How to Build a Tribe

7 Crowd Building Steps Authors Must Take Before They Launch a Crowdfunding Campaign

Mary DeMuth & Thomas Umstattd Jr.

Speakers: Thomas Umstattd and Mary DeMuth

HOW TO BUILD A TRIBE:
7 CROWD BUILDING STEPS AUTHORS SHOULD TAKE
BEFORE THEY LAUNCH A CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN
Ultimate Guide to Crowdfunding for Authors

Speakers: Thomas Umstattd and Mary DeMuth

Introduction

[Mary] Hi. This is Mary DeMuth, and we're here today to talk about "How to Build a Tribe: 7 Crowdfunding Steps Authors Should Take Before They Launch a Crowdfunding Campaign." We're going to have so much fun with you today. My guest with me and my co-conspirator is Thomas Umstattd. Thomas, why don't you say hi to the crowd.

[Thomas] Hello, everyone. This is Thomas.

[Mary] Yea! Good job, Thomas. We are going to talk about several things, obviously seven steps. So that's seven things we'll talk about. When you're starting to do a crowdfunding project, you can't just stick your project onto Kickstarter or onto Indiegogo or one of those crowdfunding campaigns and just expect the money to come flying in by osmosis. There's actually some strategic things that you can do to help create some synergy and some great momentum. We're going to talk about that today.

It's important when you're doing your crowdfunding that you consider the crowd. You need to consider the tribe that you are in. We're going to also talk about why there's a difference between being in a tribe and having a following. So we're going to start right now and we're going to start with step one.

[Thomas] Actually before we do step one I want to just kind of zoom in a little bit on what Mary said because this is really critical. It is perhaps the most common mistake that many crowdfunders make. If you post a project on Kickstarter or on Indiegogo, you may believe those websites are going to promote the project for you and all you have to do is post it and you'll be successful. That's not how it works. The key to crowdfunding is to have a crowd. We're going to be talking about tribes and crowds and using those terms interchangeably.

Ideally you want a tribe rather than a crowd because a crowd is not necessarily people who know you, whereas a tribe is a group of people who are following you and see you as a leader. One of the elements of a tribe is that it has insiders and outsiders, so you need to know not just who you are trying to reach but also who you are trying to turn off or who you're trying not to reach.

Another classic mistake is to say, "Oh but my book or my product is for everyone." That's not true about anything. In fact the most popular products on Amazon are often the things with the most scathing one-star reviews from the folks who don't like that product. A good example of this is anything made by Apple computers. People either love or hate Apple and that's why they are the most valuable computer company right now.

[Mary] That's a good point. One of the things Thomas and I have talked about is the importance of digging your well before it's thirsty and to remind you that this talk that we're giving right now is not just for people who want to crowdfund. This will be beneficial to you in a lot of different areas as you build a tribe for whatever reason. So even if you're like, "Even after I've listened to all this stuff about crowdfunding, I don't want to crowdfund," this particular talk is really going to be helpful to you because it's about building a tribe.

For me that process has been very rewarding. I personally really really shudder at the idea of marketing, but when I read Seth Godin's book *Tribes* I started to get really excited about it because I love the idea of having an impact on a group of people who are passionate about the message that I have.

So this is something that I'm really passionate about and it's important too that you create the kind of tribe that trusts you. Trust is so very important. We need to have permission to be able to speak to those people in our lives and in our tribe, especially when we're going to be doing a pretty hard ask in a crowdfunding situation.

[Thomas] That permission is your greatest asset. As we go through these steps, these are all about getting permission from people in different areas. People may not be wanting to give you permission in every area, but the goal is to start with a small ask and then slowly make a bigger and bigger ask.

Step 1: Create a Blog/Website

This leads us to step one, which is to start a blog/website. This is the critical first step. Even though it's not going to be the first place that your users interact with you, it's the most important step to start at the beginning because it's the central part of the hub. So as we talk about the other elements, like Facebook and Twitter, all of those things are connected to each other through your website.

Your website is where you're going to get people to your email list. Your website's where you're going to connect to them and the other areas. Maybe initially I just give you permission on Facebook, but then I start following you on Twitter, and then I subscribe to your email newsletter, then I start reading your blog. The more places you can touch me, the more likely I am to back your crowdfunding product, and the more I'll hear about it without feeling spammed, that you're hitting one channel too much.

So what are some tips about blogging? Obviously we could talk for hours on blogging. In fact we have hours of material on blogging on the Bestseller Society and other places, but we want to give you kind of the core nuts and bolts, what's the bare minimum that you need to get started.

The first thing is you need a blog on your own domain name. You don't want to be on JohnSmith.blogspot.com. That's a classic, classic mistake and everything about that reeks amateur, I'm not willing to spend money, I'm not a professional. If you want to be able to ask people for money you've got to spend some money and have that professional appearance. So either hire a company like Author Media to build a website and blog together or you can do it yourself. Michael Hyatt has a great guide on how to start your own WordPress.org website and blog and we'll have a link to that in the guide that accompanies this audio.

