

How to Market a Best-Seller

Created by **Jack Canfield**
Co-author, **Chicken Soup for the Soul® Series**
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- 1. Write a great book.** Make it as universal as possible. Use a panel of diverse readers to get extensive corrective feedback. (We use 40+ for the *Chicken Soup* books.)
Subscribe to Writer's Digest, P.O. Box 2124, Harlan, IA 51593-2313.
\$24 per year; \$34 per year outside the U.S.
Read lots of books on how to write better.
Attend a really good writer's conference and writer's retreat.
- 2. Come up with a really great title.** Paradox title = *How to Swim with the Sharks without Getting Eaten Alive* or *How to Lose Weight without Dieting*. How-to title = *100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom*. Promise something in the title = *Thin Thighs in 30 Days*. Use a phrase already in the common parlance which communicates a lot: *Happily Ever After* for a book on marriage. Test names with a focus group. Use the subtitle to your advantage also.
If you create a brand name, make sure to register and trademark it.
- 3. Have giant goals and believe in them.** Our first goal was a million and one half books sold in a year and a half. These were our subsequent goals.

1995: 5 million *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books
2 million *Second Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul* books
250,000 *A Chicken Soup for the Soul Cookbook*
1 million *The Aladdin Factor: How to Ask For and Get Everything You Want*

1996: Total of 10 million books for the year

1997: Total of 11 million books
(That year we sold 13.5 million books – more books in the US than any other authors!)

1998: Total of 17 million books

2000: Combined total of all years: 50 million books

2005: (We have sold over 80 million *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books so far!)

2008: (We have sold over 115 million *Chicken Soup* books in 41 languages.)

Write the goal down where you will see it everyday. Carry it with you on a card.

4. Visualize . . . Visualize . . . Visualize!

- We carried a business card that said: "I am so happy I am selling 13 million copies of *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books by December 25, 2005."

- Put signs in bright colors all over your office (especially on the mirrors)
- Visualize your goal during your morning and evening meditations
- Read Robert Dilts' *Beliefs*
- Read Deepak Chopra's *Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*
- Watch *The Secret* over and over. Read my *The Success Principles* at least 3 times.

5. Write a WOW of a business and marketing plan.

- 6. Go to the BEA** (Book Expo America—formerly American Booksellers Association) Convention in Chicago. (ABA Headquarters is at 828 South Broadway, Tarrytown, NY 10591. Phone: 800-637-0037; FAX: 914-591-2720.) Have a booth or be in your publishers booth. Sign free books at the booth. (If not, walk around and network, hand out fliers, sandwich board, etc.) Register for a signing. Richard Paul Evans example.

The regional conferences are fast becoming more important than the national conference. Attend the regional conferences also.

There is also the **CBA (Christian Booksellers Association)** Convention and the **Mormon Booksellers Association** Convention, both of which we have found extremely useful to attend. There are also gift shows if your book is appropriate for those.

- arrange to do a book signing—advertise it
- put on a party/event
- be impressive (The Christmas Box)

The UCLA Book Fair (It's in May every year) Contact a bookstore or chain to have you do signings or contact website: www.latimes.com/festival or call 1-800-LATIMES, ext 7BOOK.

- 7. Spend 90% of your time selling, marketing and self-promoting your book.** Be innovative to the max! Remember that most publishers are basically printers. You have to make it happen, especially in the beginning. Remember: "If it is meant to be, it is up to me." This has to be done in cycles to allow you to write more books. You must create a balance between the "feminine" creative cycle and the "masculine" promotional cycle.
- 8. Use "The Rule of Five."** Do five specific things every day to market your book(s). Every day—no matter what!!!
- 9. Read Jeffrey Lant's *How to Earn A Whole Lot More than A \$1,000,000 A Year Writing, Selling and Commissioning How-To Information.*** \$45.00. Jeffrey Lant Associates, 50 Follen Street - Suite 507, Cambridge, MA 02138. Phone: 617-547-6372. He has other useful resources for nonfiction how-to writers. Get his catalogue.
- 10. Read *1001 Ways to Market Your Books*** by John Kremer. Publisher: Open Horizons, Box 205, Fairfield, IA 52556-0205. Phone: 515-472-6130. \$19.95. Do what he suggests. If you're too busy, hire someone else to do it. He also has a monthly newsletter, *Book Marketing Update*, that updates the book's information

and shares new ideas and important data. We have garnered many useful ideas from the newsletter.

