



## June 9 membership meeting: SLPA presents Scott Ginsberg How to build an amazing author platform

If you've been around book publishing for a while, you've heard the term "author platform." Your author platform refers to your recognition factor, your reach, your audience, and your drawing power. And to sell a lot of books, you're going to need a strong platform to make an impact.



Someone who knows a lot about building a stellar author platform is **Scott Ginsberg**. He's known as "that guy with the nametag" because he's been wearing one 24/7 for nine and a half years straight. That might sound like a silly idea, but Scott has turned

it into a lucrative career as an international speaker, author and consultant. Scott has gained widespread media coverage through such sources as 20/20, CNN, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Inc. Magazine*, *Fast Company*, *The Washington Post*, and the CBS Early Show. And his blog has been rated as one of the "Top 100 Business Blogs on the Web." Now that's what building an author platform is all about!

### Scott will present a mini-workshop that teaches you:

- Why you need a platform in the first place
- The essential ingredients of a successful author platform
- The do's and don'ts of platforming
- How to create IMPEs (or "Intentional Moments of Platform Expansion")
- and a lot more tips on establishing yourself as an authority in your field

As a special bonus, Scott will do a short mentoring session with our publishing contest winner, Mandy Langston Manley, on how to establish her author platform as she prepares to publish her first novel. This is a great opportunity for all authors to see how they can apply this process to their own careers. Learn more about Scott Ginsberg at [www.hellomynametag.com](http://www.hellomynametag.com).

**Come to the June 9 meeting at the Richmond Heights Community Center:** Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for networking. The meeting begins at 7:00 with announcements and introductions, followed immediately by the featured speaker. The evening concludes about 8:30 with networking continuing 'til 9:00. **Our regular meetings are free to members. Guests – \$10.00 at the door.** 📖

## SLPA meetings move to Brentwood in September 2010

Beginning in September, the SLPA has found a new home for our monthly meetings: The Brentwood Community Center (Brentwood Recreational Complex), 2505 S. Brentwood Boulevard, Brentwood, MO 63144. At the SLPA Board meeting in late April, members officially voted to move the meetings to the Brentwood facility, citing the comfortable meeting space, easy parking, flexible scheduling and lower rates at the Brentwood recreational complex. 📖

## What's ahead?

**July 14 – marketing by genre:** Are you reaching the people who will actually buy your book? Not all books should be sold the same way! Find out how to reach the readers who want buy YOUR books without wasting your time and money.

**Mark your calendar!** 📖



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## Get your book done ... now!

by Penny C. Sansevieri



I don't believe in writer's block. (I can hear the gasps of disbelief already.) Listen: If you hire a plumber to come to your house and fix a problem, do you expect him to say, "Sorry, I can't figure out what your problem is. I think I have plumber's block"? Probably not, and if he did, you'd toss him out and call another guy faster than you can say Drano. Not that plumbing can be

compared to writing, but if we follow the proper steps to get the job done, I find that writer's block melts away, the drains are unclogged, and the words start flowing like water from a faucet. But what are these "steps"? Well, a big part of my job as a book marketing specialist is to help people create something they can actually market: a finished book. Many of us have ideas aplenty but not a clue how to get them down on paper.

Unlike other professions, authors operate under a whole different set of rules. We often can't just sit down and pound out a story, and those who do have created their own formula for doing so. We see this huge story with all sorts of directions we want to take it, we see the cover, we see the characters, we see the market potential. Then we see Katie Couric or Oprah smiling and holding up our book for the whole world to see. Then we glance back down at our monitor and see a tormenting blinking cursor and blank screen. And we are again reminded of what a failure we are. We have all these stories and nothing on paper. We are idea generators. We have zillions of them running through our minds, but none of them on paper. Unless you make your money in a think tank, operating this way probably isn't getting you any closer to your goals.

When a project looms before us, it's like this big elephant – huge, overwhelming and ready to stomp us flat any minute. There's an old saying: "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time." The same is true for writing. You finish a book one step at a time. But to create these steps, you first have to break down your book into manageable, bite-size pieces. This can be accomplished by creating a TOC (table of contents) that can guide you through the book. My reasoning behind this is as follows: You'd never think of driving from California to New York without a map, right? Well, how can you expect to finish your book without one? Your TOC is your roadmap, guiding you through your book. If your chapters don't have individual headings, then write a 2-3 sentence description of what the chapter encompasses. Don't get too elaborate on this. Remember, it's not going in your book; it's just a brief descriptor. Once the TOC is outlined, you'll have a vision of your book from start to finish. A few things that creating this

TOC will do for you: It will show you any gaps in your story that might need to be fleshed out, and it will give you a sense of completion, of seeing the book or project actually done, and this is a serious psychological turn-on for most authors, because we often live in a world of half-completed projects. Sometimes this step alone can propel an author enough to get their book done, or at the very least give it a darned good kick-start.

