



News & Views

▶ Helping authors and publishers create, market and sell more books

SEPTEMBER 2008

SEPTEMBER 10 MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Thinking Way Out of the Box

Creativity is used as a means to tell a story, create an emotion, express yourself and solve problems. Are you using yours to its fullest potential?

Every publisher and author is challenged to create a platform that will motivate consumers to read and purchase their books. There's a lot of competition out there. This session will help you discover new ways to stimulate your own creativity so that you can dream up the best marketing plan for yours.

Through creative games, we'll find the skills needed to think outside the box, then put them to work in brainstorming inventive marketing plans for individual books published by members and guests. **Bring your book, your book ideas and an open mind!**

Join us the second Wednesday evening of the month, September 10, at the Lodge at Des Peres. Doors open for networking at 6:30 PM; meeting begins at 7:00 PM. The formal meeting concludes around 8:30 with networking continuing till 9:00.

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

Natasha Moore first joined the likes of independent publishers in 2004 with her first book, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: A Bible Study Journal For Those Who Intend To Make It Till The End*.



Natasha Moore

Now, she is the owner of Apostolic Experience Publishing, a ministry with five authors and seven books in print.

"Being an independent book publisher is a rewarding challenge. It allows me to incorporate everything I'm passionate about—ministry, editing, writing, and a little graphic design—into one pursuit. On that level, book publishing

is easy. Getting people to care enough about your passion to spend \$15 on a book, now that's the hard part. Marketing is always the hard part."

Lynnette Schuepbach, author, illustrator and speaker, has seen first-hand how creative thinking has changed lives. She believes that everyone has the ability to create through some part of his/her life. Personally, Lynnette says, "Creativity has

Continued on page 2

Innovation: Thinking Outside the Box

By Steven Gillman

When innovators talk about thinking outside the box, they mean coming up with creative ways to solve problems—new ways to look at things. How do they do it? How can you do it too? We first have to ask what the "box" is. Then we can look at how to get outside of it.

The "box" is the normal way of doing things and looking at things. It is the assumptions that almost everyone involved is making. The best way to start thinking out of the box then, is to identify and challenge all the assumptions that make up thinking inside the box.

One of the major liquor brands was faltering years ago, and they couldn't seem to boost their sales. Promotions, lowering the price, getting better shelf placement—these were the "in the box" solutions. Then someone challenged the assumptions, by asking "What if we stopped the promotions and just raised the price?"

The price was raised as an experiment, and sales soon doubled. As it turns out, some types of liquor are bought quite often as gifts. Buyers don't want to buy the most expensive one, but they also don't want to seem cheap, so they won't buy products that don't cost enough. Now imagine what happens to your profit margins when you raise the price and double the sales. That's the power of thinking outside of the box.

Continued on page 2

In This Issue


- 1 Thinking Way Out of the Box
- 1 Innovation: Thinking Outside the Box by Steven Gillman
- 2 President's Corner by Ed Sylvia
- 3 Making it BIG at the Big Read! by Barbara Davis
- 3 When Imitation Isn't Flattery
- 3 Virtual Book Marketing Conference Coming Up!
- 4 Paying it Forward—Giving It Back by Ed Sylvia
- 5 Marketing Fundamentals—Creativity with Direction by Rick Sheldon
- 6 PubWest's National Publishing Conference & Book Industry Trade Show
- 6 From Seth Godin's Blog

Innovation: Thinking Outside The Box ... *Continued***Ways To Get Outside The Box**

Challenging assumptions is a powerful creative problem solving technique. The difficult part is to identify the assumptions. If you are designing a new motorcycle, write down assumptions like "speed matters," "it has to run on gas" and "it needs two wheels," not because you expect to prove these wrong, but because challenging these can lead to creative possibilities. Maybe the time has come for an electric three-wheeled motorcycle.

Another way to get to creative solutions is to "assume the absurd." This is either fun or annoying, depending on how open-minded you can be. All you do is start making absurd assumptions, then finding ways to make sense of them. The easiest way to do it is by asking "what if."

