
- interview

Video Content:

- you tube video of you on camera presenting your content
- you tube video of a slide show with narration
- webinar based on the content

Audio Content:

- audio blogs
- teleseminars based on the content
- short audio tip series (like an autoresponder but links to audio versions instead)

Social Networking Content:

- FaceBook fan page content
- FaceBook profile notes (if you use your profile for business & personal)
- Tweets (turn it into a #hashtag tips series)
- LinkedIn discussions

Image Content:

- slide show
- infographic

Other Ideas: Off the Beaten Path

Here are a few other ways you can use a blog to make money...

- Get a job
- Flip blogs
- Ghostwriting / Ghost Blogging
- Add a "Tip jar" where readers can tip you as thank you if they like your content
- Build an audience so you can land a book deal

5. HOW TO DRIVE MASSIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR BLOG & THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SHARING

by Michelle Shaeffer

Three Key Questions

1. Who are your readers and why do they read your blog? What do they really want? What are their biggest dreams and desires? What are their challenges and problems?
2. Where can you find them (online and offline)? Where are they at? What are they reading? Who else has their attention?
 - Social media
 - Forums
 - Newsletters
 - Virtual and Live Events
 - Associations
 - Print Publications
3. How can you get noticed? (Red Carpet and Redbox strategies later in the presentation)

8 Basic Traffic Strategies

1. Social Media
2. Content Syndication
3. Sharing/Referrals
4. Blogger Networking
5. Building Links
6. SEO
7. Content Repurposing
8. Offline

How do you choose the right strategy for you?

1. Does it reach your ideal readers?
2. Can you automate it?

3. Do you enjoy it?
4. Can you outsource it?
5. How much time is involved?
6. Does it move you towards your biggest goals?

Once you have traffic on your blog, your goal is to move them from PASSIVE readers who quietly read and learn, to ACTIVE and ENGAGED readers who talk to you, talk about you, share you, ask questions, and support you through buying your books and other products or services.

Every post you write, stop to ask yourself, what is the value for my readers in this post?

The Psychology of Sharing

What motivates sharing?

Relationship with Self, Others, You

1. Emotions (self) – joy, surprise, anger, fear, anxiety – positive outweighs negative
2. Others – we like to be “in the know” and “helpful” – create resources like top 10 lists, step by step and how to posts and your readers will want to share
3. You – when we have a personal connection, we’re more likely to share – build that by sharing stories, personal journey, and always include the perspective of what the takeaway is for your readers and what the “next steps” are for them

You will get all you want in life if you help enough other people get what they want.
Zig Ziglar

How can you make it easy and encourage your readers to share you?

1. Plugins and buttons for sharing – but only 3 to 4 choices, don’t overwhelm your readers
2. Ask, invite, encourage!
3. Reward them by interacting and saying “thanks” when you see them sharing

Sharable Post Types (Shift the Spotlight):

- Collaborative Posts

- Guest Posts, Interviews, Features
- Create an Award
- Detailed Guides that Create Results/Vision

Creating Your Blog Post Promotional Plan

What actions will you take after each post to let people know there's new content on your blog?

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Example promotion plans & ideas:

- <http://www.ducttapemarketing.com/blog/2011/08/16/my-content-amplification-system/>
- <http://www.johnpaulaguiar.com/my-crazy-simple-7-step-plan-to-promote-a-new-post/>
- [http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2006/06/how to get traf.html](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2006/06/how_to_get_traf.html)
- <http://www.probloggger.net/archives/2008/09/16/13-ways-to-promote-your-next-blog-post/>

Sample Blog Post Promotion Plans

- Shorten link with Su.pr & Stumble it
- Share post on FaceBook fan page, groups, etc. (tag featured bloggers/sites)
- Share post on Twitter
- Syndicated by TwitterTools immediately and sent to my Triberr mates
- Schedule 3 to 4 tweets in Hootsuite with varied titles and #hashtags
- Submit to SocialBuzzClub community and share posts
- Share on LinkedIn (automatically done by blog link app or Hootsuite RSS)
- Share in appropriate groups on LinkedIn
- Share on Google+ (not automated)
- Share on blogger networks like Blokube, BizSugar, as appropriate
- Social Bookmarking sites: tag on Delicious, share on Reddit
- Email a few friends them and invite them to share/comment
- Automatically delivered by RSS to my subscribers
- Allow others to share and promote the post (SexyBookmarks, Digg Digg)
- Decide whether to feature in my ezine or a mailing to my list
- Sites using RSS feed are notified of new post (AllTop, Technorati, etc)

As Appropriate:

- Consistently create new content (2-3 times a week) and follow post promotion plan for each new post
- Participate in blog challenges, Twitter chats and virtual events

Weekly:

- Guest blog at least 4 times per month (once a week - regular guest blog gigs)
- Seek out blogs to read/share/comment on
- Watch ezines for reprint opportunities & chances to guest write
- Feature a collaborative post or spotlight someone (social media)
- Visit appropriate forums & share helpful info, participate
- Send out my ezine featuring new blog posts

Monthly:

- Review stats for potential content sharing partners/thank yous
- Brainstorm testimonial/reviews and send out

- Choose 1 or 2 excellent blog posts, edit if needed & submit to Ezine Articles, Solo-E, Self Growth, etc.
- Choose a post and turn into a slideshow or YouTube video
- Create and submit a press release
- Build links by commenting on other blogs
- Create new link bait and opt-in offers to build my list
- Review social networking profiles for improvement options
- Double check sharing & subscriptions on my sites

6. HOW TO SPREAD YOUR HONEY & POLLEN

by Frank Viola

Honey bees have two sources of food.

- * honey - a carbohydrate made from nectar.
- * pollen - a protein that comes from flowers.

In staying with our Buzz metaphors, honey is the content you give away for free. This is the best way to expose people to your work and build authority and credibility.

Pollen is what you sell. People equate price with value. Most bloggers sell their most valuable work. Selling allows people put their skin in the game. They will take a product or service far more seriously if they pay money for it. If it's free, they very often regard it with little value.

Key Ingredients for Building Buzz

1. people buzz about things that are so different they can't help but talk about it.
2. people buzz about things they remember.
3. people buzz about things that matter to them and others.
4. people buzz about what delivers practical value to their lives.
5. people buzz about things they get upset over - an injustice, a hot button issue, etc.
6. people buzz about what others are buzzing about. This is the contagious element.
7. people buzz about things that entertain them.

The Sticky Honeycomb Strategy

This strategy teaches you six kinds of blog posts that stick and go viral.

Go to **buzzseminar.com/WhitePaperViola.pdf** to download the White Paper that explains this strategy. There's also a video tutorial on the Resource page.

(Note: Morgan James sells this White Paper for \$97, but you get it free with this course.)

Other Ideas for Viral Blog Posts

* **Interview someone well-known.** The more popular, the better. This is called borrowed credibility. Find the expert. The best time to ask for an interview is when the person has just released a book or some other product. They are in promotion mode. So they are more likely to accept your offer to interview them.

* **Rant about something.** Content that evokes high arousal emotions is more viral. High arousal emotions are awe/shock/anger/anxiety. Give voice to people's anger or frustration that they cannot express. Give them language for what's already inside of them.

* **Solve a problem.** What's useful tends to get shared.

The Cross-Pollinator Team

Metaphor: Honey bees cross-pollinate and spread pollen everywhere. This creates multiplication.

Based on my observation, unless you have 100k or more Twitter followers, Twitter isn't terribly effective. At least in my observation and experience. So to make up for this, you create a Cross-Pollinator Team. In other words, you build a Twitter team that cross promotes on Twitter weekly. Presently, I have 14 people on my team. All together, my twitter team contains **363k** followers. Typically, we share 2 tweets a week.

TIP: Approach people who have roughly the same amount of followers or follower-to-follow ratio that you have. Ex. if you have 300 followers, don't approach someone who has 20,000.

Template of the Email Letter I Use:

Dear xxx,

I've reached out to a select group of people whom I respect and have created a Cross-Promotion Strategy using Twitter.

This strategy is super simple and it allows us to leverage our Twitter feeds for maximum impact and reach.

I've coined the strategy THE CROSS-POLLINATOR TEAM

Right now, I am following 70 people and have around 49,000 followers on my main Twitter account @FrankViola

Here's how it works.

Each week, I will send you a ready-made Tweet of mine.

It will look something like this:

Don't Make This Mistake: <http://frankviola.org/2014/05/15/greatness> via @FrankViola

You will then reply with a link of your own using the same format:

Blog post title: link via @YourTwitterName

You will tweet my tweet during the week and I will tweet yours.

I usually send 2 tweets per week to my team members. One on Monday or Tuesday and another on Wednesday or Thursday.

Let me know if you want to do this and I'll add you to the team list. :-)

Thanks!

fv

Examples of how my team helped some of my posts go viral. These 2 people have very large Twitter followings. *Warren has over 1 million Twitter followers and Ramsey has over 500,000.*

They aren't part of my team. Ramsey saw my post from someone who is on my twitter team. Warren has also a few times.



Rick Warren 
@RickWarren



Following

I dare you to accept @FrankViola's challenge: bit.ly/1e5xe8q It might just save your life!

 Reply  Retweeted  Favorite  More

RETWEETS

34

FAVORITES

81



9:15 AM - 9 Jan 2014



Dave Ramsey 
@DaveRamsey



 Follow

Nice Job on haters @FrankViola
bit.ly/1tXFjmr

 Reply  Retweet  Favorite  More

RETWEETS

54

FAVORITES

62



4:32 PM - 30 May 2014

The Blog Swarm Technique

Bees swarm to create new hives - it's the way they multiply their hives (that is, their communities).

TIP: 30% of your time should be for content creation; 70% should be for promotion.

50 Ways to Swarm Your Blog and Conquer Online Obscurity

These tactics apply to promoting individual blog posts as well as your blog as a whole. Most are free.

1. Guest Post: Write for other blogs in your niche/industry that have more traffic than you do. IMPORTANT steps for guest posting:

Step 1: *Subscribe to their blog.* Get familiar with their work first.

Step 2: *Your first email should be a SHORT and SPECIFIC appreciation of a blog post they wrote and nothing more.* Don't ask for a guest post.

* Bad Examples: "I love your blog" or "I love your book" and then start asking for something from them. Most bloggers will ignore those requests.

Step 3: *Your second email should be a SHORT email asking HOW you can help them.* Don't ask for a guest post.

Example: If they are a writer, offer to promote their book when it comes out.

Step 4: After you've gotten a response on the above, email the blogger a third time and ask them if you can guest post for them. But offer them a **specific post idea** or the draft of the actual post. Don't be general.

Step 5: When you guest post, write quality articles that are NOT on your blog or anywhere else. Research their archives and make sure they haven't covered the subject either.

