**How to Find New Places to Sell Your Books**

**By Brian Jud**

Many product ideas came from observing a phenomenon in one area of life and applying that to a totally different product. The idea of Velcro arose when Swiss engineer George de Mestral took his dog for a walk. He noticed how burrs of the burdock plant stuck to the dog’s fur. He replicated that to invent the product. As another example, Clarence Birdseye was on vacation in Canada when he saw some salmon that had naturally frozen in ice and then thawed. When cooked, they tasted fresh. That was the origin of the frozen food industry.

Nature is one source, but there are analogies all around. Use “creative blending” to find them. The essence of this process is to generate ideas by taking a concept and blending it with another to create a third one that addresses your objective. Start with something you know. Then envisage something else that is known. Now blend the two and develop a third idea. For example, *deodorant* and *ball-point pen* could lead to *roll-on deodorant*. Or, *beer* plus *mobile phone* might lead to *pre-ordered drinks at a bar*.

Here is a technique to force the creative blending process. Suppose you are trying to find new places in which to sell your products. Across one line write all the places in which your target buyers might shop or look for the information in your products. Along a vertical line, list all the forms in which you could deliver your content. Then check the intersecting box that could offer a new opportunity for sales. Your chart might look like this:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Airport  Store | Super-market | Discount  Store | Gift Shop  (Hospital, hotel, cruise ship, museum, park, etc) | Association  meeting or conference (national or local chapter) | School  (public, private, home, college) | Military  (exchange, book club, school, libraries) | Corpor- ation  (sales, HR, mktg.) |
| Pbook |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ebook |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Audio book |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DVD |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Seminar |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Personal  Presentation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Work-for-hire |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

This exercise is intended to look at something with which you are familiar (your content) and searching for what you don’t know about it. This may sound counterintuitive, but in fact, familiarity breeds conformity. In other words, we stop thinking about familiar things in our old ways. Examining them from a different perspective reignites our curiosity and leads to better answers.

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Brian Jud is a book-marketing consultant and the Executive Director of the Association of Publishers for Special Sales (APSS – www.bookapss.org– formerly SPAN). Contact Brian at brianjud@bookmarketing.com or www.premiumbookcompany.com