What if a carpet cleaning business was better off with half as many customers? It seems absurd, but work with it. Hmm...less stressful, perhaps. More profitable if each customer was worth three times as much. Is that possible? Commercial jobs that involve large easy-to-clean spaces (theaters, offices, convention halls) make more money in a day than houses, with fewer headaches. Focusing on getting those accounts could be the most profitable way to go—not so absurd.


Another way to more innovative ideas is to literally do your thinking out of the box. Get out of the house or the office. Look around at how others are doing things. On busses in Ecuador, salesmen put a product into everyone's hands and let them hold it while they do a sales pitch. Then you have to give back "your" product or pay for it. It is very effective. How could you use the principle in your business? 

Steve Gillman has been studying brainpower and related topics for years. For more creative problem solving techniques, and to subscribe to the Brain Power Newsletter, visit: www.IncreaseBrainPower.com

We welcome our newest member!

Sara S. Woodward Dyrstad

swdrystad@yahoo.com

Sara is a first-year radiology resident at Barnes Jewish Health Care, and interested in publishing her poetry. 


PRESIDENT'S CORNER BY ED SYLVIA
Right-Brain, Right Marketing

Edward Sylvia

It takes a lot of creative energy to write and publish a book. But the job of creativity does not end there. The same creativity that goes into writing a book should continue in marketing and promoting the book. We'll talk a lot about this over the next couple of months.

No one has a more intimate relationship with the topic of the book and the audience the book has been written for. So no one is in a better position to channel creativity into novel and effective ways to tell the world—and in particular, your audience—about the book.

This month's SLPA meeting will feature two highly motivated and creative members—Lynnette Schuepbach and Natasha Moore. They will open the discussion by sharing their expertise in using creativity to effectively market their books. From there, the meeting broadens into a forum in which all attendees can share their creative strategies with others. They have a fun and useful session planned for us. Plan to participate.


Alone, independent publishing is a steep climb. Together, we can help level the playing field with the industry's larger publishing houses. 

— **Ed Sylvia, President**
slpa1@staircasepress.com

Thinking Way Out of the Box ... *Continued*

Lynnette Schuepbach

brought me sanity in time of insanity, joy in a time of sorrow, peace in a time of turmoil, and solutions when problems arise. Because of this, I wish to share my enthusiasm for creativity with everyone."

Lynnette has authored and illustrated three books for children with brilliantly colored illustrations to inspire the imagination of the reader. She has illustrated two books for older children and will have two new books coming out this year. The books focus on education and address several social issues such as sibling rivalry and bullying. She has presented to the National Convention of Parents As Teachers, the St. Clair Regional Conference for Illinois Young Author Award winners and to individual businesses for building teamwork. 

Making it BIG at the Big Read!

By Barbara Davis


Bring your family, bring your friends and bring your fans to **Big Read in Clayton, MO on Oct 11, 2008**. This is the 3rd year for this fun family event that celebrates the joys of reading. Please mark your calendars, and set your PDAs, iPods and computer calendars to remind you to take this day as a working holiday.

Here's how to make it work for you:

- ▶ You should carry your title so everyone can see the front cover.
- ▶ Bring your spouse, kids, friends and fans! Decorate them with a t-shirt that has your book cover on their front and back. Don't forget to cover their sleeves with large button-pins with your book cover on it—great conversation pieces and give-aways. Remember to have your contact information on everything.
- ▶ Proudly browse and chit-chat your way through the booths of fellow authors and writers, exchanging business cards with them as passers-by over hear conversations about your book!
- ▶ Be sure to take a few extra copies as local celebrities and news reporters are often seen strolling through the booths—perhaps they would enjoy reading a complimentary autographed copy.
- ▶ You should plan to take a break at the three Author Tents and Storytelling Tent. And of course your book will be laying proudly in your lap for all to see—what an interesting conversation piece while you are waiting for the next speaker! Perhaps even a quick sale!
- ▶ If your book is a children's or parent's subject, visit the Kids Big Corner or Kids Stage for belly-rolling giggles and casual chat with parents about your book.
- ▶ And don't forget about the Mid County Branch Library they are hosting the "Based on the Book" Children's Film Festival—it's sure to drawl a crowd!
- ▶ Don't forget to visit the food court—and remember the people behind the counter are readers, too.
- ▶ You should also attend the SLPA Seminar on publishing. Support your home team—even if you've been there and done that. The person you are sitting next to may not have heard what was said or arrived late and needs to be brought up to speed. And lucky you will be there to help them—of course by introducing yourself as successful publisher/author and member of SLPA—an expert!
- ▶ Remember, multiple and personal exposures will sell the most.