- 10A. Read *Inside the Best Sellers*** by Jerrold R. Jenkins with Mardi Link. (Traverse City, MI: Rhodes & Easton, 1997) The book includes the marketing strategies behind the success of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, *The Christmas Box*, *The Celestine Prophecy*, *Mutant Message Down Under*, *Embraced by the Light*, *1001 Ways to Be Romantic*, *The One Minute Manager*, *The Wealthy Barber*, *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* and others.
- 10B. Read *Publish to Win: Smart Strategies to Sell More Books*** by Jerrold R. Jenkins and Anne M. Stanton (Traverse City, MI: Rhodes & Easton, 1997). This is a great compliment to Kremer's book and is a must read! It's packed full of information.
- 10C. Read *Guerilla Marketing for Writers*** by Jay Conrad Levinson, Rick Frishman and Michael Larsen. (Cincinnati, OH: Writers Digest Books, 2001) This is a great resource!
- 10D. Purchase and read *Maximum Exposure Marketing System: Book Marketing Training Program for Publishers and Authors*** by Tami DePalma and Kim Dushinski. Available from MarketAbility, 813A 14th St., Golden, CO 80401; phone: 303-279-4349.
- 10E. Read *Perpetual Promotion: How to Contact Producers and Create Media Appearances for Book Promotion*** by Brian Jud (Published in 1997 by Marketing Directions, P.O. Box 715, Avon, CT 06001-0715). Teaches you how organize your own promotional tour. Tells you where to find the names of producers who decide who gets on the air, how to create an effective press kit, how to get producers' attention, and how to follow up without aggravating them.
- 11. Hire Dan Poynter**, PARA Publishing, P.O. Box 8206-364, Santa Barbara, CA 93118-8206. Phone: 800-PARAPUB. FAX: 8-5-968-1379. Fax-on-demand: 805-968-8947. Hire Dan as a consultant and buy all his reports and do what they say. He is an incredible resource when it comes to marketing and selling your books! He helped us tremendously. His website also has over 400 pages of free book writing and promoting resources. Go to www.ParaPublishing.com/books/para/364.
- 12. Hire your own PR person.** You may need different people for radio, TV and print media.
We have used as many as five different PR people and firms to help promote all of our various *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books.

Rick Frishman, Planned Television Arts, 301 East 57th St., New York, NY 10022. Phone: 212-593-5820 PTA is the best for drive time radio and television satellite tours. Also Cindy Randall, 1200 West Avenue, #1406, Miami Beach, FL 33139. 305-674-4424. FAX: 305-531-3634.

13. Do phone interviews. Goal is 3 a day, every day, with anybody, anytime, anywhere. (Go for one-hour in-depth interviews at 50,000 watt stations.) M. Scott Peck does three radio interviews every day and was on the *New York Times* Best-seller list for 612 weeks (12 years!), and has purportedly earned \$40 million.

13A. Purchase and listen to *You're on the Air: Let the Pros Teach You How to Perform Successfully on Any Television or Radio Show* by Brian Jud. This is a 90-minute video program (plus a booklet, *You're on the Air*) employing interviews with the top producers of top national talk shows to demonstrate techniques for performing successfully on TV and radio. It is a media performance and voice training course combined into one information-packed package. (Available for \$89.95 + \$4.95 S&H) from Publisher Marketing Directions, Inc., P.O. Box 715, Avon, CT 06001-0715; or call 800-562-4357.

13B. Hire media coach Joel Roberts (310-286-0631) for a day of one-on-one coaching on how to be a media star. He's really great—we usually have him teach at our **“How to Build a Speaking and Writing Empire Seminar”** every year. He'll help you on a book by book basis, e.g., he'll help you draw out the best ways to promote a specific book —what topics to focus on, what stories to tell—as well as presentation skills.

Two other incredible media trainers are 1) Judy Jernudd at Media Star Power. Contact her at 310-306-0069. She also has a great book: *Media Star Power: ABCs to Successful TV, Print & Net Interviews*. 2) Kristen Brown of On Camera. Her phone number is 805-969-5944.

14. Get onto as many magazine covers as possible—ask, ask, ask, ask!

Start small – hometown newspapers...small papers...College Alumni Magazine...Trade Magazines...Trade newsletters

15. Make sure to have a toll free 800 number to give out for people to call and order your book. Local bookstores are often out of stock. Ours: 1-800-SOUPBOOK (the K drops off when you dial it) and 1-800-2-ESTEEM. If you don't want to handle it, arrange for your publisher, a local bookstore or a fulfillment house to do it. Give out their number.