You've got your blog. You've got it set up. It's on yourname.come or yourministryname.com or the title of what your book is going to be.com. Something .com that looks professional. What do you do? What do you talk about?

The first thing you have to realize is it's not about you. Your blog is not about you. Your website is not for you. It doesn't matter what you think your website looks like whether you like it or not. Because it's not for you. Your website is for your readers; it's for your visitors; and your blog is for them as well. It doesn't matter if you think your posts are interesting. Your readers need to think your posts are interesting. Hopefully it's interesting to both of you so you're not bored writing it. Typically if you're bored writing your blog posts people are going to be bored reading your blog posts. You need to think of blogging as an act of service, an act of blessing people. Because the more you're able to bless people through your blog the more likely they are to share it with their friends.

Mary, could you give us some examples of how you used your blog to build your tribe and connect with your audience before your started crowdfunding your product?

[Mary] Actually it's an interesting story because the book that I crowdfunded is called *Not Marked* and it's about healing after sexual abuse. That book actually started from a blog post. I had not intended to write this book, but I wrote a blog post that went viral, and I shared about going to a conference where they were talking about how it's important to be this awesome sexy wife and I looked around the room and I thought, "I bet there are hundreds of us who have been sexually abused and this talk is hurting us because we feel like we can never be enough or we'll never heal from the past."

At the very end of that blog post I wrote, "What do you think? Is this a topic people are interested in?" And it went crazy. Totally crazy. People were saying in the comments, "Please, write a book about this. Please, write more about this." So that was an example of writing a blog post that hit an extreme nerve that went very, very wild and ended up being the very reason I wrote the book in the first place.

Then before the campaign began, I started (I don't know if this is the right word or not) seeding it. I put little hints here and there on my website and in other places around the web that said, "Hey, I'm working on this. I've finished it. I've finished this book and be watching for something really exciting coming." So I didn't give tons of information, but I did prepare people for it. I think Thomas is going to talk about that as well.

But in terms of content, yes, I so agree my best blog posts are the ones that I am extremely vulnerable in, which fits my audience very well. My audience – this is not a technical blog, they're not looking for information from me – they're looking for emotion. When I am vulnerable, they love it. So for me personally that's how I engage with my audience. Your job is to decide who your audience is and then you're supposed to wow them. You're supposed to write things that hit right to the nerve.

I've heard before that it's been said that in marketing we don't market to people to give them what they think they need. That's us-centered. We give them what they actually want. That's what I did on *Not Marked.*

[Thomas] That's really powerful. For some comparison, on Author Media our crowdfunding project was MyBookTable, which is a WordPress plugin. It's pretty technical and our blog is pretty technical. We have posts that get thousands of visitors a month and some of our most popular posts are things like "Six Reasons Why Authors Should Avoid GoDaddy" and "How to Do a Reverse Image Lookup." It's a really technical post, but it's ranking for things that thousands of people are searching for every month.

So don't copy Mary. You don't have to be emotional and vulnerable. If that makes you kind of cringe inside, that is probably not your style. But what you want to do is copy Mary in the sense that she's adapting her message to resonate with her audience. She was also able to use her blog to test her ideas. So she saw the demand was there first before she created the product, which can save a lot of time. Before you waste time on trying to crowdfund a product that people aren't interested in, see if people are interested in reading blog posts about that topic.

Another thing that's important in blogging is it needs to be a two-way street. One of the things I like about blogs is that they support comments. You can interact with your readers, and you can get that valuable feedback. You can know when you're being boring. You can know when you're not being clear because people will ask questions. I wrote a blog post last week, and I had three or four people ask the same or similar questions in the comments. I obviously did not do a good job explaining that point because people were confused. With a blog post, you can test those ideas ahead of time.

Another recommendation we have for you is to write guest blog posts. You want to do this months before your campaign comes out but also during the promotion period during your campaign. Guest blog posts are very, very powerful.

Why do them ahead of time? Well, guest posting on other people's blogs is one of the best things you can do to boost your search rankings. Google looks at how many links are pointing to your website and from how many different sites and how related those sites are to your blog. Believe it or not, companies spend millions of dollars hiring writers to guest post on people's blogs on that company's behalf to get the links pointing at their company's website. You can do it for free.

Another reason why it's a good idea is that it helps you build those relationships with other bloggers ahead of time so that then when your product comes out on Kickstarter they're going to be more likely to promote it and more likely to promote you because you have that relationship. If you're contacting them the very first time after your project's been out for two weeks and they have no idea who you are and you're like, "Hey, can you promote this product?" they're going to blow you off. But if you've been cultivating that relationship over time, they're much more likely to promote you.