You can also try to find guest posting opportunities with:

postjoint.com

myblogguest.com

2. Share the blog link on Twitter - no more than 2x in a day for the same post. See *10 Twitter Mistakes That Make You Look Clueless* at **buzzseminar.org/resources**
3. Share the blog link on FaceBook - no more than 2x in a day for the same post.
Use an image
4. Share the blog link on Google+ - no more than 2x in a day for the same post.
Use an image
5. Share a pin to your post on Pinterest - no more than 2x in a day for the same post.
Use an image
6. Share the blog link on LinkedIn - no more than 2x in a day for the same post.
use an image
7. Share the link on Reddit - It's still a popular social media site where you can share your links.
8. Share the blog link on Blog Engage - Blog Engage is a smaller social media site where you can share links to your posts.
9. Share the blog link on Blokube - Blokube is a small social media site that focuses on topics like marketing and design.
10. Add your blog url in your signature for all your emails. (Add it everywhere your name appears.)
11. Send the link to your blog post to another blogger if you feel it will interest them. But don't ask them to share the link. Just give them a short FYI. (Ex. Hey, I just wrote a post on xyz and I thought you might be interested in it. You can check it out here: Link.)
12. Post the link on StumbleUpon - free social bookmarking service.
13. Post the link on Delicious - free social bookmarking service.
14. Post your link to socialadr.com
15. Post the link on Digg - free social bookmarking service.
16. Submit your blog to the Google directory and the Bing directory.
17. Use BlogDash.com to promote your blog.
18. Use social share buttons below every post. Recommended:

Share This plugin - go to frankviola.org for examples. It shows the number of shares.

Social Media Feather plugin - see frankviola.org - the bottom of each post for examples. Doesn't show the number of shares. The lack of shares on some of your posts can lead you to depression!
19. Use the nRelate plugin - ends each post with related posts in classy small feature boxes under every post.

20. Host a contest to encourage social shares. Ex. If the post gets x number of social shares, someone who comments gets a free gift. Either that or give a reward for the best comment and the worst comment. (I've done both.)
21. Make a lens using [Squidoo](#) for your blog.
22. Submit an article to your local newspaper and add a link to your blog in the author bio.
23. Post a link to a blog post on Wikipedia - example: if you write about original sin, add a link to your blog post in the Wikipedia article on original sin.
24. Answer questions related to your niche on [YahooAnswers](#) and other Q & A sites (Ask.com). Include a link to your blog in the resource box.
25. Build a [FaceBook](#) page for your blog. You can also create a dedicated tab on the page for blog sign ups.
26. Create a hub about your blog on [HubPages](#).
27. Make your blog more search engine friendly by using SEO plug-ins.
I recommend the Wordpress SEO by Yoast plugin.
29. Make a [MySpace](#) page for your blog and post links to your posts on it. Do the same on [Tumblr](#).
30. Make business cards with your blog info on them, hand them to friends and family, and ask them to pass them on. [VistaPrint](#) is one printing service among many.
31. Submit your blog to [DMOZ](#). It takes time getting on it.
32. Leave quality, thought-provoking comments on blogs that are related to your niche. But NEVER post a link to your blog or blog post in the comment, even if it's related. That will be seen as self-promotion.
33. Create a "Link Love" page. This is a page that contains ready-made tweets that can be used for FaceBook and LinkedIn also.

Use Clicktotweet.com

Example: [frankviola.org/love](#)

34. Submit your site to the review site [CoolSiteOfTheDay](#).
35. Submit your blog to [BlogCatalog](#).
36. Write a page on [43things.com](#) about your blog and what you want to do with it.
37. Submit your blog to [Technorati](#).
38. Join [Helium.com](#) - they are looking for writers.

39. Buy advertising on related blogs and websites. Ex. For religious blogs, you can buy ads on Patheos.com

40. Host an online Webinar and promote your blog on it. (Some people do this with a partner. This increases the visibility since you and your partner will both be promoting it.)

Recommended: Go2Webinar: <http://www.gotomeeting.com/online/webinar>

41. Make a free eBook with a link back to your site in it, and submit it to free eBook sites like GetFreeEBooks.com and Amazon Kindle and Barnes & Noble Nook.

42. Buy .info and .me and .co domains with your blog keyword in them and use a redirect to send the traffic they receive to your main site. Or better, create landing pages that have links back to your blog.

Example: Joe owns JoeScallabeep.com. He can buy JoeScallabeep.me and .info and make them landing pages with a link to his blog. (A Landing page is a blog or website that has only 1 page on it designed to send readers elsewhere.)

43. Submit articles to print and electronic magazines that are in your niche. Put a link to your blog in the author biography.

44. Create a page (personal or business) at LookUpPage.com. You can add as many links to your blog as you like.

45. Begin a podcast and promote your blog and blog posts on the podcast.

46. Put an ad in your local newspaper.

47. Create a [Weebly](http://Weebly.com) profile and add links to your blog posts on it.

48. Design a banner for your blog and ask your friends to put it on their websites and blogs. Offer to cross promote with them. Don't ask people to promote your blog that have double or more the traffic you have, however.

49. Join HitTail.com - this service helps with SEO.

50. Start a newsletter or periodic update. Print or email. Feature your blog url on the newsletter when you send it out. (I have one that goes out 4 to 6x a year. It's separate from my email subscriber list.)

SEVEN TIPS FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER OR UPDATE LIST

These tips are not for blog updates, but for a separate newsletter or update you send out.

1. Never use these words in an email newsletter. They are "spam triggers" and will likely get your email filtered as spam so your readers won't see it.

free - instead use "no charge"

click here - use "go to"

2. Remind people how they subscribed - put that at the very top of your email.

3. Always use a compelling headline. The headline only has one purpose - to get people to open the email. That's all.

4. When people subscribe for the newsletter, thank them and give them a glimpse of what they can expect. You set this up in Mailchimp so it's automatic.

5. Never send an email to someone who hasn't subscribed. This is spam. It's illegal and you will lose credibility. Only email those who have given you *permission* by subscribing.

6. Only include one link in your newsletter. The **call-to-action** link. Include the same call-to-action link in the middle of your newsletter and then at the end in the P.S.

7. People will unsubscribe every time you send out a newsletter or update. And some of them will be down-right nasty as they slam the door on your list. Yes, this may seem hard to believe since *they willingly subscribed to your list* in the first place. But some people are grossly fickle and they change their minds and opinions on a dime. Every person with a large mailing list knows what I mean, and some of them have written entire articles about their nasty subscribers who unsubscribe for ridiculous reasons. But know this, the larger your list becomes, the more unsubscribers you will get when you send out your newsletter or update. This is normal. Let them go. Don't sweat it. If someone unsubscribes, it means they aren't a good match for you or your message. So be glad they unsubscribed. You want people on your list who appreciate you, your mission, and your message.

TIP: I suggest you always include a P.S. in your newsletter or update. People read them.

LESSON: Promote others consistently and there's a decent chance they will promote your work when you ask.

THE ART OF LAYING BEE EGGS a.k.a. HOW TO MONETIZE YOUR BLOG

The queen bee lays eggs which become workers which build the hive.

If your blog has little to no traffic, it won't earn income. The first session taught you how to build your hive.

THREE CHIEF WAYS TO MONETIZE YOUR BLOG

1. Affiliate Sales.

Examples: (These are my top 3.)

1. Amazon's affiliate program

(Ex. my top 100 best books list: frankviola.org/top100)

You can review any product on Amazon using your affiliate link and earn commissions for every sale.

2. Bluehost - they give \$65 for every referral that signs up.

3. Logos Bible Software. (I wrote a review and it contains my affiliate link.)

Many products and services today have affiliate programs. Check into them.

TIPS:

a. Only advertise affiliates that you yourself have used and love or those which you can recommend in good conscience.

b. Make sure you post the disclosure of material connection from the Federal Trade Commission. You can see it at buzzseminar.org/resources

c. make sure the product or service fits your niche and is congruent with your brand.

2. Advertising. Once you reach 10,000 unique visitors a month or 20,000 pageviews a month, start featuring paid ads on your blog.

For blog stats: Use Google Analytics. There are other plugins for this that you can search for on Google. They come and go.

Ad Services currently available (this may change in time):

- a. beaconads.com - for the Christian market
- b. buysellads.com - for the general market
- c. chitika.com - for the general market
- d. sell your own ads - Ex. frankviola.org/advertising

Recommended Strategy:

If you start selling your own ads, offer a free ad to companies. Let them sample your blog.

TIPS:

- a. for pricing, check out the blogs in your niche and see what they are charging. Compare their blog traffic to yours.
- b. find companies that are advertising on other blogs in your niche. Write them a polite and brief email introducing yourself, your blog, and offer them a free ad on your blog for a month. Be sure to include your blog stats.
- c. only advertise products and services you yourself use or trust and can endorse.
- d. keep the ads specific to your readership.
- e. put an ADVERTISE WITH US banner on your site.

3. Your Own Products. Create and sell your own products that provide value to people:

Examples:

- a. eBooks (discussed later in the course)
- b. Print books (discussed later in the course)
- c. Courses - Ex. frankviola.info - my goal is to release one course a year.
- d. Consulting - I'm going to start doing this for bloggers. Many bloggers have asked me to give them feedback on their blogs. This takes a lot of time when done right.

Blog Evaluation. I (Frank) will critically review your blog using video of the blog. I explain what's great and what needs improvement specific to your blog.

If interested in the price for the personal evaluation, email me at **frankviola@hotmail.com**

- e. you can use the ad space on your blog to promote your own products. These are called "house ads."
- f. don't clutter your blog with ads. This will turn off readers.

See the Recommended Resources at buzzseminar.org/resources for books on this subject.

Worksheet 2

It's up to you to take action on this training. Education is meaningless without action.

Action Plans

1. Make a list of the strategies you will put into practice from Michelle's two sessions.
2. Make a list of people you want to be part of your Cross-Pollinator Team.
Remember, ask people who have the same number of Twitter followers that you have or a little more -- or who have the same follower-to-follow ratio.
3. Make a list of Blog Posts You can write using the Secret Honeycomb Secret.
4. If you already have a blog, write down 5 to 10 things you will change based on this session.
5. What will your incentive/reward be for your subscribers? If you have one, how can you improve it? Is it working and does it need to change?
6. Mark which items in the Blog Swarm Technique you plan to implement.
7. Sign up to MailChimp using the link on the resource page:
buzzseminar.org/resources
7. Make a list of ideas based on this session that you plan to implement for your blog over the next twelve months.

7. HOW TO WRITE A GREAT BOOK

by Frank Viola

To see the books I've written to date, go to frankviola.org/books

I don't consider myself to be a "great" writer, but I do believe I know what it takes to write a great book.

3 Ways to Get That Book Out of You

80% of Americans express a desire to write a book. But most never do.

1. Convert Your Blog Posts Into a Book. You already have the content. Now you just rework it into a book.

Revive Us Again - about half the chapters were old blog posts.

Jesus Now - some sections were old blog posts.

God's Favorite Place on Earth - some sections were old blog posts.

Beyond Evangelical - an eBook made up of a series of old blog posts with new content added.

Ralph Polendo at polendo.net designs beautiful eBook interior designs and gorgeous book covers. You just write the content in a Word document and give it to him. He does the rest.

TIP: Once you publish the eBook, you can use e-junkie.com to sell it. It's easy to set up.

2. Get Your Spoken Talks Transcribed and Edit Them Into a Book.

From Eternity to Here - based on the transcripts of 5 different conferences in which I spoke in different cities.

If you don't speak publicly, you can use a digital recorder and speak into it. Then get the dictations transcribed.

Mike Morrell has a contact at Fiverr.com that he uses to transcribe.

3. Write the Book from Scratch.

My Process (many of these points apply to writing my blog posts also)

1. Create a Tentative Table of Contents - this will morph over time.

2. I have my target reader in mind and I write straight to them.

3. I write like a drunkard and edit like a surgeon.

My advice: Writing is primarily a right-brain activity; editing is primarily a left-brain activity. Write recklessly; edit ruthlessly. Just start writing in a stream of consciousness. Throw the paint on the canvass. Put the clay on the wheel. Keep doing that until you have something to work with. Then go back and rewrite, arrange and move around, rewrite and keep rewriting.