15A. Start a website that can take orders for your books and tapes. Publish your website address in all of your books, tapes, catalogues and newsletters. You can visit ours at www.chickensoup.com or www.jackcanfield.com to see how we have done it. Be willing to spend the money. We wasted a lot of time doing it wrong with people who were “saving us money.” If you don't want to fill orders yourself, there are ways to forward the orders to a local bookstore, or hyperlink people to www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com. See their web sites for instructions.

- 16. If possible (especially for non-fiction writers), make sure you have a page or cartoon or short chapter in your book that you can refer people to at point of purchase that will sell the book.** “Here, read pages ## to ## and see if you like it.”
- 17. Get listed in the *Radio/TV Interview Report*** at Box 1206, Lansdowne, PA 19050-8206. Phone: 1-800-989-1400, ext. 411 or 610-259-1070. They can even help you write your ad copy. If your book is good, you’ll start a chain letter effect. Take a full page ad if you can afford it. Use pictures of you and your book covers in the ad.
- 17A. Get on QVC and/or The Home Shopping Network.** Tony Robbins reportedly sold \$247,000 worth of tapes and books in 20 minutes. We’ve done both networks and were very successful.
- 18. Let periodicals, journals, newsletters, and newspapers do free excerpts from the book.** Jeffrey Lant: “Be exposed to 1.5 million people a month.” Lant uses a non-exclusive free syndicated column approach. We’re in *Women’s World* with a weekly “Chicken Soup for the Soul” column—which consists of mostly stories excerpted from our 85 books. We occasionally do an original column. We also have a weekly syndicated (King Features) Chicken Soup for the Soul newspaper column in over 150 newspapers.
- The syndicated column strategy is used very well by Robert Fulghum, Alan Cohen, Louise Hay, Dr. Ruth Westheimer, Nathaniel Branden, Dear Abby, Ann Landers, and numerous others. We’re currently negotiating for a paid nationally syndicated column to begin in October.
- 19. Call and/or visit anyone who might review your book—no matter how small the publication.** It builds your press kit and you never know what chain of events you might kick off. (Our parenting newspaper example.)
- 20. Give the book away to gatekeepers and opinion molders.** If you can afford it, give away between 200-1000 free books. We once mailed 1000 copies of *Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul* to ministers, chaplains and priests all across America. We recently gave away over 30,000 copies of three *Chicken Soup for Little Souls* books to pediatricians and dentists to put in their waiting rooms. We can afford to do that now. If you autograph them to the person you’re giving it to, you’ll have more impact.
- I once gave away 2500 copies of *The Success Principles* to what we are now calling our “Big Mouth List.” You have to get people talking about your book,
- 21. Speak, speak, speak . . .** reference the book, hold it up, read from it, show graphics from it, etc., . . . make sure you tell some emotionally moving stories . . . and then sell the book in the back of the room. If you use overheads in your talks, have big color overheads of your book cover.

Read: *Speak & Grow Rich* by Dottie & Lilly Walters. (Prentice Hall) This book is a “must read” for anyone wanting to really succeed in this part of the business.

Write: **Dottie Walters** at: P.O. Box 1120 Glendora, CA 91740. Ask to be placed on her mailing list to receive announcements on her seminars, "How to Enter the World of Public Speaking." She'll also send you additional information about her books and tapes on the subject.

Read: *Success Secrets of the Motivational Superstars* by Michael Jeffreys (Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing, 1996) Call 916-632-4400.

Join: **The National Speakers Association**, 1500 South Priest Drive, Tempe, AZ 85281. Call: 602-968-2552. Join a local chapter and attend their regional and national conference.
(714) 858-8255. Call and they'll direct you to a local group in your area.

Attend: **Attend Mark Victor Hansen's MEGA SPEAKING SEMINAR** with You can get a brochure by calling 714-759-9304. Or go to his web site, which you can find on Google.