[Mary] And to say that, it's so important that in this whole space that we talk about relationships because that is what fuels everything. I get this all the time as a blogger. I get emails from people I don't know saying, "Hey, I want to guest post on your blog," or "I want you to promote this" and I just delete those emails. I don't even respond to them any more because there's no relationship built in.

So yes, writing blog posts for other blogs has really helped my traffic, though I rarely feature them on my blog because they're so hard to implement. But if you can find people that are willing to take them, it's a great thing. For me, it's just asking my friends. Honestly, I just say, "Hey, I've got this happening. Would you be willing to interview me about it?" or whatever. My friends will typically say yes. They do because they love me, and I love them, and we help each other.

[Thomas] One final tip on guests posts. You want to try to guest post on big blogs, blogs with lots of following, blogs that get a lot of comments and tweets and likes. But you've got to start somewhere. One of the things that helps you get guest blog posts is to write other guest blog posts for folks that people have heard.

We had someone recently approach us saying, "Hey, can I write a guest post for you? I wrote a guest post for Mashable or a site similar to Mashable." We were like, "Wow. We recognize that. That's the number one site in our space. If they'll have you on as a guest post writer then you must be a good writer and you're offering value." We were much more likely to accept that blogger's guest post. So ideally you want to work your way into the big blogs, but you've got to first start with the little ones.

We have a lot more to say about blogging, but we're not going to in this audio. We have a lot of helpful guides in the PDF that accompanies this that have a lot more tips on how to blog.

Blogging Tips:
- 19 Ways to Boost Traffic to Your Blog [Video]

- [Michael Hyatt's guide on how to start your own WordPress.org website and blog](#)
- [Six Reasons Why Authors Should Avoid GoDaddy](#)
- [Our Viral Blog Post Formula](#)
- [How to Do a Reverse Image Search](#)
- [How to Add "Click to Tweet" to Your Blog Posts](#)
- [How We Grew Our Traffic By 323% in 15 Months](#)
- [50+ Things To Blog About When You Have Writer's Block](#)

There's a saying we had in Boy Scouts that a week's worth of canoe training is better than a lifetime of paddling around in circles. You can spend years blogging poorly. If you haven't gone through the training first, you'll just make the same mistakes over and over again, not knowing you're making those mistakes and you're reinforcing bad habits. So a little bit of blog training on the front end will really help.

Some final tips before we go on to step two and that is learn to write good headings and interesting titles for your blog. That's the most important thing. You want to spend twenty, thirty minutes on the title if you spend an hour on the whole post. That's how important the title is.

Also use images. Blogs allow you to use images basically for free. You don't have to pay for ink. An image is worth a thousand words, and you can often tell a good blog by how well it uses images. Good images will also help with some of the other steps like Pinterest and Facebook. A good image helps the post spread faster.

Step 2: Begin an Email Newsletter

With that let's start with step two which is to start an email newsletter.

[Mary] I guess I'm the expert on this although Thomas could talk about this as well. I'm trying to think how long I've been working on my email newsletter, but I'm pretty sure it's almost ten years. I've been working on this for quite some time. Currently I use MailChimp and I've been very, very happy with that company. Prior to that I used Constant Contact.

[Thomas] Don't use Constant Contact.

[Mary] That's where I used to use. Yeah thanks, Thomas.

[Thomas] That is not a recommendation.

[Mary] Yes. If I could give myself a gold medal, this is probably what I would give myself a gold medal about. I do this really, really well. I have built a tribe through my email newsletter that is very engaged and very connected to me and we are connected to each other. So it has been one of the best things I've done in terms of marketing. We're

going to talk a little bit about how you even start that. If you're going to sell some things, you really do need to have an email distribution list. It's super important, and it's the best way for you to move product. That's why we've definitely done that. Both of us have done that.

[Thomas] That's not just Mary's opinion. That's measurably demonstrable. There have been many studies done and our own tests at Author Media have reflected this: of all the marketing channels, email is by far the most effective. By most effective I'm saying 60%-80% of your sales will come from email which means that everything else that you're doing (website, Facebook, Twitter, etc) is only 20-40%. That's how important email is.

The most important purpose of a website is to build your email list. Your subscribe form is the most critical element of your website and why you have to build the website first. Because one of the frustrating things with emails is that you're starting from zero. You've got to start from scratch. A website helps you get started. The nice thing about MailChimp is that it's free up to 2,000 subscribers. So in those early months when it's slow going and you're slowly adding folks, you don't have to pay for that.

[Mary] There are a lot of different ways that you can create that email list. Obviously you don't want to do it illegally, and there are laws on the books, the CAN/SPAM laws. Make sure you navigate that well, meaning having a double opt-in, so someone has to opt the in and say yes I've received this email from you and yes I want to opt in. You do not want…

[Thomas] Wait. So you're saying I can't just import my outlook contacts into my email list and just say, "Well, they're my friends," and take every business card that anybody's ever handed me and add that to the list? You're saying I can't do that?

Mary] That would be illegal, Thomas. So no you can't.