4. I let my writing age. After you have the first draft, let it sit and "incubate" for a week. Then come back to it with fresh eyes.

5. I use short sentences, short words, and short paragraphs. (Hat tip to Hemingway.)

6. I try to kill the passive voice.

The ball was thrown by Joe - passive voice

Joe threw the ball - active voice

Passive sentences are weak and they bore people.

7. I use the breath test. If the reader must pause for breath in the middle of the sentence, it's too long.

8. I try to master the metaphor. I try to use metaphors in my writing. This makes your writing artistic. (I regard my books to be works of art.)

9. I try not to be redundant or repeat myself. Editors are golden here.

10. I put my reader first and myself in the background. I focus on the message.

11. I make use of two power words: Because & You.

You - the reader should feel like you're talking only to them.

Because - this word provides the reason behind the points you're making.

12. I *rewrite* like mad. The secret to great writing is rewriting.

13. I let some trusted friends read the manuscript before I send it to the publisher. Also, I incorporate their feedback and critical suggestions into the text.

14. I write with my ear not my eye. Every sentence needs to *sound* good.

15. I use short titles for my books and longer titles for the subtitles. 1 to 4 word titles are better than longer ones.

16. My strategy: *Plod. Work on it a little at a time. Chip away at it until it's finished.*

17. My most tedious step. Once I've got the last draft in good shape, I print it out and read it off line. I use a red pen to mark it up . . . removing, adding, changing. Then I incorporate the changes into the document on the computer.

Churchill perfectly describes my experience from start to finish:

"Writing a book is an adventure. To begin with, it is a toy and an amusement; then it becomes a mistress, and then it becomes a master, and then a tyrant. The last phase is that just as you are about to be reconciled to your servitude, you kill the monster, and fling him out to the public."

~ Winston Churchill

18. At this point, I show the draft to a friend and have them edit and proof it.

The Purpose of Writing a Book

- a. it gives you credibility. There's an authority that comes with writing a book.
- b. it offers your best thinking on a subject for less than \$20.
- c. it spreads your ideas. A book is still the best format for this.

Lessons I've Learned from Mistakes I've Made in Writing

- 1. Use exclamation points rarely if ever. They communicate anger or shouting these days.
- 2. Use short sentences wherever possible. Average 7 to 12 words per sentence.
- 3. Don't use fancy, difficult words.
- 4. Break up your chapters into sections with sub-headings.
- 5. If you use endnotes, make sure each section in the endnotes page contains the chapter number listed along with the chapter title.

Advice for Authors

- 1. If you're writing non-fiction, be sure that you've experienced what you're writing about for at least 5 years. Too many authors, I feel, write as arm-chair philosophers. The discerning reader can tell if you're writing from experience vs. theory.
- 2. Be sure your book contains unique content or a unique perspective on a subject.

Over 1 million books were published in the United States last year. The figure is over 3 million if you include eBooks. Over 130 million books have been published in modern history. In the U.S., the average non-fiction book sells less than 250 copies a year and less than 3,000 in its lifetime.

TIP: Do some research and ask yourself: *“Does a book like the one I’m wanting to write already exist, and is it in print?”* and, *“What’s unique about my book that hasn’t already been said the same way in another book?”*

The exception is if you find a bestseller in the public domain that's been long forgotten and you write a book that contains the same basic idea. The blockbuster book *Jesus Calling* is simply a modern rewrite of the 20th-century book, *God Calling*. The similarities are striking. The author does give credit for being inspired by the former book.

3. If you're a first-time author, start talking about your first book on your blog at least a year before it releases. Build momentum. Build interest. Build anticipation. Build a relationship with potential readers before the book arrives on the scene. Write it for your Hive.

4. If you are writing your book on a “hot” topic, keep in mind that the hour might pass by the time your book comes out. Why? Because it takes eight months to a year from the time you submit your manuscript until the book is available for purchase. So if your “hot” topic will cool down in a year, reserve your writing for your blog or release an eBook on the subject.

5. Be involved in choosing the title, the cover, and the back cover copy. These three ingredients are key to the success of any book. As the author, you want to be involved in the process. Don’t let the publisher decide without your input and involvement. It’s your book, so you need to feel that it properly represents you and your message in every way.

6. Don’t expect your publisher to sell your book. This is perhaps one of the biggest assumptions that new authors make. You will be responsible for 90% of the marketing.

7. When writing your book, identify and write *to* and *for* your specific audience. No book is for everyone.

8. When people ask, "What is your book about?," that's not really what they are asking. There's a question behind that question. What they really want to know is: *How will your book benefit me? What will I get out of it?* Answer that question before you write the book and answer it in the beginning, throughout, and at the end. And promise to answer it on the back cover.

9. Find a writing schedule and a writing space that works best for you. Atmosphere, including scents and background noise or music, is important to productive writing. Keep it free of distractions.

TIP: See the keyboard and mouse I recommend: buzzseminar.org/resources - I can't write without them. I even use them for my laptop.

10. Consider co-authoring some books. If you have "writing chemistry" with another author, it's a lot of fun and can help strengthen a book in every way.

11. Let people sample the book. Give them 20% of the best parts.

12. Blogging prepares you to write a book in the following ways:

a. Blogging clarifies your thinking on a given topic. Writing a blog post untangles your thoughts and puts into focus what you really believe about a subject.

b. Blogging "test drives" your material to an audience. This helps you to hone your craft before you publish a book.

c. Blogging -- over time -- gives you a treasure chest of material from which to draw when you write your book.

d. Blogging allows you to create a "built-in" audience who will be interested in buying your book.

e. If your blog is successful and draws high traffic, you will capture the interest of publishers. The main thing most publishers are interested in is how large your "platform" is. A blog gives you a "hive," and your hive is your platform.

I know two bloggers who received great book deals from Zondervan and Thomas Nelson because they had successful blogs. One of them was given a book advance of \$40,000, and he is in his mid-20s. It's because he built a successful blog with a large readership.

13. You get 6 months or a year of vitality out of your book releases. After that, few people care about it because it's considered "old." This is because of the glut in the book market. Classics or mega-bestsellers are the exceptions.

14. Writing is a craft. Start as a novice, become an apprentice, and finally, you'll be a master.

For more on writing and promoting your book, see the recommend books at buzzseminar.org/resources

Worksheet 3

It's up to you to take action on this training. Education is meaningless without action.

Action Plans

1. Brainstorm some ideas for your next (or first) book.
2. Jot down ideas for a title for the book that's 1 to 4 words long.
3. Create a tentative Table of Contents. This is just a rough draft. It will change as you write.
4. Write down 5 goals for your new book and give dates when you plan to reach those goals.
5. Create a writing schedule for this month. Include the blocks of time you plan to write each week. Do the same for the following months.

8. CROSS POLLINATION & MOVEMENT-BASED MARKETING

by Mike Morrell

I have a friend named Jimmy. Jimmy's a beekeeper, and what I've learned from him about the behaviors of bees has also helped me understand more about creativity and productivity.

Bees are among the most social of the insect kingdom, it turns out – living and working together in extraordinary creativity and productivity. One of the most important things I've learned from Jimmy is the bee behavior of *cross-pollination*.

“Cross-pollination” is one of those words that's successfully migrated from the world of apiary enthusiasts (bee-keepers) into marketing-speak; indeed, Dictionary.com lays out the two definitions side-by-side:

cross-pol·li·na·tion [kraws-pol-uh-ney-shuhn, kros-] *noun*

1. *Botany* . the transfer of pollen from the flower of one plant to the flower of a plant having a different genetic constitution.
2. a sharing or interchange of knowledge, ideas, etc., as for mutual enrichment; cross-fertilization.

It's a term that many of us in the “idea-business” hear and use so often that I think we've lost much of its potency and potential.

Going it alone.

Did you know that “cross-pollination” and “pollination” aren't synonymous? There *is* such a thing as *self-pollination*, where a plant keeps all its pollen to itself. And, y'know, it gets the job done. These kinds of plants *do* manage to live.

Something funny, though: These plants aren't as hardy, healthy, or resilient as cross-pollinated plants, where bees (and other insects, and even the wind) bring in pollen from *other* plants.

When *cross-pollination* happens, no one goes it alone. Bees get to fly around and be social; plants benefit from the potency of one another.

Everybody wins.

And this, in essence, is why you should “bee” an agent of cross-pollination in your community.

I remember one of the first times I learned this lesson, nearly ten years ago: My friend Spencer Burke had a book coming out, *A Heretic’s Guide to Eternity*. It’s a controversial book tackling spiritual themes that many people care – and have passionate opinions – about. It’s *not* a book for everyone. But we wanted it to find the readers it *was* for – whether they loved its premise or loved arguing about it.

Identify your hive.

So Spencer and I went about identifying our *hive* – in our case, the bloggers and podcasters who were most likely to create *buzz* around *A Heretic’s Guide*. We looked in four directions, inspired by my mentor friend Wes Roberts’ four directions of mentoring. It’s a method of hive-identification I recommend to my clients to this day.

I recommend you be on the lookout for:

1. Icons (Queen Bees)
2. Trendsetters (Workers)
3. Peers (Flight companions)
4. The next generation (Larva/Pupa)

Icons are the gatekeepers in your identified hive – the most-visible, most-respected, elder statesmen and women. The people whom *you* know and admire, who may or may not know you exist. The ones it takes guts to ask for a review or endorsement from. While you may not connect with too many Icons – or Queen Bees – it’s worth devoting 20% of your cross-pollinating time to the pursuit. Handing Rob Bell a copy of *Heretic’s Guide* before interviewing him for Relevant Magazine during his “Everything Is Spiritual” tour is an example of the audacious lengths I went to for potential buzz.

Trendsetters are those who are getting stuff done in the trenches – they’re the ones who make the quantitative and qualitative Top Blogs and Top Podcasts lists in your genre. They might not be mega-famous like Icons, but they’re still well-known and well-respected. These “worker bees” are laboring in the same hive you are; they might comprise up to half of the relationships you create.

Peers are the voices you don't *have* to check a Top 100 list to identify – you know them because you're already interacting with them, perhaps even hanging out with them in real-life – in your neighborhood, or at industry/niche events. When flitting about from flower to flower, these are the bees who are most likely be by your side already. Be good to them.

While cross-pollinating with the above three groups might be considered common sense in an enlightened-self-interest kind of way, this last group is really the secret sauce to uncommonly effective cross-pollination:

The next generation. These are voices younger than you – either in age or experience – who, on the surface, don't have much to give and have everything to gain by being associated with you.

So why would you 'waste' your time on them?

First of all, because it's simply the right thing to do.

Secondly, *you* are likely larval or 'unknown' to the Icons you're approaching. This is 'Golden Rule' territory – do unto others.

Third, by giving quality next generation voices a chance to share about something that will likely raise *their* profile, you're giving them an opportunity to flourish that they're not likely to soon forget when they spread their wings. "Pupa" is an ugly-sounding word, but is, in fact, exciting: "the cocoon-like stage where the larva undergoes metamorphosis to become an adult bee."

A Simple Rule.

Once you've identified your hive, cross-pollination can begin. It's taking the 'fertile stuff' (pollen) from *your* flower and sharing it with *their* flower.

This can take many forms that Frank and Michelle have already been sharing with us:

Interview an Icon, Trendsetter, Peer, or Next Generation on your blog.