- 21A. Speak for The Learning Annex.** No real money, but huge exposure. Ask for one of the prime locations (front or back cover—inside or out—and first page) with a picture of the book cover as part of the description. Los Angeles, New York, San Diego, San Francisco and Toronto will give you over two million exposures. That's a lot of free publicity to known book buyers and seminar attendees! Get their phone numbers from information in those cities.
- 22. Get other speakers to sell your books and tapes.** (We have 50 such people.) Can be sold in the back-of-room, and through newsletters and catalogues. SkillPath, Fred Pryor, and CareerTrack all carry our books and tapes.
- 23. Do book signings.** Be selective. Request an ad budget, staffers, and big signs. Make a commotion. (Balloons, pictures, hand out books, t-shirts, lapel pins, full window displays, etc.) Books will sell prior to and after your appearance. “Read pages ##-##” technique.” Sign books for and take pictures with the sales staff. Use certificates. You may want to consider doing some “free” speeches sponsored by local organizations. The advantage of these is that they put people in the seats because that is their job. They usually draw more people than a book signing and you can sell books in the back of the room (keeping all the profit for yourself) or have a local bookstore come in and sell books at the end of your talk (thus having the books count toward getting you on the best seller list). One trick I have learned that really works is this: If you are speaking before you sign, put a book on every chair that is set up. That way, in order to sit down, the audience member has to pick up your book. They usually start reading it and get hooked. Plus the book has now become theirs.

- 24. Befriend bookstore owners and sales people.** Always drop in and sign books when you are in the area, airport, etc. Send cards, letters, book announcements, book reviews, etc. This is especially true for local bookstores. (This also holds true for media people.) Keep a data base and stay in touch about old and new titles. When doing book tours, during any “free time” stop in at as many bookstores as possible and sign books.
- 24A. Send a “fax alert” to all of the bookstores.** (Bettie Eadie, us)
- 24B. Buy the memo space on Ingram’s order confirmation fax.** “What’s hot?” Set up an appointment and stop in at Ingram’s and sign books for the staff whenever you find yourself going to Nashville. This helps them be committed to talking about your book to potential independent bookstore buyers when they call in.
- 25. Create videotaped book reviews and promos for the bookstores.**
- 26. Ask your publisher to buy front of the store, window, and end of aisle positions in the chains - palate promotions at Costco-Price Club.** Visit their headquarters and schmooze the buyers and executives. Costco Club has a newspaper that they publish monthly—the *Costco Connection*. They can review your book or do a feature article on you and your book. We once bought the cover of the *Walden Book Report*. It was fabulous!
- 26A. Stay in your publisher’s face—constantly!** Enroll, sell, and generate provocative and stimulating marketing and promotional ideas together. Don’t let up!
- 26B. Creatively advertise. Get on the internet. Get into catalogs.** There are several catalogs which lists all of the catalogs. Here are a few with their phone numbers: *The Catalog of Catalogs* (800-331-8355); *The Directory of Mail Order Catalogs* (800-562-2139); *Mail Order Business Directory* (305-752-2547); *National Directory of Catalogs* (800-955-0231); and *The Wholesale by Mail Catalog* (HarperCollins -- only \$17).

The Catalog of Catalogs: The Complete Mail-Order Directory is an incredible reference for any author or publisher who wants to penetrate the lucrative catalog market. It’s bursting with more than 14,000 mail-order companies in nearly 850 categories. If you’re looking for sales leads, this affordable directory describes catalogs that specialize in everything from art supplies to books, foods to gardening, pets to yoga. Catalogers buy in large quantities, at reasonable discounts, over a long period of time, and don’t return merchandise. What a perfect way to sell books! Now you have the ideal reference to reach them. \$25.95.

The web site to order the catalog is: <http://www.communicationcreativity.com/catalog.html> or write: Communication Creativity, P.O. Box 909, Buena Vista, CO 81211-0909
Tel: 719-395-8659 Fax: 719-395-8374 Toll-free Order Line: 1-800-331-8355
E-mail: Lurina@CommunicationCreativity.com

27. Look for leveraged buyers - Wal-Mart, Sam's, Borders, Crown, Costco-Price Club, Coles, W. H. Smith, the big book chains, etc. Establish relationships with the buyers, promoters, and editors. Visit Ingram's in Nashville. Do book signings for their staff. Give free books to the sales staff. Give lapel pins to sales staff. (Wear lapel pins and t-shirts yourself.)

28. Be creative with by-pass marketing.

Work out deals to have your books sold in places that normally don't carry books. They stand out that way.

Nail and hair salons.

Michigan Shell station mini-marts

Chiropractic, dentist and doctor's offices

Bagel shops, deli's, restaurants, grocery stores and pharmacies.

Hospital gift shops (gift sales reps)

Cruise ships, airline stewardesses

29. Get on the airlines - book reviews, magazine articles, magazine reprints from your book, audio channels. We've been on America West audio channel and in Delta's *Skywest Magazine*. Also use the flight attendants. Work to get your books sold in the airport bookstores—especially your local one. (Ashleigh Brilliant in Santa Barbara.)