- ▶ Consider participating in the SLPA Co-Op Bookselling Booth. For one small fee your book will be displayed face out and available for purchase!

The deadline for participating in the SLPA Co-Op Booth: Wednesday October 8, 2007

To join the festivities and have your book showcased in the SLPA Co-Op Booth, or for more information, rules and entry form, visit the new St. Louis Publishers Association website. For questions and drop off arrangements, contact Barbara Davis at (636) 448-9821 or email at **DisplayCoordinator@stlouispublishers.org** and be sure to put **"2008 Co-Op Booth"** in the subject line. 

When Imitation Isn't Flattery

Worried about plagiarism? Then check out **www.copyscape.com** and see who might have lifted your web site content. The service is free (but limited to a specific number of searches per month), for a small monthly fee (\$4.95) you can have the service scan the Internet automatically and report any possible misuses of your content.

Reprinted from "The Book Marketing Expert newsletter," a free ezine offering book promotion and publicity tips and techniques.
www.amarketingexpert.com 

Virtual Book Marketing Conference Coming Up!

AuthorSmart's Virtual Book Marketing Conference is a series of ten weekly sessions covering a range of topics critical to effective book promotion. Each session is presented by a publishing industry insider sharing his or her expertise.

AME's Penny Sansevieri will be a featured presenter during Session #1, Book Marketing Overview on September 9th at 8 AM Pacific. The conference is free to attend and packed with valuable information. Check out Penny's session as well as the rest of the sessions to be offered and the stellar line up of professionals presenting them. Each speaker is providing a "signing bonus" — **www.authorsmart.net/vbmcpremiums1.html** —to everyone who participates.

For complete details, visit: **<http://stores.authorsmart.com/Page.bok?template=vbmc>**. 

Paying It Forward – Giving It Back

Another creative way to advance your publishing business—and that of our other members—**is to serve on the SLPA Board.**

The SLPA Board is a small, but dedicated group of volunteers who devote their time, energy and ideas behind the scenes to keeping this group running. **We could use your help.**

The first time I took on Presidency of this group back in 2001, SLPA was on the verge of folding. The sitting President and VP had already served several years in various capacities and needed the chance to step away from running the group. Their Treasurer had left the group (and the area) with little notice, leaving the VP to pick up the pieces and do his job as well as hers. Attendance was lagging with about 35 active (and non-volunteering) members. I had just published my first book and was still learning the business myself. I had been a member of SLPA for maybe three to four months—just long enough to realize I had a lot to learn about publishing!

So, I said no when they first approached me to do this. I didn't feel ready, but I had invested in attending PMAU for the first time that past summer and knew how much our members could benefit from all the knowledge that's out there waiting to be given, if we just put some effort into reaching for it. My wife and I thought long and hard about it. (They had also asked her to become VP, so there was plenty of pressure on the family.)

While there were a lot of “challenges” we faced, there were also some very good things in place that we could build on. SLPA had a great secretary in place, who had committed to serving one more year. After “being without” for several months, a brand new Membership Coordinator had just volunteered to take on the Membership job. And SLPA had a web site in place, with a very helpful webmaster. And they had formed official affiliations with both SPAN and PMA, so we had larger groups to call on.

So, after much hesitation, we said yes. And while it was a lot of work, we had a great time learning together and taking the group to the next level. Our other board members were also fairly new to publishing and all were hungry for information on how to make our projects successful. Our collective passion and enthusiasm drove us. Together, we'd plan programs, ask questions of our larger parent organizations like IBPA (formerly PMA) and SPAN. They were ready to help and we grew. And, while the outgoing VP did not want to serve on the SLPA Board any longer, she always made herself accessible to answer our many questions and attended a couple of board meetings when we asked her to.

We planned meetings and events around the topics that WE as new publishers wanted to know more about and this attracted a steady stream of new members, a few of whom have served brilliantly on your board in recent years. Many of the programs we've developed have become models for other PMA (IBPA) affiliates around the country.