Offer to write them a guest post, using Frank's ever-so-sincere approach as outlined yesterday.

Ask them to review your book (product, service or movement), cite it on social media, appear with you at a conference, festival, retreat or party, make a funny video

discussing your offering in their favorite animal or extra-terrestrial voices – the possibilities are endless.

When cross-pollinating, I follow one simple rule:

I don't ask my hive to do anything for me that I wouldn't be willing to do for them.

Pay it forward.

Be generous.

Cross-pollinating pays off.

How well?

Spencer and I had hundreds of bloggers and podcasters buzzing about *A Heretic's Guide* in the weeks leading up to its release. In the weeks following its release, it became the #1 most-blogged about book (on the Internet, period, in any genre) according to the blog monitor Technorati, beating out even *The Da Vinci Code* in the wake of its film release. It stayed within Technorati's Top Ten for nearly a month.

Finding our hive and cross-pollinating within its sphere of influence was so successful – and fun! – I decided to do it full time, coaching authors and creating the faith and culture blogging/podcasting hive that eventually became known as Speakeasy.

I hope you *experiment* and put cross-pollination into action.

Action Plan

Who are your . . . ?

1. Icons (Queen Bees)
2. Trendsetters (Workers)
3. Peers (Flight companions)
4. Next generation (Larva/Pupa)

Movement-Based Marketing

What do we do when the loss is unbearable? When bad things happen to good people? When there's no happy ending?

Why were people asking *this* man? A burned-out, disgraced former suburban church pastor who left formal ministry nearly 20 years ago after cheating on his wife with her best friend?

These are questions being asked to Paul Young – at churches, stadiums, cruise ships, and living rooms. People are asking because Paul is the author of the 18-million-copy best-seller, *The Shack*.

These are also the questions that have inspired some of the most powerful social movements in the past 100 years, from the end of colonialism in India to the Civil Rights Movement to the social-media fueled Middle Eastern upheavals from 2011 forward.

This is a companion piece to my audio module on what earth-shaking social movements and heart-moving bestsellers have in common. I'm going to compare *The Shack* phenomenon – in which my Speakeasy - thespeakeasy.info - network of bloggers played a role – with the USAmerica-wide Occupy Wall Street (abbreviated OWS) movement. I want to show you how...

Every compelling author can powerfully market their book by implementing the four dynamics of effective social movements:

- Kindling – favorable pre-conditions
- Lightning – individual inducements
- Bundling – micro-mobilization
- Scattering – movement maintenance and growth

Kindling: Favorable pre-conditions

(OWS: Economic dis-ease; Shack: Spiritual alienation, mistrust of God's character)

Lightning: Hearing the call

(OWS: Zucotti Park organizers – “We are the 99%”; *The Shack*: “God is better than you imagined.”)

Bundling: Finding community

(OWS: Tent cities, literature, occupy spirituality, allies. *The Shack*: The God Journey, Lifestream, Free Believers – other networks)

Scattering: Maintenance and growth

(OWS: Online resources led to Occupy in cities worldwide; the Missy Project enabled at-cost case sponsorship; Speakeasy gave access to 1,000 bloggers)

Action Plan

How – or can – movement-building dynamics apply to your book?

9. PUBLISHING OPTIONS

by Mike Morrell

Dave Hancock adds to this discussion in the audio session.

You've Got Options. Are you . . .

- Conventionally published?
- Self published?
- Want to be published in some way?

I've worked in and around almost every aspect of contemporary North American publishing, from retail bookstores to editing to marketing to coaching authors and publishers – I even had a temp agency job in high school working at a book distributor! Publishing is a constantly-shifting arena, and there are no one-sized-fits-all options.

Instead, I'd like to offer you a snapshot of the benefits and drawbacks of conventional publishing and new publishing forms, in order to empower you to make your best decision.

Conventional Publishing: Benefits

- Curated, gatekeeping support
- Editorial support
- Layout support
- Design support
- Distribution support
- Marketing support (in principle)
- No up-front costs
- Advance payment

Conventional Publishing: Drawbacks

- Loss of agency in editorial direction and design
- Lackluster distribution
- Lackluster marketing

- Meager advance
- Pitiful royalties
- Loss of control of your work

The biggest ‘drawback’ – statistically, you won’t be picked for conventional publishing to begin with. Which is no reflection on your value as an author

Self-Publishing: Benefits

- Editorial Control
- Layout & Design Control
- Distribution Control + higher profit retention per copy sold
- Vastly quicker turnaround

Self-Publishing: Drawbacks

- You have to do everything! (See above conventional pros list)
- You have to invest up-front, outsourcing what you can’t do - \$3k - \$5k on average
- Still some stigma associated with self-publishing (though it’s fading)

There are yet other publishing models emerging, rapidly, in this ever-shifting terrain: boutique indie publishing support like SamizdatCreative.com, publishing-oriented crowd-sourcing venues like CrowdScribed.com, and aggressive hybrid publishing business models like Buzz Seminar partner [Morgan James Publishing](http://MorganJamesPublishing.com). Opportunities to be published and *published well* abound like never before – limited only by your imagination, skill, and drive.

Action Plan

Which publishing option compels me the most? Why?

10. HOW TO HIT A BEST-SELLER LIST

by Frank Viola

Dave Hancock adds to this session in the audio.

I've worked with 4 different publishers so far and here is my analysis:

- * the marketing team does very little to get an author's book noticed.
- * most of their efforts are ineffective and "boiler plate" (banner ads in e-zines are not effective, for instance)
- * other authors tell me it's the same with their publishers.

This puts 95% of the promotion of a book on the shoulders of the author.

Some history: At the time of this writing, I've written 15 published books from 2005 to 2022. 10 books in 9 years.

I've written . . .

3 with Thomas Nelson

3 with Tyndale

1 with Destiny Image

6 with David C. Cook

3 with Baker

Zondervan has published two of my books in Spanish.

My books have also been published in Korean, German, Russian, Romanian, Dutch, Chinese, Portuguese. frankviola.org/translations)

Understanding Amazon Rankings

Amazon is the largest bookstore in the world.

The ranking number = where the book ranks out of 33+ million books sold by Amazon:

Less than 100 = a mega bestseller

101-1000 = a bestseller

1001-10,000 = very successful

10,001-50,000 = successful

50,001-100,000 = not bad

100,000-500,000 = mediocre

My Best-Sellers

Pagan Christianity - hit #11 on Amazon. Over 100,000 copies have sold.

From Eternity to Here - a CBA bestseller (the CBA list - Christian Book Association - is the Christian equivalent to the NY Times bestseller list.)

Jesus Manifesto - hit #6 on Amazon

Finding Organic Church - hit #12 on Amazon

God's Favorite Place on Earth - hit #13 on Amazon; #6 on The Salisbury Bestseller List.

Jesus Now - a CBA bestseller

This is *my* formula. I can't promise it will work for you, but it worked for me on 6 different titles.

1. Create a Book That's Remarkable.

Remarkable means that people feel compelled to remark about it. This inherently builds buzz.

(Ex. *God's Favorite Place on Earth* is unique in its presentation. It combined fiction, nonfiction prose, and a study guide to create a new genre called "biblical narrative." *Jesus Now* treated a unique topic. The present day ministry of Jesus, what He's been doing from ascension to second coming. I don't know any other books that treated this subject in any detail.)

2. Understand the Struggles & Feelings of Your Community

God's Favorite Place on Earth addresses 18 big common struggles that people of faith face.

3. Show Authority by Using Endorsements

47 top authors endorsed *God's Favorite Place on Earth* and recommended the book. Ex. John Ortberg, Mary DeMuth, Leonard Sweet, Greg Boyd, Jack Hayford, Tricia Goyer, Jon Acuff, etc.

Blurbs/endorsements don't sell books, but they do provide authority.

Sample Endorsement Letter

Confidential Email to xxx from Frank Viola

Dear xxx.

Frank Viola here. I hope you're well. We've not had the chance of meeting (yet), but I follow your work online. I am also aware that you kindly endorsed my close friend, xxx's, book a few years ago. Thx. for doing that.

In that connection, I am very close to completing a secret project published by David C. Cook that will be unveiled in May. It's a small book called "God's Favorite Place on Earth" and it is the most unique and accessible piece of work I've ever written. **Among other things, it addresses [add the part of the book that will be of interest to the person you're asking the endorsement from]**

Here are a few early endorsements.

"In Frank Viola's hands, the story of Lazarus—like Lazarus himself—once again comes to life. In a world where hope is battered and life can so easily beat down the human spirit, we are reminded once more of the possibility of becoming a host of Life. The gift given to Lazarus can be yours as well." **John Ortberg, pastor and author of *Who Is This Man?* and *The Life You've Always Wanted***

"As masterly as a Cezanne canvas or a Stravinsky score, Frank Viola surpasses himself in his best book yet—a work of serene, soaring magnificence. Part novel, part biography, part theology, part Bible study, Frank's imaginative touch and command of prose haiku leaves the reader resolved more than ever to be a Bethany—God's favorite place on earth." **Leonard Sweet, Drew University, George Fox University, Chief Contributor to Sermons.com**

I'd greatly appreciate if you didn't say anything about the book. You're one of a handful of people who are aware of the work. We plan to announce it in April.

The book is a quick read and blends fiction with nonfiction. The scene opens with Lazarus, 30 years after Jesus raised him from the dead. Lazarus – now ready to die -- begins telling the incomparable story of Jesus and His numerous visits to Lazarus' home town, Bethany, and the incredible things that took place there. Following each fictional section where Lazarus tells the story, I give practical teaching to draw out lessons every Christian can learn from Jesus' interactions in Bethany.

I've included the Introduction below which sets up the book and explains what I mean and don't mean by the phrase "God's favorite place." **I've also attached a digital copy of the book to this email.**

The book contains themes that are close to your heart. Therefore, at the risk of trespassing on your largesse, it would mean a great deal to me if you looked at the book and wrote a short endorsement. If you prefer to hold the manuscript in your hands, David C. Cook can send you a galley copy. I just need a mailing address. I will need the endorsement by **March 30th**.

As a thank you for doing this, I will be creating a post on my blog that includes everyone who endorses the book that highlights their most current work. My blog is ranked in the top 10 of Christian blogs on the Web and generates an enormous amount of traffic (see <http://frankviola.org/advertising>). I'd love to include you into that featured post.

Yours in His grace,

Frank Viola

Psalm 115:1

4. Make it Easy for Your Readers to Spread the Word about the Book.

A. Create a Landing Page or Website.

Examples: GodsFavoritePlace.com - landing page.

FromEternitytoHere.org – website

B. Create a list of bullet points showing the benefits of your book. Answer the question, "what will your book do for me?" This screen shot is taken from frankviola.org/books.

