

BOOK RESCUE

BOOK MARKETING - HOW TO SELL MORE BOOKS

WITH DALE L. ROBERTS



What is Book Rescue?

Just in case you're new around here, Book Rescue is a project where I help struggling independent authors sell more books.

A good candidate for Book Rescue has a catalog of books and all they need is a little course-correcting to help them see success.

My team and I come in and basically perform a brand overhaul. We work with a candidate for several months and track our progress.

I document everything here and in a [YouTube video series of the same name](#).

[UPDATE] - We just wrapped Season 2, and I'm here to update this content. If you've seen this post before, I've updated it and the downloadable PDF with new information.

This PDF was last updated: 12/13/2022

In Case You Missed It

Season 1 - Robert G. Culp

- [Pilot Episode - Thomas A. Bradley - How to Get Your Book Noticed on Amazon](#)
- [Episode 1 - Write a Book on an iPhone?](#)
- [Episode 2 - Amazon Book Descriptions](#)
- [Episode 3 - Book Cover Design Services](#)
- [Episode 4 - Building an Author Platform](#)
- [Episode 5 - Book Marketing on a Budget](#)
- [Finale - How To Increase Book Sales](#)

Binge Season 1 on YouTube - <https://bookrescueshow.com/season1>

Season 2 - Sarah Hualde

- [Episode 1 - Publish a Book in 90 Days](#)
- [Episode 2 - Hiring a Book Cover Designer is Easier Than You Think](#)
- [Episode 3 - Working with a Professional Editor](#)
- [Episode 4 - Plan a Book Launch](#)
- [Episode 5 - Amazon Ads for Beginners](#)
- [Finale - Did Our Book Marketing Strategies Pay Off](#)

Binge Season 2 on YouTube - <https://bookrescueshow.com/season2>

The Most Important Thing for You to Know About Book Rescue

By documenting Book Rescue in detail, I'm able to present exactly what my team and I are doing to help each candidate.

As a viewer, you can follow along and duplicate the strategies we are employing.

Each season of Book Rescue will address different candidates, each with their own set of circumstances. You will resonate with some more than others, but you'll see a pattern that you can duplicate in your own business.

Let me show you what I mean.

How to Use This PDF

This content was written for the Book Rescue blog, but I made it a downloadable PDF, so you can come back again and again. You're going to want to work through everything here slowly, one thing at a time.

[Don't forget to check back periodically for updates to this content!](#)

The links included in this document are resources.

Sure, some of them are affiliate links, but that is not the point of the links themselves. I'm not charging for this information, so those links are a way to monetize this content at no extra cost to you.

I hope you will click through and explore everything presented here as it is here to help you.

Prerequisites

There's a set of basic things you should have in place for your books. Some of this

might be new to you, but these are things I've been shouting from the mountaintops for YEARS now.

A few of the things included below are optional, but will help you out in the long run if you get them out of the way now.

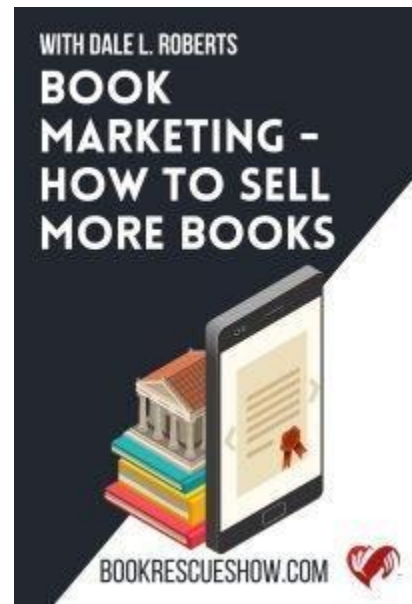
A Profitable Niche

If you want to sell more books, then you need to be writing in a profitable niche. This may sound harsh to some of you, but your memoir or your poetry book will be a super hard sell unless you already have a significant following from other types of books or you're famous.

Being an author isn't about writing what you want to write. It's about writing what people want to read...unless...you don't care about selling books. It's a Catch 22.

Published Works

You should have some books published already. I'd say two or more. However, you can use the strategies from Book Rescue to launch and market all of your books going forward.



A Basic Understanding of Keywords

During the publishing process, Amazon allows 7 keyword slots that can hold up to 50 characters each. [You should utilize as much of that real estate as possible.](#)

Also, you should have different keywords according to your format: eBook, print, and audiobook.

The best way to find keywords for your niche is to use [Publisher Rocket](#).

