**I Only Have "-ize" for You**

**By Brian Jud**

Many independent publishers use the Christopher Columbus method of planning. They do not know where they are going. When they arrive, they do not know where they are. And when they return, they do not know where they have been. This is not a good way to run a business.

Avoid this situation by writing a strategic, functional plan to market your books. Your plan should identify the most promising business opportunities. It should clarify your goals and the activities you will employ to move toward your objectives efficiently. For a view of a new planning formula, look through these "ize."

**Recognize**. A basic premise for successful marketing is to find a need and fill it. You do this by researching three major areas. First, discover what product opportunities exist. Second, learn the demographics and psychographics of your prospective customers. Finally, calculate your potential market's size, growth and competitive status.

**Crystallize**. According to an ancient proverb, a journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step. But what if that step is in the wrong direction? Start your trek by deciding where you want to go. Write a specific, measurable objective and the date upon which you will accomplish it.

**Strategize**. Now that your destination is etched in your mind, how you will get there? Should your product be a book, an audio book or an ebook? Will you market it through the traditional retail channels or directly to non-retail buyers in corporations, associations or the military? Or both? Answers to these questions will dictate your distribution network and discounts which in turn impact your pricing strategy. Finally, describe how you will coordinate the elements of your promotion mix by manipulating your advertising, publicity, sales promotion and personal selling strategies, on and offline.

Next, define the specific actions you will take in each of the four strategic areas. If your product is to be a printed book, what size, color and shape will make it most saleable? At what price will you sell it? Which distribution partners will you contact? How can you build your platform? To which reviewers will you send galleys or ARCs? What will be in your one-sheet, and to what television and radio stations will you send it? Which trade shows will you attend? Will you conduct a direct mail campaign? There are many marketing actions you can take before your book is published. Here is a list to help you get started: [www.bookapss.org/PrePubTimeLine.pdf](http://www.bookapss.org/PrePubTimeLine.pdf)

**Capitalize**. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of actions you can take to market your book. However, most publishers do not have unlimited funds to perform them all. So create a financial statement to allocate your existing resources, as well as if, when and how much you may need to borrow.

**Energize**. Without action, planning only gives the illusion of progress. Now it is time to put your plan into action. Marketing a book successfully requires perpetual promotion. Perform each step according to the way you planned it.

**Scrutinize**. Action is not synonymous with accomplishment. You may be busy promoting your book but you may not be getting closer to your goal. Periodically assess your progress and make any changes that are necessary.

**Realize**. This planning formula organizes and directs your thinking and actions to best exploit available opportunities. It coordinates and unifies your efforts to make your budget more efficient. And it helps you regain your bearings and look back to see how far you have come. It’s up to you to make your goals a reality, and if you plan correctly the “ize” have it.

Decide where you are, where you want to go and how you will get there. Then set your course for smooth sailing toward a new world of publishing success

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