The screenshot shows a landing page for the book "GOD'S FAVORITE PLACE ON EARTH" by Frank Viola. The page has a light beige background with green accents. At the top, the title "GOD'S FAVORITE PLACE ON EARTH" is in bold black text, followed by the subtitle "What It Really Means to Receive Jesus Christ" in a smaller, brown font. Below this is a paragraph of text describing the book's theme: "Do you sometimes struggle with discouragement, doubt, fear, guilt, bitterness, spiritual burnout or spiritual complacency? Do you ever feel you're just not doing enough to please God? Are you looking for what God wants from you, exactly? This book blends fiction with nonfiction, bringing a largely unfamiliar story in the Gospels to life, ushering you to the place that Jesus loved most." This is followed by "In this book, you'll discover:" and a bulleted list of six points: "How to forgive and release those who have rejected you.", "How to live life without fear of anything.", "How to trust God when He doesn't appear to fulfill His promises.", "How to gain God's peace in the midst of your worst storm.", "How to increase your faith and overcome doubt.", and "And much, much more." Below the list, it says "Recommended by John Ortberg, Jack Hayford, Mary DeMuth, Mark Batterson, Jon Acuff, Tricia Goyer, Leonard Sweet, Greg Boyd, Pete Wilson, Phil Cooke, Craig Keener, Jenni Catron, and many others." Then, it states "Amazon Bestseller: Reaching #13 out of all books. Salisbury Post Bestseller: Reaching #6." At the bottom, there is a grid of nine green buttons with white text and icons: "Read a Sample" (document icon), "Sample the Audio" (speaker icon), "Endorsements" (speech bubble icon), "Watch the Video" (film strip icon), "Order from Amazon" (Amazon logo), "Order from CBD" (CBD logo), "Order from Barnes & Noble" (BN logo), "Bulk Discounts" (stack of books icon), and "Order Audio" (MP3 icon).

GOD'S FAVORITE PLACE ON EARTH
What It Really Means to Receive Jesus Christ

Do you sometimes struggle with discouragement, doubt, fear, guilt, bitterness, spiritual burnout or spiritual complacency? Do you ever feel you're just not doing enough to please God? Are you looking for what God wants from you, exactly? This book blends fiction with nonfiction, bringing a largely unfamiliar story in the Gospels to life, ushering you to the place that Jesus loved most.

In this book, you'll discover:

- How to forgive and release those who have rejected you.
- How to live life without fear of anything.
- How to trust God when He doesn't appear to fulfill His promises.
- How to gain God's peace in the midst of your worst storm.
- How to increase your faith and overcome doubt.

And much, much more.

Recommended by John Ortberg, Jack Hayford, Mary DeMuth, Mark Batterson, Jon Acuff, Tricia Goyer, Leonard Sweet, Greg Boyd, Pete Wilson, Phil Cooke, Craig Keener, Jenni Catron, and many others.

Amazon Bestseller: Reaching #13 out of all books. Salisbury Post Bestseller: Reaching #6.

Read a Sample | Sample the Audio | Endorsements

Watch the Video | Order from Amazon | Order from CBD

Order from Barnes & Noble | Bulk Discounts | Order Audio

C. Create a list of tweets for your book.

Ex. JesusNow.tv - see the quotes at the bottom of the page.

TIP: Don't *just* ask your community to help you spread the word, give them the tools they need to make it as simple as possible for them to spread the word.

5. Use Promotional Creativity.

I had a professional create a gripping video trailer for the book that looks like a movie trailer. You can view it at GodsFavoritePlace.com.

6. Create a Sampler to Giveaway.

Instead of creating the traditional "sample chapter," I went further and put 20% of the book into a neat looking PDF so readers could "taste test" the book. You can find it at GodsFavoritePlace.com.

TIP: Create a mini-booklet using the best parts of your book and sell it on Amazon.com as a Kindle for 99 cents. In this way, you'll be utilizing Amazon's readership to give people a "taste test" of your full book.

You can get your manuscript converted from Word to Kindle and Nook formats for at a low price using fiverr.com.

7. Provide a Powerful Reward for Buying the Book During Release Week.

For *God's Favorite Place on Earth*, I gave away 25 eBooks & audios by 19 different authors to everyone who bought the book during release week.

For *Jesus Now*, those who bought it during release week got the digital Study Guide for free which included a bonus chapter.

Use an email autoresponder. Ex. JesusNowBook@gmail.com

7. Get a Publicist. Most publishers have in-house publicists. But here are two I can recommend for hire. It's important to get the publicist to promote the book on media during release week.

Rick Hogan - rickhoganson@gmail.com - costs 1k - 2k a month at the time of this writing.

Kelly Hughes - considered by many to be the best - dechanthughes.com - costs 4k to 5k a month at the time of this writing.

9. Engage Your Hive Using The Swarm Book Technique.

One month before your book releases, let your readers know when the book releases and ask them to wait to buy it during release week from Amazon or the store you're

targeting. For the CBA list, I asked people to purchase from Parable.com. Parable dropped the price below Amazon's during release week.

10. Cross Promote.

I asked my endorsers to promote the book during release week along with the 25 free book promotion. I offered to promote their books in return when they released.

11. Post Excerpts From the Book Leading Up to Release Week. Do this 1 month beforehand. Build anticipation for the big release.

12. Send an Email to Your List on the Day of Release. In that email, tell them about the limited-time reward if they buy the book on release week. Here's a sample email I sent out for *God's Favorite Place on Earth*:

Sample Email:

Frank Viola: Get My New Book NOW & Receive 25 Free Books by 19 Authors

May 1st, 2013

Dear Ones,

Frank Viola here.

I've been looking forward to this day for many months! My new book, **GOD'S FAVORITE PLACE ON EARTH**, is officially available.

This short and easy-to-read book is my life's work.

But it gets better. Today through May 7th, if you purchase a copy (or copies) of my new book, I will give you 25 FREE books & audios by 19 different authors.

You can get all the details and take advantage of this crazy-good offer by clicking GodsFavoritePlace.com

God's Favorite Place is my most creative work and the 25 free gifts are immensely valuable. 47 Christian authors shared how *God's Favorite Place* affected them personally and how it addresses 18 specific struggles we Christians face.

Go to GodsFavoritePlace.com and every question you have about the offer will be answered. It's super easy to get the gifts.

I hope you'll take advantage of this limited-time opportunity.

P.S. As promised, I plan to release the **How to Live by the Indwelling Life of Christ** online course in September. You'll get an announcement when it's ready via this update list.

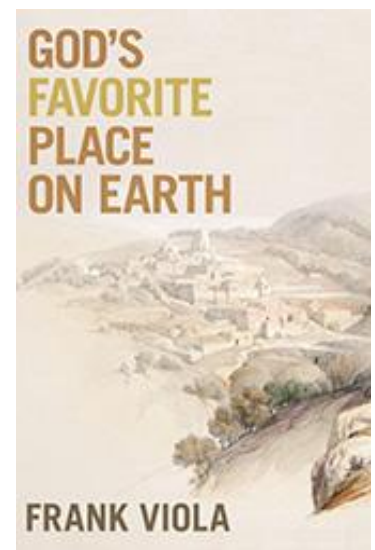
Finally, my *Answers to Questions Page* has been fully updated with many new questions and answers.

Yours in His bonds,

fv

Psalm 115:1

Tip: Send a follow-up email one day before the book's release week ends.



13. Get Your Friends Involved.

- * Ask your friends who blog to promote the book via an interview with you or a review the day the book releases. Be sure to mention the incentive/reward in the interview or have them do so in their review.
- * If you have friends who have email lists, ask them to promote the book to their list. Offer to promote their book (or product or service) to your list in the future.
- * Some authors create a launch team. Those on the team get an electronic copy of the book and/or other gifts (some authors give them an exclusive teleseminar). The team is asked to write a review on Amazon well before the pub. date, and to promote the book during release week.

14. Set a Specific Goal Beforehand. Example: "My book will hit the CBA bestseller list for May 2014."

15. Assume Personal Responsibility for Reaching the Goal. If I didn't reach it, it was my own fault and no one else's.

16. Check Out Mike Morrell's Speakeasy Service. This is a blog network review service for authors who write in the religious genre.

17. Hitting the NY Times Best-Seller List. In the audio session that accompanies this chapter, Dave Hancock explains how to hit the NY Times list. Note: If a business book hits the NY Times list, it means greater honorariums for speaking gigs. This isn't the case for Christian authors, however. It only applies to business books and speakers.

Worksheet 4

It's up to you to take action on this training. Education is meaningless without action.

Action Plans

1. Create a Promotion/Marketing plan for your book based on this session by answering these questions.

- a. who is your target audience?
- b. how will you target them?
- c. list 3 books that are similar to your own book.
- d. what bloggers will you reach out to and ask for interviews or reviews?
- e. who will you ask to be on your launch team?
- f. create a realistic goal for your book's progress. (Best-seller lists to hit, number of copies sold the first year, etc.)

2. Please write an email to **thebuzzseminar@gmail.com** and tell us how the seminar has impacted or helped you.

3. Make a list of the strategies you plan to implement from Mike Morrell's talks.

4. Make a list of the books on our resource list that that you plan to order and read this year. Go to buzzseminar.org/resources

11. GUERRILLA MARKETING

by Dave Hancock

Listen to the audio that matches this chapter and write down -- in your own words and paraphrased -- the following points made in the audio.

You can also buy the entire book *Guerrilla Marketing* from the resource page.

The Difference Between Gorillas and Guerrillas

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The 15 Most Important Marketing Secrets

From the audio. Paraphrase and write down or get the book.

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The Guerrilla Marketer's 10 Commandments

From the audio. Paraphrase and write down or get the book.

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Ten Additional Commandments:

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12. THE ENTREPRENEURIAL AUTHOR

by Dave Hancock

The Goals

Welcome to the dawn of a new revolution. And congratulations on even considering becoming an Entrepreneurial Author in a new, rapidly changing world. It's challenging, but you're in for a lot of fun. Of course, there is a lot of work—but fun, too. Lots of fun if you do it right.

The first thing you'll notice about being an Entrepreneurial Author is that your goals will be different from the old-fashioned goals of a traditional author. The Entrepreneurial Author is flexible, innovative, unconventional, dependent, interactive, generous, enjoyable, profitable, and has low overhead costs. The goal is to stay that way.

Look at the authors all around you. If you can't see many, it's because they are not Entrepreneurial Authors; instead they're buried in work, rarely coming up for fresh air or free time. The goals of The Entrepreneurial Author allow them the freedom to pursue interests beyond work—while amassing an income beyond that of their workaholic ancestors.

You can always tell Entrepreneurial Authors by their goals. They are not as money-minded as the authors who came before them. They seem to be happier with the work that they're doing and appear to really care about satisfying the needs of their readers. You've never seen follow-up done the way these people do it. They stay in touch *constantly* with their readers. It's not as if they are working at their business, but rather demonstrating *passion* for their work. Their goal is to express that passion with excellence and transform it into profits.

Not surprisingly, Entrepreneurial Authors achieve their goals on a daily basis. Their long-term goals are lofty. Those goals exist in the future. Their short-term goals are even loftier. Those exist in the *present*—because that is the domain of the entrepreneur. That is where their goals are to be found in abundance.

Your ability to plan for the future and learn from the past will determine your level of comfort in the present, in the here and now. Being an Entrepreneurial Author means realizing that these can be the good old days and that you don't have to wait for the joy that comes with success. It's right here in front of you.

The New American Dream

Originally the dream meant having enough food and protection from the weather. Cave-dwellers dreamt of hunting enough game or gathering an abundance of nuts and berries. That dream changed, replaced by the hope of earning enough money to feed a hungry family. The Industrial Revolution took care of that and eventually gave birth to the American Dream: a house, a job, and financial security.

*****The Oldest American Dream*****

Authors of the twentieth century were motivated by a slightly different version of the American Dream. In place of a house, a job, and financial security, they sought fortune, security, expansion, and power. But that journey was characterized by a workaholic mindset, sacrifice, and greed.