If you don't want to invest the \$97 in the lifetime license for the software, [contact my assistant](#). She has a package where she can do your keywords and categories for you using Publisher Rocket. However, that license will pay for itself!

For you DIYers, I recently covered a [detailed tutorial on keywords over on my blog](#).

Whenever you aren't seeing significant sales after 3 months to 1 year, update your 7 keywords.

10 Categories*

If you're scratching your head here because you could only choose 2 categories during publishing, then allow me to blow your mind.

Again, Publisher Rocket is an indispensable tool here.

Once you have a list of **up to** 8 additional categories, [you can email KDP and have them added to your book](#). I say "up to" because you may not find a full 10 categories for certain niches.

Again, here's a [detailed post to nail your categories every time](#).

**This information is about to change.*

A Decent Headshot (Optional)

[This doesn't have to be fancy](#). It can be a selfie if you're low on funds. However, if you have the cash, get some professional pictures taken.

Having a decent headshot for your author pages, back of your book, and social media will serve you well. It's a hassle you won't have to deal with if you get it squared away before you begin.

Author Bio (Optional)

This is another one of those things, like your headshot, that you're going to use repeatedly in your books and on your author pages.

For Book Rescue candidates, I hire [Russ Burg via Fiverr](#) to write a professional bio. As of this writing, 250 words will set you back 10 bucks. That's plenty.

I want to note that Fiverr sponsors Book Rescue. They have provided credits for both myself and candidates. Honestly, they've been amazing! I've used Fiverr for years and I recommend them because you can find affordable services on their platform. [Here's my list of vetted providers](#). You'll also see links to specific sellers throughout this post.

Author Pages (Optional)

Set up your Amazon Author Central page. It's free, and it's there for you to use. Especially if you don't have a website or plan to have one, get your pages set up so you have one place to send people to see all of your books, any blogs you write, and your social media.

I can help you get set up [with this playlist](#) (it's only 3 videos).

I also have a [comprehensive guide on my blog](#) to help you out.

Every Book Rescue Starts with a Catalog Audit

Generally, I look at 3 things when I do a catalog audit for a Book Rescue candidate:

1. How do the covers look?
2. How does the description look?
3. How do the keywords look?

If any of these 3 things are out of whack, any other effort you put into your books will be for naught.

If everything looks fine to you, but you're still not selling books, it's time to get an objective pair of eyeballs on your stuff! You can post your covers in the [Self-Publishing Book Facebook Group](#) and get feedback. In fact, you can get feedback on all of this there.

I encourage you to build relationships with the other authors in that group, so you can help each other!

Get these 3 things dialed in BEFORE you begin marketing and promoting!

Book Rescue Yourself

Disclaimer: This is the same thing I tell every Book Rescue candidate. I can't guarantee results. All I can do is give you my best effort and guidance to course-correct what you're already doing in the hope of helping you sell more books.

Metadata

The first thing I tackle with each Book Rescue candidate is metadata excluding your title and subtitle. These things can't be edited during the overhaul process.

You should know how to title your books appropriately and to not keyword stuff in these areas.

If you need examples, you can look at any Book Rescue candidate's titles or [my own](#).

We look at keywords and categories, both of which we optimize with Publisher Rocket.

Finally, we address the book description.

I bring Brian Meeks in and he works directly with the candidate to use some basic copywriting techniques and a very effective template to create book descriptions that get read and sell more books.

You can get your hands on that template [here](#).

That will give you what you need to write better book descriptions.

If you want to work with Brian directly, you can reach him via this Facebook link - <https://www.facebook.com/brian.meeks.186>

He is also available in the Self-Publishing with Dale Discord server - <https://discord.gg/hZ66CjdPxD>

If your books are getting attention, but you're not getting sales, your covers are decent, but your descriptions are not converting. If no one is looking at your books, discoverability (via keywords and categories) and/or your covers are most likely the problem.

You'll have to run ads to find out this information. 🙌🙌🙌 More on that a little later.

Keeping Track of Your Metadata - Grab Sarah's Spreadsheet

One of the first assignments I gave Sarah in Season 2 was to create a spreadsheet to track all of her metadata.

Why?

Because you end up tweaking things like your keywords often, and you need to know what you've tried before, so you don't try it again if it wasn't working.

This spreadsheet needed to include:

- All her books
- How many words in each
- How many pages in the print version
- Trim size
- Paper type
- Keywords
- Description

Sarah ended up creating a beautiful sheet which many viewers asked about, so the team, Sarah, and I made it available to you:

When you visit the links below, you'll notice the files are View Only. To get a copy you can edit, click File and then select Make a copy from the drop-down menu.

