

Boise Non-Fiction Writer's Group, 6:30 -8:00 PM, June 4

Rediscovered Bookshop, 7079 Overland Rd., Boise

Notes taken by Jane Rohling

MAKING A LIVING WITH YOUR BOOK

Dave Lakhani is a marketing expert, trainer, and author of *Subliminal Persuasion: Influence and Marketing Secrets They Don't Want You To Know*, and *Persuasion: The Art of Getting What You Want*. In his talk to the Boise Nonfiction Writer's Group, Dave shared the plan he has used to sell tens of thousands of books in 13 languages.

Dave Lakhani's company is Bold Approach (<http://www.boldapproach.com>), a business acceleration strategy firm. Dave's lived in Boise off and on for many years and is happy to have the opportunity to speak to the Nonfiction Writers Group and provide assistance to its members. His personal e-mail address is: dave@boldapproach.com and he invites members of the Non-fiction Writer's Group to contact him. He gets hundreds of e-mails daily so it may take him a while to get back to you. Dave coaches and mentors people.

You can also check out Dave's web sites (www.boldapproach.com, or www.subliminalpersuasion.com) his blog, his Facebook page, his Twitters to learn more about his work, his books, and his activities and events. Dave's doing a workshop in Las Vegas June 27-28 and anyone who buys an advance copy of his book can go free as his guest...just bring the book with you.

An ongoing project Dave's working on is a book he's writing with his 4 year old daughter. He puts her in interesting or challenging situations and then has her talk through them with him, tell him about her experience, to which Dave adds his comments and observations.

Dave spoke to the Non-fiction Writer's Group about how to market what we write. He told us that he wanted to write a book, so he just went after a publisher and wrote the book. He said it's not how good you are at writing that determines whether you sell books, it's how good you are at marketing that counts.

Publishers put ink on paper, covers on books, and ship them out very well. They get you in catalogues and some bookstores, but if the author isn't well known, or it's a niche book it's going to take some good marketing to make sales.

The average business book in the U.S. sells 5,000 copies.

Tips for nonfiction writers who want to earn some income from their books:

1. Negotiate a contract with a publisher and have it reviewed by an attorney.
2. Negotiate an advance. Advances of a few thousand dollars are common and 6-figure advances are possible for known writers. Try to get at least \$15,000-20,000 for your first book. Dave has had better experience negotiating for a bigger chunk of the sales profit than for a bigger advance.
3. Use the internet for marketing.
4. Bestseller's lists: You can buy your way into the NY Times bestseller list by purchasing (and getting others to purchase) large quantities of your own book

- from stores as soon as it's released. Getting on this list can double or triple your speaking fees! Amazon.com's bestseller list is calculated hourly and can be easily manipulated. If you can get 300-400 people to buy your book in a very short period of time to move your book up on the list—you can get up to #25 on Amazon's list for that hour.
5. Language has a lot to do with how you position things. It helps to get your book categorized in a smaller category, one with fewer books in it, to get on the bestseller list for that category.
 6. Get something published and out, then get it on a bestseller list once. That'll get your name and books out and move you toward success.
 7. If you're writing a non-fiction book and it's taking you more than a year it's taking too long (unless there's a particular part of the research that requires a longer period of time). You need to focus more on your book! You need to get in, get it published, get it out and get it seen!
 8. You have to be seen to sell! Getting out and giving talks, interviews, etc. is very important for getting your name out and getting your book sold. You have to give talks—people who get to know you are more likely to buy your book.
 9. Focus on what you do, how it works for you, how it promotes your books. Narrow your funnel down so more and more people know you, your story, and your work. Every writer has a story and that's often what they don't want to talk about.
 10. Book signings are a waste of time but you have to do them, especially in small, independent bookstores. People who meet you, buy your book and get it signed are more likely to read your book and talk about it. At book signings, Dave highlights things in the books, marks them with a bookmark for customers, and suggests parts they should really read.
 11. Dave buys all of the books he sells himself through Amazon because Amazon reports on sales and he can use those reports to tell the publisher how many have sold.
 12. Get people who are well known to endorse your book.

Dave grew up in a cult from the time he was about 6-7 years old until he left at 16. The mind control and manipulation he experienced there is how he learned firsthand about subliminal persuasion. Talking about his personal experiences in the cult helps him sell books and generates interest in his books.

Dave writes about 1-2 books a year now.

Your goal when you go out and give talks to market your book is to get people's emotions so high about your book that they buy the book and can't wait to get home to read it.

You've GOT to get out and give talks and be seen to sell your books—if you don't, you can write a book and publish it but you can't make a living from it.