Once you've developed your TOC, you'll want to go through it and create a "to-do" list. Regardless of what genre your book is, you will always have a to-do list. Whether it's getting endorsements, doing research, or getting approvals for quotes or excerpts for your book, this to-do list will become yet another item that will help propel your book toward completion.

Once the to-do list is done, set it aside. Now you should have your completed TOC with a vision of the entire book and a growing list of items that will need to be handled for the book to get done. Now the real fun begins.


Some books on writing will tell you to set aside a day or two a week or an evening here and there to get your book completed. I disagree with this theory, and here's why: You need to stay dialed into your topic. When I was working on an upcoming book, I would often put the project aside for days or weeks at a time, promising myself to schedule time "as soon as I could." Well, that rarely happened. What I found is that if I set aside some time every day to do something on the book, I got it completed a lot quicker. The more you keep your hands in your project, the more it will stay at the front of your mind and on your radar screen, and the more energy you will invest to finish it. I won't tell you to set aside hours of your time each day—in fact, you don't even have to set aside an hour. Take 15 minutes, or even five—whatever your schedule permits. If this seems like a ridiculously short amount of time, consider this: You now have your to-do list and your outlined TOC! If you are short on time one day, pick a quickie item from your to-do list and get it done. If you have more time, then pound out a chapter or two. The idea behind creating the to-do lists and a TOC is to not only give your project a structure, but to also eliminate any and all excuses for getting it done. Don't feel like writing today? No problem. There's probably a mountain of research just waiting to be traversed. Get the picture?

But let's say you can't even get through the TOC. "My book has too many layers," you lament. "Too many back stories, tons of stuff going on. I can't possibly be expected to filter it down into a neat little TOC." Yes, you can, and you must. If your book has no focus, your book will have no focus. It's as simple as that. But it doesn't stop there—if your book is all

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## Get Your Book Done ... Now! ... *Continued*

over the place and you do actually manage to get it done, you'll never be able to keep a reader interested because you will be the only one who will get it, and what's the point of that? What you'll need to do in this case is find the "core" of your book or the focus of your story. Ask yourself this: What's the one thing this book cannot do without? What's the one thing this story circles around? That's your core. If you're still coming up with three or four things that your story circles around, you aren't focused enough and neither is your book. Find that one thing and build your story or book around it.

If you follow these steps, your book will get finished quicker than you could have ever imagined. And the once-dreaded writer's block will go from a stumbling block to a building block. 

© 2010 Penny C. Sansevieri. Penny C. Sansevieri, CEO and founder of Author Marketing Experts, Inc., is a best-selling author and internationally recognized book marketing and media relations expert. Her company is one of the leaders in the publishing industry and has developed some of the most cutting-edge book marketing campaigns. To learn more about Penny's books or her promotional services, you can visit her web site at [www.amarketingexpert.com](http://www.amarketingexpert.com).


## We welcome our newest members

### C. David and Gretchen E. Claybrook Lifeworks LLC • [cdavec@charter.net](mailto:cdavec@charter.net)

Lifeworks LLC is a design company for rehabilitation houses. Both Dave and Gretchen are currently writing books; Dave is composing two works of fiction, and Gretchen is writing a children's book.

**Raymond G. Feilner, Jr.** • [feilnerdy@truman.edu](mailto:feilnerdy@truman.edu)  
Ray has transcribed and edited *Aritmetica Practica* and has composed entries in the *Dictionary of the Old Spanish Language*. He is currently writing a book for middle-graders and is producing 3D illustrations for a children's book.

**Dan Thompson**  
**Bluebird Publishing** • [www.bluebirdbookpub.com](http://www.bluebirdbookpub.com)  
Bluebird Publishing is a new St. Louis company which combines the experience of Jeff Fister of Virginia Publishing and Dan Thompson of Big River Distribution. Virginia Publishing has been publishing books since 1990. Dan Thompson has been in the books and music retail distribution business for 30 years.

If you are a new member who would like to be introduced to your new friends at SLPA, please write [memberchair@slpa.org](mailto:memberchair@slpa.org) for an application. 