[Thomas] It's also bad marketing. Because those people mark you as spam.

[Mary] Yes. And that's a killer. If someone marks you as spam it is not good. You do not want to be marked as spam. I even have an email that I send to people who just arbitrarily sign me up for their newsletter. I send them the law saying this is illegal, you can't do this. Sometimes I get people relieved saying, "Thank you for letting me know." Sometimes I get angry people. But it's against the law. You don't want to do something that's against the law.

[Thomas] And more than violating the American laws or whatever country you're in, it violates Google's laws. Google punishes you much more harshly. Let me explain. If someone on Gmail marks you as spam, you go to spam for everyone on Gmail. Or a few people on Gmail. And it's not just Gmail. Yahoo, AOL, Hotmail, all of these are the same way. When someone marks you as spam they are saying to their entire internet

service provider, "This person is a spammer. Don't let any of their emails get through." You absolutely do not want that to happen.

[Mary] I agree. You're building trust with your audience in your email distribution list. If you've added them without them knowing it, it's bad as well.

One way I have built my email distribution list is through my website. The sign up form is on the upper right hand corner of the site, which is a really great place of real estate on the website. People's eyes naturally gravitate there. I offer a free e-book as an incentive to get people to sign up for my newsletter and I honestly don't have a lot of unsuscribers. Sometimes you'll have people that just want that free thing and then they unsubscribe. But once they have subscribed they tend to really like the content I've given them.

Again, this goes back to knowing your tribe well. I give them what they need and want every month, and I don't spam them. I don't do tons of asks. I'm very, very cautious about that. I guard the integrity of that list like crazy.

Another thing I do, and Thomas does this as well, is I have speaker cards for when I speak. On the bottom of the speaker card is a little tear off that says, "Yes, I would love to have this awesome free book that you wrote and here's my email address." So when I'm speaking I pass those out and I say, "Hey, I'm going to be giving away books today. So fill these out and pass them in to be entered to win." When they pass them in I choose people from the piel that win books, but then I take those little cards back home with me. I add them to my email distribution list.

Those little tear-offs grant permission. I let them know on that little piece of paper they will be getting an email from me. So that is definitely something you can do if you are a speaker.

When I'm on the radio (I'm not as good at this as I should be, so I'll just be honest here) I forget often to let people know about my free e-book. But when I'm on the radio I need to be mentioning the fact that they could get on my newsletter distribution list. But again I'm not that great at it, so I need to remember.

The other thing to remember is – I just said remember seven times so sorry about that everybody – the other thing to know is how to write great sales copy. Again, if we're just going to end this on all the things that Mary doesn't do right, this would be one of them. I am learning. I am getting better at this, but I am very poor at sales copy and closing a sale. Thomas will attest to that. But closing is something that is learnable. *Cashvertising* is one book I recommend. Thomas suggests doing A/B testing on newsletters so that you send out to know which ones really hit people.

[Thomas] Just to explain a little bit how that works because some of you are probably like, "What's an A/B test?" It has nothing to do with the alphabet. It's also called the split

test. You can have a version of an email and then you can have a second version. One of the million reasons I love MailChimp is it will perform a split test.

You send a percentage, maybe 20%, of your list version A. Let's say you're testing the subject of email, so you send them subject A and then 20% of your list it sends subject B. For a period of time (that you determine) it sees which subject gets more opens and then it sends the balance to that better more optimized subject. So what that means is that 80% of your list ends up getting a more popular email subject and you get feedback on what works and what doesn't. You can learn better copyrighting techniques over time with verifiable results. This subject opened 5% at a time and this subject opened 7% at a time. That's a measurable difference in your email subjects. You get to learn after a while what works and what doesn't.

[Mary] That's great information. I think I need to do that. So thanks, Thomas.

The last point on email distribution list/newsletters is to offer your readers value. You want to give them something that they want to pass on to other people, or that they just find so valuable that it changes their lives. So be sure to do that. That's just the thing that we're underlying through the whole platform raising process. Because if you're crowdfunding something, that thing that you're crowdfunding has to be something that people actually want. It has to offer them value.

[Thomas] A pitfall when you're thinking about your crowd is to think about the many. They're not thinking about the tribe, they're thinking about themselves individually and your relationship with that one person. So one way you can think about this is like dating. Old fashioned advertising is like going to a singles bar, walking up to the first stranger and saying, "Hey, will you marry me?" and they're like, "No. Weird." And then they say no. So you're like, well I'll ask the next person. And if I ask a thousand people to marry me one of them will say yes. So I just have to ask thousands and thousands.

The whole idea behind TV advertising or radio advertising is that if I tell a million people about my Lexus car maybe a handful of them will actually buy a Lexus car and make the advertisement pay for itself. That is not the approach that we're recommending. What we're recommending is that you date your e-readers or your possible customers. So before you ask them, "Hey will you back my crowdfunding campaign?" you're offering them value on Facebook. That's like a "Hey, can I buy you a drink?" You're saying, "Hey, how would you like to get my email newsletter?" That's like "Hey, can I get your phone number?" It's a little bit more commitment. It's a little bit scarier.

