

Find Your Niche-Creating Success in the Book Industry

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The success of writing a book is not as simple as just creating a good story ... it's about branding your idea into something memorable and relatable to the audience of your choosing. In the children's book market, the potential to create a name for yourself and your book comes from developing a vision that follows your characters and leaves a lasting impact on your readers. Once you find your niche, the possibilities continue to emerge and build upon each other with the opening of every new door.

1. Surround yourself with your audience. What better way to understand the audience you are writing for than to become a part of their world! In the Children's Book Industry, it's important not only to create a name for yourself with teachers, parents, and schools, but also with the young creative minds who read your work. School presentations, reading in the classroom, attending children's activities in your area, and finding every way possible to understand the importance of the children's relationship to a character in your story is imperative to keep your reader's attention. Stay current and realistic with the times to identify with the youthfulness of your audience.

2. Make your writing stand for something greater. When does an author or story become more than a title? It happens when you ask yourself why you write. We often learn a lot about ourselves during our own character development process. There is always so much more to say underneath the fictional idea, yet it goes unwritten. When we get to know our story, we get to know ourselves. Acceptance is the key to our continual development, and is extremely important in children's literacy. So if you have a message, what is your message? Say it. Become a creditable source of information as you develop a passion for something greater than the fiction.

3. Don't stop with just the book. Think of some of the greatest book and cartoon characters of all time. One thing they have in common is a visible and recognizable image. It only makes sense for your character to become a brand in itself. Why not? Stuffed animals, Interactive Websites, Action Figures, Collectors Cards, and Computer Games work hand in hand to make your creation stand out. There are many companies out there that will work with you to get your characters just right. Remember to create a brand that stands for something lasting, and is visible and easy to find.

4. Allow your readers to get involved. It is important to promote literacy in your efforts as an author of children's literature. An author can become alive to

the children and become more than a mythical maker of a story when put directly in front of the fans and the readers, allowing the children to participate. Creative writing contests for kids, writing workshops, kids book reviews, and fun newsletters to keep them involved are only a few ways to connect as a real person on their level, and inspire young minds to use their creativity and follow dreams towards becoming a reality.

5. Surround yourself with a team. Becoming a successful and serious author is a full-time job. Success cannot be created or sustained alone forever, understanding that success is a daily process. Surround yourself with mentors, writers, marketers, publicists, and experts in your field. As you work to build your team, focus on the benefits of bringing together a group of individuals who each share a unique approach towards your vision for your book project. As the online marketing and networking industry continues to explode, do not solely rely on your Internet posse. Get out there and remember the importance of face-to-face relationships with others.

About the Author: Melissa M. Williams, Founder of LongTale Publishing has been writing stories since the age of eight years old. Many of her stories were inspired by real-life experiences with childhood pets she owned while growing up in Houston, Texas. Melissa started the ***Iggy the Iguana*** chapter book series while pursuing a Master's degree in professional counseling. During graduate school, Melissa began substitute teaching for third and fourth grade classes, which inspired her to get the students involved in the creative writing process of her books. Melissa continues to connect to her young readers by visiting schools and speaking to students about her journey as an author. It is extremely important for her to leave a lasting and positive impression on young people, as Melissa encourages students to be creative and follow their dreams. In addition to writing for children, she is a published songwriter and writes with singer/songwriter, Misha Williams, her younger sister.