Here's the version with Sarah's data for examples – <https://bookrescueshow.com/sarahsample>

Here's the template for you to fill in – <https://bookrescueshow.com/trackingtemplate>

Book Covers

I have [a list of book cover designers on Fiverr here](#). In most cases, I use [Olivia Pro Design](#) because her covers are uber affordable and they are consistently of

mind-blowing quality.

If you've ever seen a Book Rescue cover reveal, then you know what I'm talking about. They're my favorite!

An eBook cover from OliviaProDesign is \$5 as of this writing. FIVE DOLLARS! Anyone should be able to afford that.

What about your paperback or hardback? [OliviaProDesign](#) can do all 3 plus your audiobook for less than \$50.

Your book cover obstacles are no more.

Author Platform

This is probably the single most-expensive element of a Book Rescue. Is it required? Not necessarily.

Not everyone has \$499+ for a full platform build, so for this post, let's focus on which parts you can do for yourself at a low cost.

The main thing is going to be building your email list.

You want to build an email list simply because you want to capture your own customers. You might sell tons of books through Amazon, but those are Amazon's customers.

The only way to convert them to *your* customers is to get them on your email list.

Substack

One huge development over this last year has been my experimentation with a platform called [Substack](#).

Substack is like email marketing and a website/blog combined. You write a blog post-style update, and Substack sends it out to your email list. You can import your email list from other providers like MailerLite, MailChimp, ConvertKit, etc, or you can build out a new audience like I've done.

Substack is unique and it really brings the focus back to writing. You can share podcasts, video, and more just as you could on your own website, but the best part is it doesn't cost anything, and you can monetize it!

You can actually start off with paid subscriptions or start one later and earn money from your writing on Substack. You also have the option of keeping your content free.

If you're overwhelmed by the thought of a website and email marketing, Substack is your solution.

MailerLite

I didn't import my current list into Substack. I still maintain my lists on MailerLite, and if you plan to do much marketing, I suggest that you do the same. MailerLite makes it easy to send emails out to your list that you may not necessarily want published as an article forever the way Substack does it.

Sometimes, you have a quick short update to send, and MailerLite is perfect for that.

I have a [MailerLite tutorial here](#) that details how to set up your email marketing and what to send out to your subscribers.

After using [5 email marketing platforms](#) in the last 7 years, [MailerLite](#) is where I hang my hat.

Social Media

When you consider social media for your author brand, don't try to be everywhere.

Focus on what you already know. Most of us are on Facebook, create a Page for your author brand and start posting things related to your books, your niche, etc.

I recommend Twitter for authors because it's easy to network through public feeds and hashtags. It's also just a great platform to post quotes, writings, lyrics, or whatever you want to share as a writer in short, concise messages.

You should start in one place and only expand beyond that if you have time.

Otherwise, focus on one platform and do it well. This will serve you much better than being 100 places where you never post because you don't have time.

Website

If you're going all in on your website, it should be self-hosted WordPress all the way. I highly recommend my host, [Siteground](#), but they are pricey. An honorable mention and more affordable option would be [Namecheap](#).

I get all of my domains through Namecheap, and then I'm free to host my sites wherever I want. I never buy my domains through my webhost.

If you don't want to fool with all of that and the steep learning curve involved with it, do [Substack](#).

Is Your Book Ready for Publishing?

Editing/Proofreading

We need to talk about editing.

Now, before you completely recoil inside yourself or feel compelled to assume the fetal position, hear me out...

I'm not going to tell you that you MUST hire a professional editor. I will never forget my DIY roots. I understand what it means to be attempting to self-publish books with ZERO financial resources.

[This post on my blog gives you 10 steps on how to self-edit your own book.](#)

When your brand takes off, definitely invest in a good editor and book coach.

An affordable way to get feedback on your book is to hire beta readers. You can do this via [Fiverr](#).

Betas readers read, analyze, and provide niche relevant feedback to improve your manuscript.

Here's the list of providers we used for Sarah – <https://dalelinks.com/betaread>

Formatting

You need a book that is properly formatted.

For eBooks, you can do this yourself using Google Docs or Microsoft Word. [I have a tutorial for that on my Substack.](#)

Formatting for print is quite a bit more complicated. You'll need to find someone on Fiverr or [hire my assistant](#).

Marketing - Sell More Books

I believe this is the biggest pain point for every independent author and self-publisher out there.

We either don't like it, or simply don't know how to do it. Maybe a little of both.