If I'm giving you my email, I'm trusting you not to spam me. That's a harder thing to do. That's why people often offer, like Mary does, a free giveaway with that. So again, you're respecting permission. You don't want to be a creepster who's stalking people; you want to be a charming person in a dating relationship. Think what would be the appropriate next step here. You don't want to take things too fast or you'll scare folks off.

[Mary] So WWTD. What Would Thomas Do on a date.

[Thomas] Don't do that because I'm actually very unlucky at love and as much as I give marketing advice with a dating metaphor, my actually dating life is nothing to copy.

Step 3: Speak About Your Topic

[Mary] Alright. The next one is step three is to start speaking about your topic. Thomas and I both are speakers and he's going to spearhead this one.

[Thomas] Speaking is really powerful. What I like about speaking is that it allows you to have a much deeper interaction with people. So you're not going to speak to the same number of folks who subscribe to your email list or follow you on Facebook. It's going to be a much smaller number. But I can tell you, having worked with several crowdfunding campaigns, your biggest donations are going to come from people who've heard you speak because you have that deeper relationship with them. What you want with your crowdfunding campaign is not just breadth of lots of people following you, but also depth.

I had a lot of people donating at the $250 level. That's where a lot of our money came from. Mary had donations of $400, $500, $2,000 and a lot of that was tied to directly or indirectly her speaking. I know this sounds very intimidating, and there's a lot to be said about how to start a speaking career, so we're not going to go into all of that, but we encourage you to start growing your speaking platform. Not only does it help that depth but also helps all of the other areas of your marketing, all of the other steps, helps get traffic to your website, helps get good solid subscribers to your email list.

A couple of quick tips on how to grow your speaking career. The first is create talks. Be ready to speak. My break as a professional speaker came because I was ready to give a couple of talks on the spur of the moment. A speaker had backed down at a conference or they had an opening for one reason or another, so I signed up to give a talk later that day. Which I wouldn't have been able to do if I hadn't already started speaking for free and gotten practice as a speaker.

Zig Ziglar, one of the highest paid speakers of all time who wasn't a United States president first (they can get paid $100,000 or more for a one-hour talk) said he spoke a thousand times for free before he ever got paid. He honed and he practiced the craft of speaking. Rick Green—a very popular speaker—who mentored me in public speaking spoke for years, three or four talks a week, again, without getting paid, just to get better and better at public speaking. Once he did get on that stage for money, he had the experience and the talks ready and the language was honed and crafted. He'd worked out his umms and ahs or if he did it, he was able to make it sound like it was on purpose. So there's a lot to learn about public speaking. But we encourage you to get started.

Some other suggestions, if you're just getting started reach out to rotary groups in your area and meetup.com groups. We have a checklist of other places that's a companion to this audio to check out. But send them a list of your talks, come up with good subjects and titles and a short description for a fifteen-minute talk.

Every rotary club and Kiwanis group have a weekly meeting. They have to find a speaker for every single meeting. And they don't pay. They pay you with free lunch. So they're a very easy place to get started.

Also church groups are a great place to get started. Meetup.com probably has meet-up groups related to your topic in your area, and it's very easy to do a search through there.

[Mary] And if I can add something, I will say that in terms of me as an author the highest ROI (return on investment) for actually selling books is speaking. When people know you and they hear you and they hear your heart, they want to buy from you. So creating that relationship as Thomas talked about through speaking is important. This can also mean podcasting. That's a whole can of worms that we're not going to open right now. But the more people hear your voice, the more they discern what you're passionate about. You want to humanize yourself to your audience. You don't want to come across as just words on a page or just a robot.

We'll talk about this later in another segment, but that's why when you do a crowdfunding campaign your video is so important. It doesn't have to be professional, but potential backers need to see you as being a real life human being with a problem or with something that you're trying to solve. They need to see you interact with a camera as if you're interacting with the other people.

[Thomas] Emotion is so important. Food for the Hungry or Food for Children did a very famous test where they kind of tricked people. They had them do a fake test first where they said, "Answer these questions and you'll get five bucks." They gave everyone five dollar bills, and then they presented them with a story. Two versions of a story. It was an A/B split test.

One was about a little girl named Rokea who lived in Ethiopia and was starving. The other was a bunch of statistics about children in Ethiopia in general and the enormity of the local famine there. They found that the folks who got the statistics gave $1.70 on average and the folks who heard the story gave almost twice that amount.

This is why speaking is so important because you move people emotionally. And, interestingly, when they combined the two, they ended up still raising less. So your story, why you're creating this product is so critical. Audio is a key element to communicating that emotion.