The author of the twenty-first century will be more of a guerrilla—one who thrives on the nontraditional, does the unconventional if the conventional is nonsensical, and knows that working in the new millennium requires rethinking the nature of being a successful Entrepreneurial Author.

The Entrepreneurial Author will be motivated by *the journey itself*, because the journey will be the goal.

Balance will be the new dream. The Entrepreneurial Author who goes about creating a profit-producing enterprise will begin with balance, actually *starting* with work that makes them happy—the goal of all entrepreneurial dreams. Once that has been attained, The Entrepreneurial Author will be able to pursue their other goals: making money, enjoying free time, maintaining their health, and having fun.

When the journey is the goal, you can begin with work that satisfies you. You will have time to spend enjoying activities other than the work you love and a remarkable freedom from work-related stress. The Entrepreneurial Authors, many of whom exist today well ahead of their time, have twenty characteristics in common. These twenty

hallmarks fuel the commitment these authors have—to themselves, their families, their communities, and their work. Here are their goals:

*****The Journey Is the Goal*****

1. *The Entrepreneurial Author knows that the journey is the goal.* He also realizes that he is in control of his enterprise, not the other way around; and if he is dissatisfied with his journey, he is missing the point of the journey itself. Unlike old-fashioned enterprises, which often required gigantic sacrifices for the sake of the goal, The Entrepreneurial Author places the goal of a pleasant journey ahead of the mere notion of sacrifices.

2. *The Entrepreneurial Author achieves balance from the very start.* She builds free time into her work schedule so that balance is part of her enterprise. She respects her leisure time as much as her work time, never allowing too much of one to interfere with the other. Traditional authors always placed work ahead of leisure and showed no respect for their own personal freedom. Entrepreneurial Authors cherish their freedom as much as their work.

3. *The Entrepreneurial Author is not in a hurry.* Unnecessary speed frequently undermines even the best-conceived strategies. Haste makes waste and sacrifices quality. The Entrepreneurial Author is fully aware that patience is his ally, and he has planned intelligently to eliminate most emergencies that call for moving fast. His pace is always steady, but never rushed.

*****A Warning Sign*****

4. *The Entrepreneurial Author uses stress as a benchmark.* If she feels any stress, she knows she must be going about things in the wrong way. Entrepreneurial Authors do not accept stress as a part of doing business and recognize any stress as a warning sign that something's the matter—in the work plan of the author or in the business itself. Adjustments are made to eliminate the cause of the stress, which causes the stress to disappear.

5. *The Entrepreneurial Author looks forward to work.* He has a love affair with his work and considers himself blessed to be paid for doing the work that he does. He is good at his work, energizing his passion for it in a quest to learn more about it and improve his understanding of it, thereby increasing his skills. The Entrepreneurial

Author doesn't think about his retirement, because he would never want to stop doing the work he loves.

6. *The Entrepreneurial Author has no weaknesses.* She is effective in every aspect of her enterprise, because she has filled in the gaps between her strengths and talents with people who abound at the prowess she lacks. She is very much a team player and allies herself with other Entrepreneurial Authors who share the team spirit and possess complementary skills. She values her teammates as much as old-fashioned authors valued their independence.

7. *The Entrepreneurial Author is fusion-oriented.* He is always on the alert to fuse his business with other synergistic authors. He is willing to combine marketing efforts, production skills, information, leads, mailing lists, and anything else to increase his effectiveness and marketing reach while reducing the cost of achieving those goals. His fusion efforts are intentionally short-term and rarely permanent. In his business relationships, instead of thinking "marriage," he thinks "fling."

*****No Kidding*****

8. *The Entrepreneurial Author does not kid herself.* She knows that if she overestimates her own abilities, she runs the risk of skimping on the quality she represents to her customers, employees, investors, suppliers, and fusion partners. She forces herself to face reality on a daily basis and realizes that all of her business practices must always be evaluated in the glaring light of what really is happening instead of what should be happening.

9. *The Entrepreneurial Author lives in the present.* He is well aware of the past and very enticed by the future, but the here and now is where he resides, embracing the technologies of the present, leaving future technologies on the horizon right where they belong until later when they are ripe and ready. He is alert to the new, wary of the avant-garde, and wooed from the old only by improvement, not mere change.

10. *The Entrepreneurial Author understands the precious nature of time.* She doesn't buy into that old lie that "time is money" and knows in her heart that time is far more important than money. She knows that time is life. She is aware that her customers and prospects feel the same way about time, so she respects theirs and wouldn't dare waste it. As a practicing Entrepreneurial Author, she is the epitome of efficiency, but never lets it interfere with her effectiveness.

11. *The Entrepreneurial Author always operates according to a plan.* He knows who he is, where he is going, and how he will get there. He knows why he is here in the first place. He is prepared, knows that anything can and will happen, and can deal with the barriers to entrepreneurial success, because his plan has foreseen them and shown exactly how to surmount them. The Entrepreneurial Author reevaluates his plan regularly and does not hesitate to make changes in it, though commitment to the plan is part of his very being.

*****A Guide, Not a Master*****

12. *The Entrepreneurial Author is flexible.* She is guided by a strategy for success and knows the difference between a guide and a master. When it is necessary, The Entrepreneurial Author changes, accepting change is part of the status quo, not ignoring or battling it. She is able to adapt to new situations, realizes that service is whatever her customers want it to be, and knows that inflexible things become brittle and break.

13. *The Entrepreneurial Author aims for results more than growth.* He is focused on profitability and balance, vitality and improvement, and value and quality more than size and growth. His plan calls for steadily increasing profits without the sacrifice of personal time, so his actions are oriented to hitting those targets instead of growing for the sake of growth alone. He is wary of becoming large and does not equate hugeness with excellence.

*****A Little Help from Friends*****

14. *The Entrepreneurial Author is dependent upon many people.* She knows that the age of the lone-wolf author—independent and proud of it—has passed. The Entrepreneurial Author is very dependent upon her fusion business partners, her employees, her customers, her suppliers, and her mentors. She got where she is with her own wings, her own determination, and her own smarts, as an Entrepreneurial Author with a little help from a lot of friends.

15. *The Entrepreneurial Author is constantly learning.* A seagull flies in circles in the sky, looking for food in an endless quest. When it finally finds the food, the seagull lands and eats its fill. When it has completed the meal it then returns to the sky, only to fly in circles again, searching for food, although it has eaten. Humans have only one

comparable instinct—the need for constant learning. Entrepreneurial Authors have this need in spades.

16. *The Entrepreneurial Author is passionate about work.* Her enthusiasm for what she does is apparent to everyone who sees her work. This enthusiasm spreads to everyone who works with her, even to her customers. In its purest form, this enthusiasm is best expressed as the word *passion*—an intense feeling that burns within her and is manifested in the devotion she demonstrates toward her business.

17. *The Entrepreneurial Author is focused on the goal.* He knows that balance does not come easily and that he must rid himself of the values and expectations of his ancestors. To do this, he must remain focused on his journey, seeing the future clearly while concentrating on the present. He is aware that the minutia of life and business can distract him, so he does what is necessary to make those distractions only momentary.

18. *The Entrepreneurial Author is disciplined about the tasks at hand.* She is keenly aware that every time she writes a task on her daily calendar, she is making a promise to herself. As an Entrepreneurial Author who does not kid herself, she keeps those promises, knowing that the achievement of her goals will be more than an adequate reward for her discipline. She finds it easy to be disciplined because of the payback offered by the leisure that follows.

19. *The Entrepreneurial Author is well-organized at home and at work.* He does not waste valuable time looking for items that have been misplaced and stays organized as he works and as new work comes to him. His astute sense of order is fueled by the efficiency that results from it. He shares his ability to organize with those who work with him. Yet The Entrepreneurial Author never squanders precious time by becoming overly organized.

20. *The Entrepreneurial Author has an upbeat attitude.* Because she knows that life is unfair, that problems arise, that to error is human, and that the cool shall inherit the Earth, she manages to take obstacles in stride, keeping her perspective and her sense of humor. Her ever-present optimism is grounded in an ability to perceive the positive side of things—recognizing the negative but never dwelling on it, her positive attitude is contagious and spreads rapidly.

*****Life as a Fairy Tale*****

Perhaps in the light of these twenty criteria, you're thinking, "Do Entrepreneurial Authors exist in real life or only in fairy tales?" The answer is yes. They do exist in real life, but their success and balance are like a fairy tale. They exist all around you.

Armed with the right vision and the right information, The Entrepreneurial Author can attain heights never before envisioned. They can add the element of love to their work, because they will devote themselves only to work that they love.

This book has been written to make the dream vividly clear to you. If you can see the dream, you can will it to come true. If you can will it to come true, you can take the steps to empower your will with actions.

The Entrepreneurial Author does more than read books and attend seminars about achievement and success. They take action, do something, and shake the tree. They know that their time on Earth is limited, that the most important time is *right now*, and that they've got to get it right the first time. To do this, they go with the flow—*their own flow*—possessing the sensitivity to know what they really want, what they can do well, why they're here, what they love to do, what is realistic, and what is possible.

*****The Art of the Possible*****

The Entrepreneurial Author is a master of the *art of the possible*.

What is written in these pages is all possible. We didn't have the benefit of a book to plant these ideas in our heads, but we made them up as we went along or realized them as we looked back.

It won't take you long to recognize that you have all the makings of an Entrepreneurial Author, that you can do what we are writing about, that you can live your dream, that you can work with joy, and that it won't take you a bundle to get you started—or even a lot of time.

The Goals of The Entrepreneurial Author

The goals of The Entrepreneurial Author are loftier than those of the traditional author: attaining work that is satisfying, enough money to enjoy freedom from worry about it, health good enough to take for granted, a family or bonding with others with whom you can give and receive love and support, fun that does not have to be

pursued but exists in daily living, and the longevity to appreciate with wisdom that you and those you love have achieved.

Most importantly, as I hope you realize, the goal of The Entrepreneurial Author is the journey itself.

Entrepreneurial Authors set their sights on attaining these goals as they live their dream of enjoying life and the attainment of them. This has not been the way with most traditional authors.

Simply observing the economy, unemployment statistics, the plight of the homeless, and the low level of job satisfaction among the employed—along with their secret nightmare of becoming laid off during a massive downsizing—vividly proves that our society isn't living up to its potential as a successful civilization.

Note: The entire book is on the resource page.

13. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The audio session that matches this chapter contains the complete question and answer session with all four speakers.

The speakers are accessible on the Hive FaceBook page (see Chapter 15).

14. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

by Mike Morrell

This Buzz Seminar Master Class has offered you *a lot* of information and strategies to create a powerful, sustainable online presence. It's worth going through the audio training and workbook to create your strategic plan – what *you'd* like to implement, and in what order, as trying to do everything at once will only result in frustration and overwhelm.

What follows is one way to put everything together in a forward-moving plan. It's not necessarily how Frank would put everything together, or how Michelle or David would put everything together; it's how I recommend my coaching clients organize their efforts.

1. Discover your singular focus.
2. Create an archetypal Hive-member – specific targeting creates broad results.
3. In a world of social media, email is (still) most important. It's the intimate friend invited into your Hive's Inbox, week after week.
4. Blogging is second-most important. Blog your singular focus consistently - and cross-pollinate.
5. Don't ignore social media – be present to it like you would take care of a kiosk on rented land. Build your chosen social media channels in quantity and quality, with the continuous goal of connecting people to your online Real Estate – your email list and blog.
6. Attract (email) blog subscribers via downloadable subscriber incentive (eBook, video, report, etc...) in a feature box visible in several places on your blog (recall Frank Viola's Sticky Honeycomb Strategy).
7. Give away 90% of your content for free.