I'm not going to lie, it's hard. Once you know what to do, it makes it a lot easier.

In a world of short attention spans and Kardashians, we have mere nanoseconds to grab someone's attention.

Here's your toolkit.

Free and Premium Book Promotion Opportunities

There are 4 websites that I typically go to for free and premium book promotion:

1. <https://www.tckpublishing.com/book-promotion-sites/>

2. <https://kindlepreneur.com/list-sites-promote-free-amazon-books/>
3. <https://blog.reedsy.com/book-promotion-services/>
4. <https://davidgaughran.com/best-promo-sites-books/>

I give Sarah these 3 websites in Episode 3 of Season 2 and ask her to create a spreadsheet of the opportunities that fit her book and genre. I also advise her to stick with mostly free promotions since we're just starting out trying to get her brand off the ground. This is the same advice I give to you.

Once you have this spreadsheet, you can hit that same list again and again if you're publishing a series.

I also recommend a book called [*The Book Reviewer Yellow Pages*](#). This is the same deal as with those 4 websites. Go through the book and see which methods work for your book and your launch.

Audience Building

The days of rapid-fire publishing and profiting are long past. To see success these days, you need to have a ready-made audience, and not just any audience. They need to be real people who are interested in what you're doing.

I'm mentioning this first because it's the best way to market your books: sharing them with a warm audience of people who already know, like, and trust you.

The things I'm mentioning below are in addition to your email list and social following.

Leveraging My Audience

With Book Rescue, I leverage my audience on behalf of the candidates.

Obviously, I can't do this for you, but you can do it for yourself.

Participate in YouTube comments.

Join my free Facebook community -

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/selfpublishingbooks>. We are nearly 5K strong and waiting to help you with questions, book cover critiques, and you can even take part in the self-promotion threads each Tuesday!

Hop on the Self-Publishing with Dale Discord server - <https://discord.gg/hZ66CjdPxD>. This place is really hopping and you get access to me, the team, and there are channel featuring Brian Meeks and Hannah Jacobson of Book Award Pro.

These are the places where my tribe hangs out.

Video Marketing

If you want to or enjoy making videos, I highly recommend that you do so. Those aforementioned short attention spans LOVE video. It's a great way to build an audience quickly. You can see this in motion during Season 2 of Book Rescue. Sarah already had a small YouTube channel going.

Don't underestimate the power of a small audience. You don't need 100,000 subscribers to make a full-time living.

One of the coolest things about video is that you're creating an asset. A video has a relatively long shelf life as opposed to, say, a Tweet which has a lifespan of about 15 minutes before it languishes in oblivion. [Source](#)

Look into TikTok - If you just can't stomach YouTube, maybe you can handle short-form video like TikTok where you can create videos of varying lengths up to 10 minutes. Use the hashtag #booktok!

I understand that not everyone wants to do videos. If you have no desire, don't force the issue. Stick to what you like doing because you are more likely to be consistent in those endeavors.

If you don't want to run your own channels, consider landing interviews on others' channels.

At best, you get publicity. At worst, you get a resource that has becoups of information on self-publishing in YouTube itself.

Podcasting

If you aren't interested in video, the next best thing is podcasting! It has all the benefits of video without being video!

Imagine if you are a young adult fantasy author like Robert, the Season 1 Book Rescue Candidate. Then you created a podcast based on your genre and it gained popularity as the go-to podcast for young adult fantasy.

That would be an amazing audience to leverage as a young adult fantasy author, right?

The world of opportunities you could open would be lucrative and never ending! Podcasting puts you on a whole new repertoire of audio websites you wouldn't be on otherwise, like Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Soundcloud, and more.

If you look into podcasting, you're going to find many people telling you that you need an expensive microphone and a bunch of paid software to start. You do not.

You can podcast with a smartphone and <https://anchor.fm>.

If you aren't interested in running your own podcast, then consider landing interviews on podcasts. Here are a couple of free places to do that:

- <https://podcastguests.com/>
- <https://www.matchmaker.fm/>

Networking

This is sort of like audience building, but rather than being a b2c (business to customer) situation, it's more b2b (business to business).

You'll notice that I leverage my network a ton for Book Rescue.

I use Brian Meeks. Most of the services donated to Book Rescue are from my network like [Book Award Pro](#) and [StoryOrigin](#).

When you see an individual or business you like and would like to work with, reach out! Send them an email or interact with them on social media.

Build relationships. (This also applies to your audience!)

StoryOrigin

If you don't listen to anything else in this post, get over to [StoryOrigin](#) and create your FREE account.