30. Network and mastermind with other book authors—especially best-selling authors.

You'll get tons of ideas that you can use. Always ask them what they are doing.

31. Create a big event with hoopla to create mass media attention. (Feeding the homeless with the world's largest pot of chicken soup on Thanksgiving, presenting a check for \$250,000 to the American Red Cross, working with Literacy Volunteers of America for a 40 city Readathon, co-sponsoring National Arbor Day & planting a million trees.) *Chicken Soup for the Surviving Soul* was launched with a rally of over 800 cancer survivors and celebrity emcee and introducers. *Teenage Soul* launched with a huge event with celebrity attendance at Planet Motown in Las Vegas.

32. Identify a charity to receive proceeds from each book.

These are some of the ones that are identified with various *Chicken Soup* books:

American Red Cross

Save the Children

Feed the Children

Habitat for Humanity

The Yellow Ribbon Project

The Wellness Community

The Union Rescue Mission

National Arbor Day Foundation

Literacy Volunteers of America

Breast Cancer Research Foundation

AAUW Educational Foundation

Motivational Media Associates

Soup Kitchens for the Soul

Charities of Poor People

32A. Work with charities for free or low-cost coop advertising. (*Chicken Soup for the Surviving Soul* and the American Cancer Society in *People* magazine. *Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul* and Habitat for Humanity and Save the Children television campaigns.) We choose a charity to receive money from every book we do.

32B. Create campaigns with appropriate corporate advertisers and sponsors.

Chicken Soup for the Pet Lover's Soul and Petco Stores, Bayer, and IAMS.

Chicken Soup for the Couple's Soul (Body Shop, Victoria's Secret)

Chicken Soup for the Soul series and Campbell Soup Corporation.

Chicken Soup for the McDonald's Soul, *Chicken Soup for the Lutheran Soul*, *Chicken Soup for the Grieving Soul*.

Chicken Soup for the Surviving Soul free sampler booklet and The Revlon Run/Walk for Life, Burger King -- AFLAC deal..

Chicken Soup for the Teacher's Soul and Great American Insurance

Chicken Soup for the Prisoner's Soul and corporate sponsors.

33. Create an identifiable series rather than just one book. Use a common logo look or trade dress on the cover.

Chicken Soup for the Soul

The Dummies Series

A is for B is for C is for

God's Vitamin C for the Spirit

Life's Little Instruction Books

Don't Know Much About . . .

Talk Back to Ritalin Talk Back to Prozac

The One Minute Manager series

Dilbert (etc.)

Life 101 ... Wealth 101 (Peter McWilliams)

Mars & Venus (John Gray)

34. Aggressively pursue speaking at the big rallies and conventions - orthodontists, chiropractors, state education associations, etc.

35. Pre-sell your book to corporate and association audiences. Do special printings with their corporate logo on the cover for orders of 1000 copies or more or use a pre-printed adhesive label stating: "A Gift from *Name of Organization*."

36. Persevere. Become obsessed with your book. If you're not, why did you write it? Take every shot you can think of. Go for it!

Remember this wonderful and true quote: "If it is meant to be, it is up to me."

Doing all of this takes a lot of hard work—much of it detail-oriented grass roots work, but it is worth it. You wrote the book because you wanted to get your story and/or your message out to the world. As you build your readership for your earlier books, you build up a fan base that will eagerly look forward to your next book until you disappoint them.

I know these principles and techniques work if you will work them. They have helped us sell 80+ million *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books in 39 languages. They have helped us win the American Booksellers Book of the Year Award in 1995 and a Guinness Book World Record for having 7 books on the New York Times Best Seller List on May 24th, 1998, and allowed us to positively impact the lives of countless millions of people around the world. We have lived what seem like charmed lives—being on Oprah, meeting presidents, international travel, lots of superstar actors and writers for friends—but most importantly, we have been able to fully express our creativity and have it matter in the world. We have built a platform that opens doors to doing almost anything we want in the world. But it is all the result of hard work and dedication. I hope you will choose to make the sacrifices that will allow you to create the life you envision for yourself and your family.

I wish you the best of success with your writing career and with the achievement of all your goals for book sales.

Love to you!

Jack Canfield

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Web Sites: www.chickensoup.com; www.jackcanfield.com, www.thesuccessprinciples.com