## Bits and Bytes

**At recent meetings, membership cards and guest passes were distributed to all current SLPA members. If you haven't yet picked up yours, please help us save the postage and check in at the registration table at our next meeting. Thank you!**

### ► Barnes & Noble, The BookMasters Group enter the self-publishing business

**Barnes & Noble** is entering the self-publishing business with the summer launch of **PubIt! by Barnes & Noble** that will allow independent publishers and self-publishing writers to distribute their works digitally through Barnes & Noble.com and the Barnes & Noble eBookstore. For more information, visit: [www.barnesandnoble.com/pubit/](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/pubit/)


**The BookMasters Group** has announced a new digital conversion and distribution alternative for self-published authors called **AUTURO**. For more information, visit: [www.bookmasters.com/auturo/index.html](http://www.bookmasters.com/auturo/index.html)

### ► Children's book publisher announces new literary awards

**Five Star Publications, Inc.** is sponsoring **The Purple Dragonfly Book Awards**, open to books written for children between the ages of four and 10 years. Five Star is accepting entries in 19 categories through June 14, 2010. Self-published books are welcome! The Grand Prize is \$300 and one hour of marketing consultation from Five Star Publications. Category winners will be awarded \$75. The entry fee is \$50 per title, per category. A complete list of categories and rules for submissions can be found at [www.fivestarpublishations.com/dragonfly](http://www.fivestarpublishations.com/dragonfly)  
Contact: Maureen Campbell  
Five Star Publications, Inc.  
Phone: (602) 980-8072 - Fax: (480) 940-8787  
E-mail: [maureen@FiveStarPublications.com](mailto:maureen@FiveStarPublications.com)

### ► Check out these websites!

**Self-Publishing Review** is "a central site devoted to self-publishing news and reviews. It is also a social network where writers, readers, and everyone can join and connect, so please register. The aim of the site is to improve the attitude toward self-publishing and help authors find readers."  
Visit: [www.selfpublishingreview.com/](http://www.selfpublishingreview.com/)

**The Adventurous Writer** offers "quips and tips for successful writers, where writing quotations meet practical writing advice. And live happily ever after."  
<http://theadventurouswriter.com/blogwriting/> 



## 11 brand-building lessons learned from wearing a nametag 24-7 for 3,000 days

by Scott Ginsberg

**1. Approachability wins business.** We live in a culture of sales resistance. Consumers are skeptical and require confidence before deciding to buy. They've been advertised to, marketed to, duped, fooled, conned, scammed, sold and screwed over too many times. Approachability establishes comfort, creates connections and builds trust. So: Return emails right away. Call back the same hour. Make communication a relaxing experience. Ask unexpected, penetrating questions. Cultivate your creativity and passion and embed that into the pavement, and people will want to sit in your radius. Remember: If they can't come UP to you, how will they ever get BEHIND you?

**2. Be That Guy.** We live in a hyperspeed, A.D.D. culture. Clients need to know they're getting YOU. The world demands specialists and people need shortcuts. And that's exactly what personal brands are. Ask yourself: Whom are you known TO? What are you known AS? What are you known FOR? What are you known for KNOWING? Remember: Anonymity is bankruptcy. It's not who you know, it's who knows YOU. You need to create a monthly plan for making people more aware of you. Create a reputation that accurately describes you, often precedes you and humbly serves you when you're not there.

**3. Be The Origin, not The Echo.** There are no cover bands in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Similarly, in business: The more imitable you are, the less valuable you are. So: Be un-competable. Be un-confusable. Be un-disputable. Be un-stealable. Be The Only. The secret is: Don't be different; be unique. "Different" is something you do intentionally; unique is something you are inherently. Being "different" is for amateurs. Extract and magnify your uniqueness.

**4. Create Points of Dissonance (POD).** Curiosity is a natural motivator of human engagement. So, there's a certain dissonance when people observe an unexpected or unexplained behavior. And THAT dissonance increases the probability of an encounter. Because people just HAVE to ask. They just GOTTA know. So, it's about stimulating curiosity, breaking patterns and attracting interest. The goal is to create a fulcrum point from which the conversation can advance. Because before someone gets to the "Aha!" about what you do and who you are, they have to be captivated by the "Huh?" This permission is a valuable asset because people's time and attention are being vied for by an infinite amount of forces. Ultimately, it's about leveraging remarkability to trigger an emotional engagement.

**5. Don't be stopped by not knowing how.** Focus (first) on the WHAT, and the HOW will eventually appear. Here's why: The "WHAT" can be defined right away; the "WHAT" can lead to immediate action; and the "WHAT" can lay groundwork for the "HOW" to materialize. Here's how: Dare to do it badly. Which might mean making an idiot of yourself. Spending time paying your dues. Which might mean fighting your attitude of instant gratification. Seeking progress, not perfection. Which might mean asking for feedback to find out where you suck. Remember: Ideas are free; execution is priceless.