One final thing on speaking is that you don't have to be in person to speak. I'm a huge fan of webinars. In fact, webinars have several advantages over regular speaking. One

of those advantages is that free webinars are one of the best ways to build your email list. Because typically when people sign up for a webinar they give you their email address to get on that webinar.

We've done webinars, and we've brought in big name folks like Michael Hyatt or Rachelle Gardner. In those cases, we'll have a thousand people sign up. Those thousand people then go onto our email newsletter and we've just gotten a thousand really solid folks. Here's a secret: a thousand people sign up for a free webinar, maybe only two hundred actually end up coming to the webinar. The rest get busy or they forget. A lot of them will ask for a recording afterwards. But you still have all thousand email addresses on your list.

And so webinars are really, really powerful. They also save you the cost and hassle of traveling. So I don't do a lot of free talks anymore. I won't travel to a place typically to give a free talk, but I will put on a free webinar because me flying somewhere takes a lot of time. It takes 24 hours or 48 hours roundtrip whereas a webinar only takes me an hour or two. I get in and get out.

I'm a big fan of webinars and I recommend [MeetingBurner](#). We'll have a link in the guide. It's a great webinar tool. It's not very expensive and it goes up to a thousand people to help you build that list quickly.

Step 4: Fashion a Facebook Page

[Mary] Alright. So the next thing that we're going to talk about is starting a Facebook page. Thomas Umstattd, Facebook King, is going to talk to us about that.

[Thomas] I'm not the Facebook King, I don't think there is one. There's a Facebook Queen though and if you're looking for a guru to follow she knows a lot of what she's talking about.

I do recommend that you have a business page. For an author, public figure, or business owner, a business page is better than a personal page. Personal pages don't scale. They can't get more than 5,000 friends. You can't advertise. You don't get analytics, and you can't schedule posts. There are many reasons why you should avoid a personal page.

You may be saying, "I already have a personal page. I've got 2,000 friends on my personal page and I have a business page with fifty, so I end up putting all of my attention into the personal page." What I would recommend is that you convert your personal page into a business page, which you can do. Then combine it with that business page. So instead of having fifty friends or likes, you now have 2,000 likes or maybe 2,050 likes. So that's a really powerful tool.

We have a guide on how to do that step-by-step. There's a coupon code on how to get that guide in the guide. But you can figure out how to do it. I highly recommend a business page because you're going to need a popular Facebook page once your campaign comes out.

A Facebook page is the number two source of money for a crowdfunding campaign. With Kickstarter you get data on where your funds come from. For our campaign, MyBookTable, email was the number one source of funds. The number two source of funds by far was Facebook because we had invested the time and effort to build a popular Facebook page ahead of time.

Something else that you might want to consider experimenting with is Facebook advertising. I know that this is very powerful. We did Facebook ads to help promote our campaign. It was a great investment.

I actually have a friend who did a successful campaign and raised $10,000 with no tribe. He had zero tribe when he started, and he did it all with Facebook advertising. He advertised to the tribe that already existed that already was interested in his idea. He provided very targeted Facebook ads related to his product. They clicked on the ads and backed his project, and he raised $10,000.

I don't recommend it because it costs money. He spent about $500 on Facebook ads during his campaign. Of course it paid for itself in the money that he raised, but if his campaign had been a failure he would have been out of the $500.

We recommend the holistic approach. Facebook ads can be a very effective strategy. But if you don't want to advertise, you also want to post content to Facebook, shareable content, images related to your topic, quotes, helpful tips, and answering people's questions.

Mary, what sorts of things do you do with Facebook?

[Mary] I think that one of the best things I do on Facebook is when I convey emotions about something (getting back to this emotion thing). Today I asked people, "What is going to be your word for 2014? What is the one thing you can concentrate on next year?" So asking questions, interacting with people is so valuable to folks. That's building trust along the way.

The thing that doesn't work well for me now is using images. They can be good, but they're lower on the totem pole now on the new Facebook logarithm. At least that's what I have found. Any time you post a link, man does it go way down. I go from 2,000 views to 250 views.

There is a little work around for that. If you want to talk about your post and you want someone to go to your Indiegogo campaign or whatever you can be sure you're the first

comment or put the link in the comments. But I'm sure Facebook will figure that out too. So those are some of the things that I've done that have been good.

[Thomas] Yeah. Mary has been talking about Facebook's algorithm. Facebook does not show your posts to everyone. Let's say you have 1,000 fans/likes on Facebook. If you post something maybe only 50 of those people will see your post or maybe 500 of them will see your post. But almost never will all 1,000 people see your post. This is another reason why I really like email newsletters because all 1,000 people get your email. Not all 1,000 will open it, but at least they get it.

Facebook looks at how close they are to you and how many mutual friends you have, what kind of content it is. Like Mary said, a plain text post is going to do better than a link. A link is not going to perform very well. The algorithm punishes images for how they rank, but images get shared more than any other content type. For the things that go super viral that it's not just your friends or your followers who see it, but also their followers and their followers' followers, images are kind of swinging for the fences type content. But they are not necessarily the best base hit content.

