

The Author Toolbox: Practical tools to help authors...

Build a Book

Do you have a ...

- Word processing program (Word, Scrivener, etc.)
- Place to write
- Time to write (timer, alarm clock, etc.)
- Equipment and supplies (laptop, index cards, pens, etc.)
- Plotting method or do you create seat-of-the-pants style
- Knowledge of basic manuscript formatting
- Basic writing aids like a grammar program, Emotion Thesaurus, etc.
- Critique partner or other objective feedback
- Accountability partner
- Growth program (craft books, classes, podcasts)

Build a Platform

Do you have a ...

- Website or blog as an online home base?
- Email list collection method (MailChimp, Mailerlite, etc.)
- Social media presence on 2 or 3 places where your ideal reader hangs out such as:
 - Facebook (profile or author page)
 - Twitter
 - Pinterest
 - Google +
 - LinkedIn

- Instagram
- Snapchat
- YouTube

- Social media scheduling program (Hootsuite, CoSchedule, Tweet Jukebox, Social Bee, etc.) or a virtual assistant
- Amazon Author Central profile
- Goodreads Author Page
- Graphics design program for memes (Canva, PicMonkey, Book Brush, etc.)
- Source for licensed photos

Build a Business

Do you have a ...

- Basic knowledge about book proposals and query letters
- Computer backup program (Mozy, Dropbox, etc.)
- Place to record work activity (journal, calendar, etc.)
- Place to save all writing related receipts
- Separate bank account for writing expenses and income
- Method to collect credit/debit card payments from readers
- Method to track expenses by deductible category (spreadsheet, QuickBooks, etc.)
- Tax help for filing self-employment income and sending quarterly tax payments if necessary
- Know if you need a state sales tax license for selling books at appearances
- Know if your city/county has special requirements for a home-based business (such as being an indie publisher)

Build a Career

Do you have a ...

- Plan for future books either in a series or standalone
- Plan to publish traditionally and if so,
 - Do you have or want an agent?
 - Do you have personal contacts in the publishing industry?
 - Do you have a marketing plan and budget?
- Plan to indie publish and if so,
 - Do you have a production budget?
 - Will you purchase ISBNs?
 - Do you have an editor, cover designer, and formatter?
 - Will you do Amazon KDP Select or launch with multiple sales channels?
 - Will you do a print version?
 - Will you do an audio version?
 - Do you have a marketing plan and budget?
- Pen name (if appropriate or needed) for different genres
- Launch team (and way to communicate with them)
- Social media blast strategies or access to email lists to advertise promotional pricing
- Method for hosting a giveaway or contest for readers
- Method for getting and following up with reviewers
- Marketing timeline or checklist
- Knowledge or willingness to learn advertising platforms
- Contacts for guest posts during a launch blog tour
- Promotional items such as:
 - Business cards
 - Bookmarks
 - Postcards
 - “Autographed by author” stickers
 - Interior book plates
 - Thank you cards
- Time management technique or software
- Professional memberships, local writers groups, or attend writing conferences
- Strategy for entering (or not entering) writing contests
- Reading plan to stay atop the market trends in your genre
- Desire to do any speaking and if so,
 - Do you know what topics you could talk about?
 - Do you have contacts in various organizations?
 - Do you have a plan for speaking fees or book tables (including appropriate sales taxes)?
- Interest in additional income in writing related areas such as:
 - Magazine articles
 - Editing services (macro/concept, micro/line, proofer)
 - Virtual assistant

Being an author in today’s market involves so much more than writing a book. While this checklist is a good starting place, you might need additional help to get your words into the hands of readers.

Check out www.TheAuthorToolbox.com for links to informational blog posts, a list of tools/resources including affordable courses, plus editing or coaching services.