SLPA Board meetings evolved into a monthly Saturday morning meeting where we'd conduct SLPA's business and then linger for an extra hour brainstorming each other's business issues. It was great fun and we—and SLPA—thrived in recent years. Our membership grew to roughly 100. Strong friendships and professional connections are formed when you volunteer.

This year has been another transition year for us. I stepped back in for one more year as President after being out of the area in graduate school for two years. And many of our board members have faced additional family challenges this past year that have made their volunteerism an act of generosity that we especially appreciate.

We scaled back on presenting a big education event this year so we could undertake an ambitious web site redevelopment project this past year. (The third incarnation of the site since I've been a member.) Our new site should help us all interact even from a distance, when we cannot meet face-to-face. These days, our US economy provides additional financial challenges for all of us when trying to publish. Our goal remains to make SLPA as useful to you as possible.

Serving on the SLPA Board is a great way to learn more, network more and keep your publishing business moving forward. Take a look at the list of positions available and consider volunteering. Some years we don't have someone to fill a slot and then we can't provide a service. The more we are able to fill these slots for the coming year, the more well-rounded the organization will be. And that means more benefits for all of us.

If you have questions or you're interested in helping next year, contact us soon. Our bylaws require us to present a slate of board candidates for 2009 at our October meeting. The actual election happens in November and the new board assumes office after our November meeting. EVERY POSITION is up for election and we invite you to participate and help us take it the next level again.

Thanks for your help! 
Ed Sylvia, 2008 President

Marketing Fundamentals—Creativity with Direction

By Rick Sheldon

You may have your own ideas of what creativity means. You may also be struggling with your company's advertising and/or income. With regard to marketing, the definition of creativity is very different than it is in relation to the arts. Marketing uses many of the artistic genres including composition, design, photography, film, music, dance, and theater, but the intention and outcome are not alike by any means.

Advertising experts use certain guidelines to aid them in focusing their creativity. Consider the following ideas compiled by a variety of creative professionals.


- Creativity exists when you discover any insight that increases your profit. What may not strike you as being artistically creative may be extremely creative in the marketing world if it is contributing to your overall sales. Above all, your profit is way more important than any acknowledgements or awards you might receive.
- You should blend your creative ideas. Invent something that will lend itself to creativity, that will last over time, and that can stand to be used consistently. Repetition is a major component of effective marketing, and your ideas should have the capability to be reused multiple times with subtle changes or in various circumstances.
- Humor is not always the best creative strategy. The material of what the general public finds humorous varies from population to population. Moreover, as repetition is necessary for success, if your idea flops, it will do so time and again at the expense of your company's profit and image.
- Direct your creativity toward a purpose: selling. Remember the point of inputting your energies and time. Your advertising budget should aim for generating revenue, not just promoting a specific image or designing a well-built ad. All of your advertising should have one goal, and that is to sell your business' products or services.
- Do not get lost in the entertainment aspect. Your marketing is a serious business. While many creative advertisements are entertaining, show business is not the point. If you happen to entertain your customers, that is an added bonus. However, you want to make selling your business your target.
- Creativity should be a way for you to broadcast your company's name. Some advertisers make the mistake of not emphasizing their name; amidst the visuals and verbiage, the name is subtly

dropped. Be sure to create an ad that exclaims your name. Tell people who you are.

- Use creativity to make an element of distinction in your advertising. Take advantage of the opportunity to create an impression in the mind's of the observers. Tell people about your special benefits, your standard of quality, your unbeatable deals, or your long history of existing as a family owned business. Tell people why you are different than the competition.
- Do not wait on a lightning bolt of inspiration to strike you. Creative experts are not merely enlightened. Neither do they slave away mindlessly waiting to design the perfect advertisement. If you truly want to explore and express creativity, become knowledgeable. Take a class, do research, learn from the best, and study design and marketing principles.
- In the invention process, begin with general ideas and then move to more specific ones. Creative ideas should be the predecessors for more concentrated efforts like slogans, visuals, tag lines, and fonts. First start with the kind of message that you are promoting, and then build from there.
- Remember that the best marketing creativity withstands the test of time. It doesn't become passe or outdated in a few years. It has the capability of surviving and of actually improving with time.