Probably the best base hit type content you can post on Facebook is just a question. Question marks are magic because one of the things that that algorithm looks at is how many comments a post has. So when you ask a question you tend to get far more comments.

The more likes you have on a post causes it to be seen more. So be positive. Typically people don't want to like complaining. So not only is it a sin, it's also bad marketing. So try to avoid complaining on Facebook. I know it's hard, you've had a tough day, and you want to go vent on Facebook, but it will hurt your algorithmic performance.

[Mary] I just read that Jeff Bezos said this. He said, "Complaining is not a strategy." I think that's really important on so many levels in so many important parts of our lives.

[Thomas] Yeah that's very good. There's a lot more to be said about Facebook. We'll have some articles in our guide that accompanies this audio, but there's nothing that will be just getting on Facebook and playing with it. Experimenting. Seeing what works with your audience. It's important to have a presence on Facebook because it is the biggest social network. Most social media strategies include Facebook and then one other social network, the one that is the niche network for your tribe specifically.

With that, let's talk about one of those niche networks: Twitter. Mary?

Step 5: Start Connecting to Your Tribe on Twitter

[Mary] I'll piggyback on what Thomas said and when I speak to writers in particular who are super stressed out about all this stuff, all this marketing and social media, I say choose one and become awesome at it. I think that has really helped me.

If I was going to boil it down to one thing I do awesome besides blogging it would be Twitter. That's why Thomas stepped aside and let me talk about this one because he doesn't do Twitter as much. Why this works for me is that I have this passion and desire to encourage people. I view Twitter as a vehicle to better people's lives. That's why Twitter you don't necessarily view it as "I'm going to use this to be a me-monster and have everyone come to me and cause my statistics on my website to go crazy." No, I just want to help people.

It's good for me because I'm a writer so I'm at my computer all day long researching and writing. If something occurs to me that is nuggetized in less than 140 characters I will put it on Twitter and it will be tweeted and re-tweeted because it is something of value.

One of the things that I'm not good at but I'm learning is to write great headlines. There's a book that we'll connect you to in the notes. It's called *Advertising Headlines That Make You Rich.* That has really helped me not to become super rich or anything, but it has helped me to write the kinds of headlines, the kinds of titles that draw people in.

Let's say you're connecting to your Indiegogo campaign. Just simply saying, "Hey, support me in my Indiegogo campaign," is not very compelling. But if you talk about something a little more targeted like "I'm sick and tired of sexual abuse and the effects that it's had on other people," people are more apt to go look at that link than if you're just being straight forward and boring. What I love about Twitter as a writer is that it makes me become a better writer. It makes me make things smaller, more succinct, more understandable, punchy, and so that's why it works really well for me. Go ahead, Thomas.

[Thomas] I just want to stress this point. I think this is perhaps the best element of Twitter. It helps undo how you were taught to write, which is the wrong way to write. We all pretty much learned to write the same way. We were in elementary school and we had the assignment to write 300 words about Christopher Columbus and have it on my desk by Tuesday. You got that assignment. Nowadays maybe it's Sacagawea, it's 300 words, but it's the same assignment.

So what do you do? You get the Encyclopedia and you rewrite the Encyclopedia article and you get to 200 words and you're like, "Oh." So what do you do at that point as a seven-year-old or a seventh grader? Do you go to the library and get more books about Sacagawea and learn more about her to get those extra 100 words? No. You turn every 'and' into 'as well as' and you add all of this bloat and fluff to your writing. Which is the very definition of bad writing.

No one wants to read that kind of writing. No one will pay for it. And Twitter beats those unnecessary words out of you with 140 character stick. It's a great exercise to write something, see that you're 10 characters over, and then go back and see what you can cut and get that same meaning.

[Mary] I so agree. In terms of building your Twitter following, my mantra "slow and steady wins the race." You can buy followers. I've never done that, and I don't consider myself any sort of celebrity. I'm at the 20,000 in terms of followers, but boy those 20,000 are very connected, and I get a lot of interaction. It's my way of interacting with my tribe. That's how I know what people want and what they need. They also reply back to me and we have conversations. I have people direct messaging me on Twitter with some very interesting issues and I'm able to kind of point them to good resources to help them in their lives.

In terms of the Kickstarter campaign, and that's what we're talking about here, how do you crowdfund, how do you build your platform so that you can crowdfund from it? Twitter was one of the best things I use to build my Indiegogo campaign.

One of the things I think works really well is clicktotweet.com. I created tweets for my tribe, people that I knew, and I went to clicktotweet and it generated a clickable link. So when someone clicks on the link, it has this already built in tweet with the URL and everything. So it became kind of viral because I was able to provide tweets for people. And then of course I wrote, "Hey next week be watching. Something cool's going to be happening," building momentum from the start. Again, if you're writing awesome tweets people will re-tweet them. If you're tweeting about something really cool with Indiegogo or your Kickstarter campaign, they will re-tweet it. And then their friends will do it, and so on and so on and so on.