Explore that platform and read the case studies.

Use the tools there to build an ARC team, build your email list, and increase your following.

In the last couple of years, StoryOrigin has continued to build more tools and constantly update their offering. I've had the founder, Evan Gow, [on my channel](#).

I stand behind this company. I know it helps authors. It's helped me and it's helped Book Rescue candidates.

As of this writing, StoryOrigin provides a robust free account to get started, and a paid option of only \$10 per month. It's worth every cent of that.

Book Award Pro

There's been some misconceptions about this one in the wild, so let me address that. When you pay for Book Award Pro, you are not paying to win an award. You are paying to enter award programs. Most book awards have entry fees and a detailed entry process. That's what you're paying for.

[Book Award Pro](#) provides you with an accolade you can use to build credibility. It's that simple.

Book Award Pro has a FREE plan also where they match you with award programs that

fit you and your book and you do the submission work.

They reserve the upper tiers of their model for those who want a done-for-you approach.

With free matches, you can enter award contests yourself and only pay the entry fees where applicable.

Don't sleep on this. Give it a try. You have nothing to lose. I've won more than 20 awards through Book Award Pro.

Getting Book Reviews

Leverage your ARC team!

Besides StoryOrigin and their ARC team features to help you get advanced reader copy reviews, here are a couple more options to help you reach retail-ready status.

Retail-ready status? Yes.

I took Amazon's Amazon Advertising course and they stated that in that course that for a product to be retail-ready, it needs to have a minimum of 15 reviews with an average of three and a half stars or better.

Readers' Favorite Free Book Review

You can get a free book review from [Readers' Favorite](#). This is something you'll notice Book Rescue Season 1 candidate, Robert G. Culp, took advantage of on ALL of his books.

Even one review can help you. It can help you get more reviews and sell more books.

You have ZERO excuses to not take advantage of this opportunity.

GetBooksReviewed.com

If you need reviews, [GetBooksReviewed.com](#) is just another weapon in your arsenal that you can use to achieve retail-ready status for your books.

You can get started free with their 10-day trial and then it's about \$10 per month after that, depending upon which plan and payment option you choose.

To be clear, this isn't a "review swap" website. We all know that review swaps are a bad idea.

GetBooksReviewed.com in their own words:

You are NOT paying for NOR “swapping” book reviews, but gaining “access” to a reading club with a vast, everchanging selection of library of books. Our

algorithm is such that while authors review books by other authors, we do not review each other's books. For example, if you reviewed one of my books, I will not even see any of your books in the library, So... there will be no chance I could see to select your books to review. That way no one could ever say you (even unintentionally) swapped book reviews with me. I hope that makes sense.

Special Review Links

I've got to thank Dave Chesson for this information.

When you invite people to review your books, what links are you using? Your book page?

I've got something better for you.

Invite them directly to the page where they can leave the review so they're not wading through all the distractions included on an Amazon sales page.

Use this link.

amazon.com/review/create-review?&asin=

Paste your ASIN after the =.

That's it.

BookBrush

[BookBrush](#) is like Canva for authors.

One of the coolest things about BookBrush is that it was made by authors for authors.

You can create all kinds of professional graphics you can use on social media and websites, including:

- Mockups
- Cover reveals
- 3D covers
- Box set graphics
- Book trailers

They have a free plan and affordable paid plans. They also add new features all the time. [Jump on it!](#)

Amazon Ads

Here's what I tell everyone before they get started with Amazon Ads:

Don't set aside more money for your advertising budget than you can afford to lose.

If you can afford to lose \$0, then that's it. Use the exhaustive list of other options above. Don't spend your rent money on Amazon ads.

The second thing I tell people is:

The best way to get into Amazon Ads and learn how to use it effectively is just to get in there and experiment with it.

That's what Sarah did in [Episode 5 of Season 2](#).

If you want to jump in with some guidance, both Amazon and Dave Chesson from Kindlepreneur have FREE courses to help:

- <https://advertising.amazon.com/resources/learning-console>
- <https://kindlepreneur.com/free-amazon-ads-course/>

Now, Go Sell More Books!

Don't forget to check back. I will keep this post updated with any new information and services you might see on Book Rescue.

If you used this content and it helped you to sell more books, I really want to hear from you. You can start the conversation in the comments below, or reach out via email - <https://bookrescueshow.com/contact-us/>

I may be interested in featuring you in a video if you're interested.

If you'd like to support Book Rescue, you can do so by sharing this content. Send this PDF to an author who needs it!

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