8. Offer premium content 10% of the time for a fee – books, webinars, seminars, courses, retreats.
9. Live in gratitude, earning a living while giving value to your Hive.

Congratulations. In learning this material, you're already ahead of 95% of those out there who merely *wish* they could blog or write or share their passion for a living. To close the gap and turn knowledge into wisdom – learning into action – keep these nine points in mind as you revisit your Buzz Seminar materials, creating your action plan. And then do it!

Action Plan

How will I put it all together?

When will I start? (Be specific!)

What will I do if I start to feel overwhelmed or discouraged?

(Hint: Consider taking advantage of The Hive, our online group, for support.)

15. THE NEXT STEP - AN INVITATION TO THE HIVE

Because you purchased this course, you are invited to join the members-only FaceBook group called THE HIVE.

The Hive is made up of those who attended the live Buzz Seminar and who bought the course.

In the Hive, members help one another with questions and new resources.

Go to <https://www.FaceBook.com/groups/1500882083481527>

Once you've put into practice the strategies laid out in this course, if you want to take your blog to the next level, consider having Frank Viola do a **Personal Blog Evaluation** for your blog.

He will create a video of your blog and critique every part of it with helpful suggestions for improvement.

For pricing, email **frankaviola@hotmail.com** and put BLOG EVALUATION in the subject line.

APPENDIX: AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE WORLD OF HONEYBEES

Mike Morrell Interviews Beekeeper Jimmy Chalmers

The Buzz Seminar uses the language and vocabulary of honeybees. To add insight into what content-creators and spreaders can learn from the world of nature, Mike Morrell interviewed Jimmy Chalmers, who is a seasoned beekeeper.

Here is the transcript of the interview.

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MIKE: Jimmy! It's so good to chat today. You were a beekeeper for a number of years. Could you share with me and the Buzz Seminar participants – what is your philosophy of beekeeping?

BEEKEEPER: I will share my philosophy of beekeeping; it's all part of this idea of how our relationship with God's creation has changed here in the West. And our relationship especially, not only to God's creation: the animals, the produce, the fruits, and the vegetables. Our relationship has changed so much we no longer see things as sacred. What is interesting to me is the different ways we keep bees in the United States, since World War II. It's become more about aggregate business; it becomes more about this idea of what it means to keep honeybees commercially. The commercial and aggregate industries have had so much profound impact in the beekeeping industry.

Really now, when you go take a beekeeping course from anywhere in this country, you are actually learning to keep bees as they do on commercial apiaries, very large commercial apiaries. There is just this huge infusion of what it means to be an industrial commercial beekeeper. By contrast I see beekeeping as a sacrament; I see it as a sacred thing.

When I'm in my bee yard it's where I hear the voice of God, where I hear him singing to me. I hear the voice of God in the buzzing of the bees. When I'm surrounded by thousands and thousands of buzzing bees, I actually hear God's presence, I hear him vibrating through the sound, and I'm in God's presence- its worship to me.

Much like it is in the East, if you go to Nepal, Indonesia, in the Eastern Asia, you'll find they still have this sacred understanding of the honeybees, of the beekeeper. In the hills of Nepal especially, the man who is the beekeeper or the honey-robber is considered a leader in the community. He is blessed every year before the honey harvest by the Shaman.

He actually goes to this huge ceremony with the king of Nepal, getting permission to harvest the honey from creation, and they actually sing songs and pray prayers to the Creator of the universe as they are going into the jungle to harvest the honey, and as they are about to harvest the honey they have these elaborate prayers that they chant and sing. In much of Asia and the East, they still have this understanding of what it means to be connected to nature. It's a very sacred thing.

So, my philosophy of beekeeping is much more about sacrament, much more about it being sacred. I was never as interested in creating honey, or creating products just for the money as I was about my connection to this amazing amazing insect that God created.

MIKE: Wow. So as you were in relationship to the bees as you were – you know, feeling this sense of deep gratitude for them – did this end up creating a better yield at the same time? I think about how in the business world, there's a theme that's arisen in recent years: Creating good business is not all about profit. For those with eyes to see, business is about a *triple bottom-line* of people, planets, and profits. For some businesses, another 'p' – *purpose* – is added into the mix. We have our eyes on multiple indicators of quality and multiple indicators of value. All the same, many more conventionally-oriented people with bills to pay and desires to grow financially are asking: *Is this profitable?* Adding this into the mix, does awe and respect for the bees as sacred work for you in terms of a bountiful yield?

BEEKEEPER: It did – this was the practical cause of me getting pulled away from the commercial understanding of beekeeping, and having a much more nature-rooted worldview of keeping bees. I did work directly with the DNA strain; I was creating as it were – or orchestrating, or overseeing. Because of this, and because I kept as many chemicals out of my bees as possible, I was able to charge a higher premium for the products I produced. So, yes, continuing down that avenue I see the potential of great profit.

MIKE: And you have a clientele appreciative and hungry for this, too –

BEEKEEPER: Yes, yes I did. And if nothing else, Mike, I know that because of my view of the bees as a partnership, and me dancing with God's creation, making music with God's creation, I became a better me.

Because beekeeping in this way gave me an outlet of worship, a different outlet of worship; it caused me not only to worship God in a miraculous way, but it caused me to really *catch* God, and see God working in his garden when no one else does. I got to catch glimpses of God's presence at work in creation.

God being the great gardener, the great husbandman of the world, I can see that and sense the divine heartbeat; hearing it, smelling it, and feeling it inside of me on a regular basis.

Even if it was never about the profits it was about me. It changed me.

MIKE: It sounds like this process brought more wholeness to your life.

BEEKEEPER: Yes, it did. It does.

MIKE: Wow. From this understanding it should be fascinating to dive in to some of the other questions I have.

BEEKEEPER: Please do!

MIKE: What does the Queen bee *do*, exactly?

I'm also curious about your role: As someone who is deliberately, intentionally, cultivating bees, are you, as the human, involved in mimicking or coming alongside the Queen bee's function?

BEEKEEPER: Yes. You know what's interesting to me? I've heard people – there is a saying: "She's the Queen Bee" or "Wouldn't it be great to be the Queen Bee?"

I understand what they're saying – and yes, if we view the beehive as a pyramid, she is at the top of the pyramid. But not in the same way that it would be in a conventional business structure, as though this Queen Bee has all the power – that what she says goes. Because at the same time that she is at the top of the pyramid, she is a slave to the process, and here's why: she is the only bee within a functioning colony that can produce fertilized eggs, and those fertilized eggs produce workers or

female honeybees. Those workers are the ones who gather the nectar, the pollen, build the house, build the community and keep the DNA strain moving forward down the track.

While she's living, yes: she's at the top of the food chain but it's a very symbiotic relationship between the Queen, the workers, and the way the hive functions.

MIKE: So “She’s the Queen Bee” is a misnomer right up there with “S/he slept like a baby” – which any parent will tell you, is often *fraught and finicky*.

BEEKEEPER: Yes! So beyond the glamorized narrative, this is what the Queen Bee actually does: she carries all of the living sperm to create more fully-functioning bees.

MIKE: All fertility flows through her?

BEEKEEPER: Essentially, yes. Now, workers can lay eggs, but they will create basically drones; they are limited in what they can do. A drone is a male bee and he is nothing but a flying sperm bank.

MIKE: Ouch! “A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle?”

BEEKEEPER: That's all he is! The Drone is just there for emergency purposes. The Queen carries sperm...let's start it from the egg. A Queen lays eggs, she can lay a fertilized egg or an unfertilized egg. If she lays a fertilized egg, it's mixed with sperm. She is going to produce a female bee; that female bee has potential to become a female worker bee or the potential to become a Queen. The difference centers entirely in the food. For the first seventy-two hours of that little egg’s life, it's fed a substance called *royal jelly*, and this amazing protein filled food that bees produce.

MIKE: Yeah, I've heard the infomercials.

BEEKEEPER: Yep, for seventy-two hours that egg is fed nothing but royal jelly; that egg is going through the larva stage, the pupa stage, for the first seventy two hours it gets nothing but royal jelly. If you continue to feed that egg with royal jelly and fill that cell up, packed with royal jelly – if that egg goes through the entire process and eats nothing but royal jelly, it will develop into a Queen.

MIKE: Wow. This difference is all in the nourishment.

BEEKEEPER: Yeah! It's all about the nourishment, all about the nutrition. Usually, what happens, though, at the end of that seventy-two hours, is they start thinning the royal jelly supply and change over to what's called *bee bread*, a combination of honey and pollen. That's what they feed the other eggs, larva and pupa that they are going to develop into female workers.

MIKE: I guess it's all speculative since we're not bees, but do you think they trade-off food supplies due to the scarcity of royal jelly? Or because it would be counter-productive to have a whole hive full of queens? What do you suppose this is all about?

BEEKEEPER: It's about continuing the DNA strain. The entire hives process is about nothing but what keeps the family strain alive.

MIKE: Okay. So in a way the Queen is kind of like a servant leader, and everybody involved is serving; they are all working toward reproducing themselves.

BEEKEEPER: That is correct – she is truly a servant leader. Actually, she is influenced more by the bees around her than she actually influences the hive.

MIKE: So the Queen pays attention to what the hive wants and needs, and is responsive?

BEEKEEPER: Well, sometimes she doesn't even know what the hive is doing.

MIKE: Oh?

BEEKEEPER: Yes, because a Queen's lifespan is about five years. What will happen is, as her egg-laying output begins to slow down and her ability to keep up with the pace of laying eggs slows down, the hive will sense that. They will take an egg she has just laid, divide up among different parts of the hive, and they will make new Queens. They may make two, three, or even half a dozen. At the end of the birthing period of that Queen, she will hatch about 16 or 17 eggs, they will come after each other, as well as the old Queen, to kill her. The Queen that survives is the new Queen of the hive.

MIKE: Game of Thrones: Killer Bees Edition!

BEEKEEPER: Yeah. It can get kind of brutal. This is one of the reasons that hive management – the understanding beekeepers have of how the hive functions –

is important in maintaining a quality bee-yard. A quality strain of bees. Once the Queen hatches, she is a virgin Queen. She can lay eggs, but they are unfertilized.

She'll hang around in the hive for five or six days, then she will start her mating flights. She will come out to the edge of the hive about noon or one in the afternoon, she will fly high up in the air. At that point she will put out this amazing pheromone that travels for long distances. Every drone bee that picks up on that, flies to where she is and will attempt to mate with her. They mount each other in flight, they mate, and he ejaculates. At the point of ejaculation his genitals explode!

MIKE: Wait, what? Ouch!

BEEKEEPER: He drops to the ground dead. She flies around for a little while, until her body is ready to mate again. She will do this for about five to seven days, she may mate between 15-45 times during that period.

MIKE: Goodness gracious – those poor drones. Mowing 'em down like *flies*! Or, I guess bees. Still, at least they died happy, eh..?

BEEKEEPER: You want a Queen who has mated many times with many different drones, because what you're doing is getting a larger circle of DNA possibilities, mixed in that Queen's body, adding to the possibility of success. Now, because of the uniqueness of her little insect body, she will keep that sperm alive and viable for her entire life. After she's mated, she'll go back in the hive and then there is a possibility that she will never leave that hive alive again.