Again, artistic creativity and marketing creativity are of different worlds. Your priorities should fastidiously remain dedicated building your company's sales. Reflect upon GE "Bringing Good Things to Life" or being "In Good Hands" with Allstate or Elsie, the Borden cow. These are not just good examples of creativity done right. They are long lasting icons of creative ingenious. It is no coincidence that these brands have survived the changes of the decades. Wisely, these businesses were aware of the dangers of constantly altering an image, logo, slogan, or visual and the importance of stability.

Time and again, businesses make the same mistakes. They rely on the wrong definition of creativity. They publish ideas and then scrap them. They wonder why they lack customer loyalty, brand recognition and much-needed sales.

In conclusion, follow the lead of those who have achieved success. Know the differences in creativity. 

Rick Sheldon has 18 years experience in the Promotional Products Industry and is currently CEO of Save on Promotional Products Inc., a Discount Online Promotional Products Company. He can be contacted at 1-800-826-8706; email: rick@justpay10.com or: www.saveonpromotionalproducts.com

PubWest's National Publishing Conference & Book Industry Trade Show

November 13-15, Portland, Oregon

We are excited to announce that SPAN is partnering with PubWest on their national conference, "Advancing the Book."

The event promises to provide a wealth of learning and networking over three action-packed days.

PubWest's (the Publishers Association of the West) 2008 National Publishing Conference & Book Industry Trade Show will present such luminaries as John Ingram of Ingram Book Group, best selling author Ursula Le Guin, and graphic novel entrepreneur Mike Richardson from Dark Horse Comics.


SPAN is an Industry Partner of PubWest's conference and this allows SPAN members to sign up at PubWest member's rates. From Publishing 101 on the first day to advanced viral marketing and digital content on day three, this conference will help you sell more books, increase profits, and provide the resources to address those day-to-day issues of publishing.

REGISTRATION

To get the discount for SPAN members, register as an "Attendee" on the PubWest Web site.

Important!!! On the "Events and Meals" page, you will be prompted to select an "Attendee Category".

Select "Referral" and enter "SPAN" in the "Referral Code" field.

More information and registration can be found at www.pubwest.org. **Questions? Call the SPAN office at 719-475-1726.** 

From Seth Godin's Blog

There's always good stuff to be found in Seth Godin's blog, and since Marketing Creativity is a big topic for Mr. Godin, we send you there this month... actually back to his post on October 26, 2006. The post is reprinted here, http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2006/10/the_two_things_.html but we encourage you to explore his blog and dig into the trackback links for more good stuff.

The two things that kill marketing creativity

The first is fear.

The fear that you'll have to implement whatever you dream up.
The fear that you will fail.

The fear that you will do something stupid and be ridiculed by your peers for decades.

The fear that you'll get fired.

The fear that there will be an unanticipated backlash associated with your idea.

The fear of change.


The fear of missing out on the thing you won't be able to do if you do this.

The second is a lack of imagination.

I believe that every single person I've met in this profession is capable of astounding creativity. That you, and everyone else for that matter, is able to dream up something radical and viral and yes, remarkable. So why doesn't it happen more often? Sure, fear is a big part, but it's also a lack of imagination.

Basically, most people don't believe something better can occur. They believe that the status quo is also the best they can do. So they don't look. They don't push. They don't ask, "what else?" and "what now?" They settle.

Fear is an emotion and it's impossible to counter an emotion with logic. So you need to mount emotional arguments for why your fear of the new is the thing you truly need to fear.

As for the second issue, just knowing it exists ought to be enough. Once you realize you're settling, it may just be enough to get you wondering... wondering whether maybe, just maybe, something better is behind curtain number 2. 

Next Deadline ▶ September 21

Don't be late – no kidding!

Send us news on your new releases or upcoming appearances or anything else you wish to share.

Get your news and articles in EARLY! Send your information, articles and announcements to newslettereditor@stlouispublishers.org.

Questions About SLPA?



Contact Membership Chairman:
Christine Frank at 314-205-2679 or
Assistant Membership Coordinator:
Linda Austin at 314-822-1170