Social media, like blogs, can all you to be sort of "invisible" and private and helps you sell books, but you still need to get out and be visible to promote yourself.

You get what you negotiate! Never let something get into your contract that results in turning over your intellectual property to the publisher.

Don't give up the audio rights to your book. Dave makes as much or more from audio books as from the printed books.

Don't start writing unless you assume what you do is going to be a success! Writing a book is far too much work otherwise. When you're finished you should have much more to show for your work than the pride of ownership.

Money is what allows you to keep writing! If you're earning money from your books, you can quit trying to work a "day job" and while squeezing your writing into nights and weekends.

Create another product related to your book and make note of it in the book to create a broader package of things to sell. Ask yourself, "What's my funnel look like? How do I sell more than just my book?" The book is only a "lead generator" that drives people to the other products Dave offers (training sessions, DVDs, other books, etc.)

- The sale of the book is like a first date. You want to be sure you have a second and third date as your customer moves into bigger, more expensive products with each additional "date."
- For example, if you're selling a book about ghost towns, think about selling a map that shows where the good ghost towns are, and then selling guided tours to your favorite ghost towns, etc.

Social media—like Facebook, blogs, U-tube, etc.—are all ways people connect that you can control. They aren't controlled by big media outlets.

- In blogs you can just talk about your experiences. You should post a couple of paragraphs on your topic to it 3-5 times a week. Posting to your blog is also a great way to get you writing, unstuck, by just posting a couple of paragraphs. Blogs are much better than adding pages to your web site because of the way Google's algorithm works--your posts get indexed by Google and so will come up in searches and come up higher on the search list if you post frequently and put important words (name, business name, books, etc.) in the title and frequently in the blog.
- Facebook is where people go to meet like-minded friends.
- Twitters are like micro-blogging. You can only text 140 characters and you can send them to the list of people who follow your Twitters. You send them like text messages from your cell phone and you can also send photos you take on your cell phone. People who follow your Twitters will also go to your blog and web site, buy and read your books, etc.
- Linked In: networking to connect with other professionals like you.
- Pod casting is also a good way to get information out about your books, work.

You have to be willing to take a stand and talk about what's important to you.

No matter what your topic is, there are great big groups of people online who are interested in it. Use the Web and social media to capitalize on that audience.

Public people don't have the same right to privacy that you do—you can write about them as long as you don't slander them. It's very nearly impossible to litigate a writer who's writing about something that appears to be true to the writer.

Ask people to interview you and get them to support your book. It sometimes helps if you can offer to reciprocate and support their work as well.

- Mind Map is mentioned in Dave's book and he tells people how he uses it, so Dave asked to be on an online Webinar the person who developed the technique offers so he could tell people how he uses mind mapping.

Get a publisher: It's very difficult to get self-published books into Barnes & Noble, and if you do, you'll lose 65% of the sales to them. It's better to get a publisher who can get you wider distribution. You may make less per book but you'll sell many more books.

Publish your book first, then create products to go with your book, put on live events that promote it, personalize the interaction for those who attend your events. Live presentations are best because you can establish a more personal relationship the people who attend and they're more likely to buy your book and come back for more.

- Promoters of Dave's events usually get 50% from what he sells at the event.

A few comments about cults and manipulation:

- Only one thing separates manipulation from persuasion and that's intent.
- Critical thinking is a lost skill in our society.
- Cults can be positive.
- Examples that are cult-like are Mac computer users, Jimmy Buffet parrot heads, Scion drivers.

Ask for endorsements and forewords for your book: If you have trouble getting past the "gatekeepers" to get to the person you want an endorsement from, show up at one of their events and try to ask them there.

Dave never used an agent. He got an introduction through someone to the editor at Wiley (his publisher) before he published his first book, and wrote a proposal that time. The book was so successful that he didn't need to work much at getting them to publish subsequent books. He still writes proposals, but doesn't need to put as much into it for Wiley. He's stayed with the same publisher for all of his books because of the rapport and ease of working with them.

Write media releases and send them out. Have an opinion and be willing to share it to get on news programs, other TV or radio interviews, etc.

Pick up on other stories in the news media that can be tied into your work and use that opportunity to put out a news release about your work. Dave likes to "look for a hungry crowd and wheel a cart in front of them" rather than putting on a banquet for a few people.

NPR is an exceptional media outlet—If you can get a story or interview there it's great! The Oprah show is very hard to get into but your work will be an instant success if you do.

To see what real persuasion and manipulation is like, watch the television preachers asking for money. Watch them first with the sound on a few times, then turn the sound off and watch what they DO.