MIKE: Whoa. What an unusual process.

BEEKEEPER: Yes, now she does not feed herself; she has a Queen core. These bees are functioning via a caste system within the beehive. They are responsible to feed, clean, groom her, and ultimately take care of her. At the same time, they are guiding her around the hive to lay eggs. They are inputting information to her: "Lay eggs, lay eggs, lay eggs, we need eggs!"

They are kind of grooming her on purpose to cause her to lay more eggs. Then usually about this time of year, Mike, about 1-2% of the hive will be drones, male bees, sperm carriers. They do not work, they do not gather food; they lay around the hive. Once a day they hope to catch a scent of a Queen bee to mate with her and die. What happens is that in September, you don't need any more sperm. The hive has set itself

up for survival for the winter, so they chase the drones out of the hive and they die of starvation.

MIKE: Just another day in the hard-knock life of the hive.

Speaking of: How does the *hive itself* come in to being? The physical structure of the hive – what is its process?

BEEKEEPER: The physical structure, and for that lets go to the question you prepped me for, about swarming. I remember, this time of year your typical beehive is around 50,000, maybe 60,000 bees strong; you want as much nectar as possible.

In the North Carolina region, the nectar flow tends to start the first or second week of May, and tends to end the second or third week of June. That's our huge honey flow; you want as many bees as possible working as fast as they can, foraging for honey, nectar and pollen. If you have a Queen who is amazing at laying eggs, she may lay 1,500 eggs a day. She could, if she's a singular Queen, lay 1,800-2,000 eggs a day. Twenty-two days later, that worker bee is going to hatch.

She'll start laying eggs in about March, maybe even earlier. If you do that math, you see that if she's a really really amazing Queen, she is going to be producing a lot of bees, those bees fill up a lot of space and require a lot of food. What happens is the hive goes, "Wait a minute folks, we're filling up this space. We're not going to have enough space to gather enough nectar to make enough honey to keep this hive going in the future. We'd better do something!"

The bees will grab an egg, go up in to the top of the hive, form a Queen, then the bees will swarm. What happens is that the young Queen hatches – many times she will swarm with half the bees, and they will go off and form another colony. Although sometimes the old Queen will take half the bees and start another colony of her own. So that's how the colonies multiply.

MIKE: So swarming is about the multiplying of hives.

BEEKEEPER: Swarming is about multiplication, not division: we are multiplying. So what happens is that swarming mechanism will kick in; the bees that are going to leave will fill themselves with honey, gather with the departing Queen, and fly away. They will go form another colony, in a new place. Then they will start building a hive.

What happens is, during the lifespan of the worker bee, there is a certain time she can produce wax – there is a place in her body where she produces little microscopic bits of wax. She moves them up to her mandibles with her legs and adds honey to really form that wax. It takes about 10 lbs. of honey to produce 1 lb. of wax. Let's say a hive swarms and 25,000 bees swarm with her, they've got to carry enough honey for them to have the energy to produce wax. To start building that next hive, bees are amazing architects and builders. They build that cone and start immediately laying eggs, foraging for nectar and pollen. That's why you say "A swarm in May is worth a mountain of hay; a swarm in June is not worth a spoon."

MIKE: Ohh. Is *that* why you say that?

BEEKEEPER: If you're a beekeeper you do! A swarm early in the season is a good thing; if it's too late in the season they won't survive. They won't have enough resources to build a hive or survive.

MIKE: So a hive is basically constructed out of super-dense honey?

BEEKEEPER: Well, they have to eat a large amount of honey for their gland to spit out wax. For all purposes, yes. They convert the honey to wax.

MIKE: The analogy that comes up for me as you're speaking is that a content creator is wanting to build a new hive – of people, a community. They give away a lot of honey, a lot of the sweet stuff. By continuously producing the honey, you create a hive.

BEEKEEPER: That's inspiring.

MIKE: What is the process through which a bee makes honey?

BEEKEEPER: What happens is, nectar is nothing more than super-sweet syrup provided by gorgeous flowers.

MIKE: Did you say *gorgeous* flowers?

[laughter]

BEEKEEPER: Yeah, what happens is nectar is essentially sugar with a lot of water in it – about 95% water. What happens is the bee goes out, she fills up her little honey stomach with nectar. There is an enzyme in that honey stomach that mixes with that

nectar while she's flying back to the hive. She gets back to the hive, and she lands sometimes; there will be a worker caste caller a grosser.

The grosser will meet her at the entrance and will transfer the nectar to the grosser. She will fly back while the grosser flies back. The grosser will spit that nectar into a honey cell and that enzyme will start to break down that sugar. Then what happens is the bees are flapping their wings constantly. Air is moving through that hive, and over the next few days they evaporate the water. What is left behind is the amazing nectar that because of an enzyme has been cured to honey. When that honey, or nectar, gets to the point where it's 17% water or less, you have honey.

MIKE: What's the benefit of the flowers? It seems like it's kind of a virtuous cycle, it's helpful for the flowers.

BEEKEEPER: It is! Because what the bees are doing for the flowers is producing, ultimately that's what most of the cycle is about. It's the idea of the male and female parts of the flower. The pollen being the seed and the bees are spreading that seed throughout the flowers. Because as they gather nectar, they gather pollen, and as they move from flower to flower to flower, that pollen is brushing up against the female parts of flowers, and bam! We have fertilization there. Flowers need bees so they can reproduce themselves.

MIKE: It's all about reproduction, isn't it? The bees are basically helping the flowers get it on, eh?

BEEKEEPER: Remember, say that hive is 60,000 bees, I may have 50,000 of them out there forging every day. That bee may make 15 trips a day. Hundreds and hundreds of flowers = $50,000 \times 15,000 \times$ however many flowers they visit a day... there is a whole lot of awesome sex going on, and the bees are responsible for it.

[laughter]

BEEKEEPER: They are the conductors of amazing reproduction. This amazing thing God has put into the universe; he's made his entire creation scream of passion.

MIKE: So this is interesting: At a basic level, the bees are helping facilitate the flowers perpetuating themselves. There's a lot of reproduction – multiplication – happening. What's in it for the bees? I guess the bees are doing all this because they want to create honey, correct?

BEEKEEPER: Well remember: they have to have two sources of food, a carbohydrate and a protein. The carbohydrate comes from the honey, the protein comes from the pollen.

MIKE: Okay. So they more or less directly ingest the pollen?

BEEKEEPER: Yes. They will directly ingest it or mix it with honey. A beehive needs about 300 lbs. of honey to get through the year, and about 30-50 lbs. of pollen. The pollen is amazing stuff; it is protein packed, I tell people all the time, you want to really get protein in your body, go to a natural food store and buy some refrigerated pollen and start taking that stuff down by the spoonful.

MIKE: This doesn't trigger allergies..?

BEEKEEPER: Start with 1/8 of an ounce, start with an eighth of a teaspoon. Then as long as you don't have an allergic reaction, work up to about a teaspoon a day or so. It's got this fantastic citrusy/floral flavor to it, it's like eating flowery citrusy dirt. It's really cool; I love the stuff.

MIKE: So if people wanted to just gather their own pollen in the wild, can that happen?

BEEKEEPER: No, you need some bees. We can set a hive up to collect nothing but pollen. So if we set that hive up, the bees come back and load it with pollen, we collect it with a pollen collector.

MIKE: Okay, interesting! This could generate a whole different set of connections with having a powerful presence in the world, "marketing" and otherwise. I don't like the *viral* metaphor personally, i.e. "this video went viral!" Who wants to catch a *virus*?

BEEKEEPER: Not me! By contrast, I think that the analogy of honey bees that's out there is basically spot-on. There is just so much that goes on about spreading content, and getting people to follow after you. Just this idea of things spreading from place to place, that idea of pollinating is amazing for the Buzz Seminar. What happens with content from my perspective is powerful: I find something I love, then I pass it on, then they pass it on again. I think that the parallel of reproduction is really amazing.

I'm going to pick up pollen, pick up those ideas and that content. Then as I move through my life to my next path, I spread it around to everyone else.

MIKE: Absolutely, so pollen in this case would be the content. Is pollen digested? Is that what creates the honey?

BEEKEEPER: No, no, no, no, no – pollen is protein, honey is carbohydrate and honey is created through the nectar, not through pollen.

MIKE: Got it! Thanks for setting me straight. [Laughter]

BEEKEEPER: Now: You need more honey than pollen, but they must have them both to survive. One of the challenges we're facing with the bees is because after WWII we started uni-cropping. One of the problems we're having is bees are getting pollen from one source. You're getting different qualities and types of pollen, if bees are left alone to forage in the wild, they will gather nectar and pollen. They get all the best nutrition from the different varieties. If you're getting your food from one source, you're a weaker honeybee.

MIKE: Okay, this feels like a rich analogy as well.

BEEKEEPER: Folks only watching news from CNN will be weaker for it – or just Fox News. Pollen is content.

MIKE: So diverse content. Perhaps as content creators we're creating both pollen and honey.

BEEKEEPER: When I connect with people like yourself, we're friends because we've found the Big Tent. I find people with the same passion for Jesus, but we're getting food from so many diverse sources we end up being stronger in our faith. It may not look like the faith of our parents or of our evangelical/fundamentalist forbears, but it's still an amazing, powerful thing.

MIKE: Diversity tends to strengthen resilience and adaptivity all the way around.

BEEKEEPER: Diversity of food sources strengthens the genetics of a honeybee

MIKE: Right! So I'm wondering if hives need more honey than pollen. I think a successful hive leader in marketing creates a lot of honey. The honey is the stuff they

give away – it's really sweet, awesome, valuable content. That protein is stuff they work harder for, what they make their living on; they charge us for access to it. These are books, webinars, classes, coaching, retreats.

We creators – hive-builders – need both nutrients to survive. Honey provides the quick energy; the protein from the pollen is the slow-release power source.

BEEKEEPER: The best Queen and the best hive have high quality protein at certain times of the year. When I'm having what I want, the hive is building up in the early spring so they are ready for the honey flow. I want to get them high quality protein - the higher quality, the higher quality of the bees. Combining it with the honey to make the beebread for the eggs and the larva.

MIKE: It's the honey and the pollen working together that sustains the overall ecosystem of the hive.

BEEKEEPER: Yes. And Queens are created and promoted from within; cross-pollination with diverse plants keep the swarms and hives multiplying.

MIKE: Beautiful! Thanks so much, Jimmy.

BEEKEEPER: Anytime, Mike.

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Jimmy Chalmers is a native of North Carolina and a proud third generation Durhamite, splitting his time between NC and Marietta, Georgia. He actually retained his faith after studying at Oral Roberts University and N.C. State University. He considers himself a multi-vocational man, a pastor-of-last-resort that attempts to combine a passion for theology, food, teaching and love of community into a life that sizzles. A veteran beekeeper, at the moment Jimmy is leaning into the creative tensions of being a vagabond and creating community. Don't tell him you don't like social media - he may lay hands on you and pray. Twitter: @Jimmy_C; FaceBook.com/jimmy.chalmers

Mike Morrell has coached dozens of authors and their teams in the art and skill of personal branding, helping books like the 18-million bestseller *The Shack* and the NY Times bestsellers *A New Kind of Christianity* and *Crazy Love* connect with “hives” of avid readers. Through Speakeasy, Mike has cultivated a hive of over 1,000 avid faith and spirituality bloggers who cross-pollinate quality books and ideas. Mike uses his

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