**6. Fans, not customers. More Fans = Less Selling.** You need fans; and you need to give them megaphones. Fans are people who will do your marketing for you, encourage and support everything you do, and most importantly, tell all their friends to become fans of yours too. The secret is three words: Build a following. Don't be selfish with your knowledge. Post on your blog everyday, because writing is the basis of all wealth. Practice Fanagement 101 by asking for people's email so they become part of your permission asset, then constantly delivering a value message.

**7. Get a cool company name.** If your company name contains words like "Solutions," "Associates" and "Communications," you send the following messages to the world: (1) You're lazy, (2) you're amateur, (3) You're unoriginal and (4) You're uncreative. You don't want a generic company name. Generic names = generic products. And generic products = generic value. And generic value = generic service. And generic service = generic business, and generic businesses ... rarely stay in business. If people don't react in SOME way when they see the name of your company, change your name.

**8. Make the mundane memorable.** If you consistently do this through all of your touchpoints, or brand moments, here's what happens: (1) Customers start talking. (2) Employees have more fun. (3) The brand lives and breathes in a new way. (4) Uniqueness shines through. (5) Loyalty increases. The secret is: Nobody notices normal. Positioning yourself as "normal" is like asking customers to find a needle in a stack of needles! Remember: Those who get noticed get remembered; and those who get remembered get business.

**9. Networking works.** Here's how to do it successfully. In ONE word: Fun. In TWO words: Be prepared. In THREE words: Ask better questions. In FOUR words: Any time, any place. In FIVE words: Incorporate passion into the conversation. In SIX words: Develop and maintain mutually valuable relationships. In SEVEN words: Articulate what you do quickly and memorably. In EIGHT words: Listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen and listen. In NINE words: Encourage people to approach you by being The Observed. In TEN words: Right place in right time

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## 11 brand-building lessons ... *Continued*

means being in many places. Remember: "Luck" is an acronym for "Working Your Ass Off." If you want to be in the right place at the right time, you need to be in a lot of places. Then, find out where the rock created the ripple and go throw more rocks.

**10. People buy people first.** Find a way to lead with your person and follow with your profession. Values before vocation. Individuality before industry. Personality before position. Ultimately, every interaction you have with somebody either adds to or subtracts from the positive perception of your brand. Remember: People don't buy from, trust or have loyalty to COMPANIES, but rather, people.

**11. Shtick must be supported by substance.** The word shtick is defined as "A characteristic attribute, talent, gimmick or trait that is helpful in securing recognition or attention." But shtick is not enough. Shtick needs substance. Shtick doesn't sustain you. Shtick only sells temporarily. Sure, shtick is catchy and cool and clever and fun and different. But in business, that will only carry you so far. Sure, shtick might get you in the door. But in marketing, that doesn't guarantee you'll stay in the room. Only VALUE and SUBSTANCE can do that. In business, you CAN'T be all sugar. Customers want value. Customers want substance. Customers want to take a few licks and then discover your Tootsie center. 📖



© 2006 All Rights Reserved. Scott Ginsberg, aka "The Nametag Guy," is the author of three books and a professional speaker who helps people maximize approachability, become unforgettable and make a name for themselves. To book Scott for your next association meeting, conference or corporate event, contact Front Porch Productions at 314/256-1800 or email [scott@hellomynameisscott.com](mailto:scott@hellomynameisscott.com)

## Mark your calendars!

The Big Read is coming October 9th, 2010, and the SLPA will host a workshop. Bookmark your calendar for an extraordinary event that celebrates authors and promotes literacy. The Big Read, held on the Clayton High School campus, will feature authors, costumed characters, interactive projects, panel discussions and book signings. The Big Read hours are 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. More details to come! 📖



## Book Learning

Every month, the SLPA invites independent publishing professionals to share their expertise with members and guests. In May, our guest speaker was Mark Levine, author of *The Fine Print of Self-Publishing: The Contracts & Services of 45 Self-Publishing Companies Ranked, Analyzed & Exposed*. Here are comments from meeting attendees:



"This meeting was informational on many different levels. It was good for beginners and for learning about trends for the future, such as e-books."

— Kandi Henson (new member)



"Mark was one of the best speakers. He was personable, funny, down-to-earth, accessible and unbelievably generous with his knowledge."

— Bobbi Linkemer (member)



"I got a lot out of the Q&A which brought out different aspects of publishing I hadn't thought of."

— Raymond Feilner (new member) 📖

You are invited to submit items and articles to *SLPA News and Views*.

**Next deadline: June 20**

**Don't be late – no kidding!**

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

## Questions about SLPA?

Contact membership chairperson:  
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