

How To Become A Virtual Best-Seller

Madeline McIntosh is the CEO of Penguin Random House, the biggest publisher in the world. Her biggest priority during the pandemic has been getting readers the books they want. And what many of them want are books that other people have already bought. As McIntosh puts it, “When the outside world is very chaotic, you want the tried and true.”

In other words, best sellers sell the best because they are best sellers. They get the attention, the investment and the word-of-mouth that fuels their momentum at the expense of their competition. Surefire hits earn the physical and digital shelf space that put them in front of readers. Algorithms reaffirm their popularity and create a self-fulfilling cycle. The data drive sales as more people are influenced to buy. The winners take all.

What’s the moral of the story? Be the best-seller in your category. Epitomize excellence. Set the standard that surpasses all others. Become known as the person that can be trusted to protect other people against the danger of non-performance.

The pandemic has pushed many of us to the limit. We’re either going through PPSD – Post Pandemic Stress Disorder, or we’re experiencing PPSG – Post Pandemic Self Growth. Our external environment is either panicking us or it’s propelling us to the next level.

This is an extreme moment that is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The time to become a best seller is now, when TUNA – Turbulence, Uncertainty, Novelty and Anxiety – are at unprecedented highs and not likely to come down any time soon. This is the time to apply your own vaccine. I call it CAESAR – Certainty, Adaptability, Excitement, Safety, Ambition, Results. It’s time to start your own movement, no matter what you do.

Here are the 7 Steps to Become a Bestseller:

1

Be hungry

You can’t teach hunger. It is a visceral need for the outcomes that you want to achieve. It’s an appetite for the actions required to make an impact on the world. The bolder your ambition, the bigger your appetite needs to be. How badly do you want to be a best-seller? What will it cost you if you don’t? How much are you prepared to pay? The great thing about hunger is that you never have to remind yourself of it. The beast will always demand to be fed.



2

Master your craft

To quote Martin Luther King, “If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry.” I am aspiring to become the Beethoven of virtual empowerment and inspiration. I am reading, watching, talking and listening to the great ones. I’m studying the data. Then I’m applying what I’m learning while I introduce my own innovations. I’m experimenting my way forward, one conversation, one vlog, one post at a time. I’m getting the feedback and requesting the guidance. I’m adapting and adjusting real time. This is the work that needs to be done. It can be accelerated but not cut short



3

Tell your story

In order to become a best-seller, you have to sell yourself best. You need to tell your story in a way that compels others to pay attention. You need to cut through the noise and confusion with a call to action that enrolls people in your cause. This program is my way of differentiating myself against the thousands of people competing for your eyeballs. Every word is designed to empower you become a best-seller on your own terms.



4

Build your FAME

It doesn’t matter whether you’re targeting millions of readers like John Grisham or merely thousands like Mike Lipkin, there are four key stakeholder groups you need to nurture, captured in the acronym- FAME: Fans – the people that like your work; Advocates – the people that will praise you to others; Mobilizers – the people that will actively engage others to hire you; Evangelists – the people that will passionately campaign on our behalf. Get clear on these four stakeholders and take exceptional care of your Mobilizers and Evangelists. They are your game changers.



5

Serve with distinction

Deliver the results that are most important to your fans, advocates, mobilizers and evangelists. Say what you’ll do and then do what you say. Your value is directly correlated with the outcome they want to achieve. It could be psychological, emotional or behavioural. Design their goals together with them. Then co-own their goals with them. Show them that their goals are as important to you as they are to them. When they see you, they must see a champion of their future.



6

Be Prolific

Prolific means doing many things so you can produce abundant results. It means reaching out to many people, experimenting with many approaches, creating many ideas, accessing many sources. James Patterson, the world’s bestselling author, writes 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Writer’s block is never a problem for him. If he ever gets bored with one project, he has a dozen others to turn to at any one time. Weariness or overwhelm is not an option for best sellers. If I don’t know you, I cannot buy from you. Seize every opportunity to broadcast my message. In the age of the omnichannel, you can be everywhere all the time. So try more things. Increase your tolerance for failure because everywhere the ratio of setbacks to breakthroughs will be greater. All of us will struggle in some way. Struggle well.



7

Recharge

As the great football coach, Vince Lombardi said, fatigue makes cowards of us all. Perspective is worn away by the grind. Take the time to reinvigorate your mind, heart, body and soul. It takes rest and re-creation to sustain the tension that pulls you into the future. Plan your play as stringently as you plan your work, especially during a pandemic. Now more than ever, it takes a village to become a bestseller.



That’s it for now. I hope I’ve inspired you to become a bestseller. Pass it on. This is Mike Lipkin and I approve this message.