The beauty of Twitter for me is connecting with my tribe, listening to my tribe, and even in a way, I don't like the word leveraging, but leveraging their ability to tweet on my behalf. Because there's that scripture in Proverbs that says, *Let another promote you and not the words of your mouth.* For me I think that is one of the best things about platform is that my tribe members promote me. I don't have to run around going, "It's all about me! Come buy my thing. It's me me me me." They start becoming passionate about it because I've had a hand in changing their lives.

[Thomas] Re-tweets are where you're going to get your best growth from. There's a common strategy that you'll hear some "gurus" (I'm saying that in quotes because they're totally bogus) recommend called follower churn. Where you follow people related to your topic, hoping that they'll follow you back. If they don't follow you back, you unfollow those people and follow new people. You search through followers trying to inflate your number.

I will tell you this totally works in getting your follower count to go higher because people will follow you. What will happen is other people who are using that same strategy will do it to you if you follow them back. But what you end up getting is all of these folks who are following you but then are using a tool like TweetDeck or HootSuite to ignore you. So you're both talking to empty rooms.

There's a great tool called klout.com (we'll have the link in the notes) that will help you figure out if someone's following is real or bogus because it can help sort out those weeds. When someone follows you because they saw one of your friends re-tweet your content or re-tweet it several times, they're like, "Okay. Who is this Mary person? Why do I keep seeing her in my feed?" That's a real person who's following you to get your content and not because you're following them back. So that's a really powerful tool.

Another reason why Twitter and Facebook are so important for Kickstarter and Indiegogo is that those sites have deep Twitter and Facebook integration. People can click to tweet those campaigns from the Kickstarter interface. You need to already be on Twitter so that you can monitor that conversation.

With MyBookTable someone in the very last hours really wanted one of our stretch goals and they @-replied hundreds of people in the WordPress space, basically spamming them on our behalf trying to get them to back our campaign. I was kind of simultaneously flattered and horrified that this guy in Sweden was tweeting all of these folks promoting MyBookTable. Re-tweets are really key. Mary?

[Mary] Yeah. The other thing is to create a hashtag for your product or the thing that you're trying to fund. Mine was #notmarked and that caused me to be able to quickly search to see what people were saying about it. Definitely put the hashtag in bold letters in your campaign on your Indiegogo or Kickstarter page because it just really helps people share it. In fact, I'm so passionate about the hashtag that I put it on every other page of my physical book so that people will know what that hashtag is and they can then share about and I'll always be able to monitor what people are saying about the book.

[Thomas] Hashtags are very powerful. They're important and they now work on every social network. Pinterest and Facebook and Google+ all use hashtags as well. You want to try to find a hashtag that is not being used by very many people because you don't pay for hashtags and anyone can use any hashtag for anything. You want to try to find something that is short enough so that it doesn't take up too much space but also long enough where no one else is using it.

A final thing before we go onto the next step and that is to use Twitter to listen. If you already built up some sort of a platform, you're already an author, people may already be talking about your books on Twitter. They may already be talking about you on Twitter. If you're speaking people may be talking about your talk or live tweeting what you're saying as you're speaking. I often enjoy that to see what in my speech actually made it onto Twitter. I talk for an hour and six sentences get tweeted. Well, I want to know what those six sentences were. What really resonated with people? So listening is really key use of Twitter.

Step 6: Use Pinterest

With that, let's go to step six which is Pinterest. I will admit of these seven it is my weakest area. I am not a big Pinterest user, but Mary is. So Mary, tell us about Pinterest and how people can use it to build their tribe.

[Mary] Well, Thomas, if you start using a British accent then you could be really great at it because most of the traffic on Pinterest in the UK is British men. So jolly-oh.

[Thomas] Right-oh. I love pinning elements on Pinterest.

[Mary] Yes. I came kind of late to Pinterest. I didn't really get it. I didn't see how it would be beneficial to me. As one who's learning how to focus better in her life, I just put up images of my book covers and it was really lame and didn't make sense. Eventually I read a book called *Pinterest Savvy* By Melissa Taylor and that really helped me understand the power of Pinterest.

I learned that Pinterest can generate 80% of your blog traffic.

If you're a male talking about technology, Pinterest is probably not for you. But if you have any sort of female middle class audience, (which is typically the book market) this is probably where you need to be. Pinterest is very important to understand.

[Thomas] Realize that something like 80% of active Pinterest users are women. It's one of the most dense social networks in terms of the kinds of people who are using it, in terms of demographic. So Facebook's on the other end of the spectrum. Everyone's on Facebook at least a little bit.

Pinterest is very, very focused. But if that focus happens to overlap with your tribe, if that's where your tribe is already having their conversations with each other (because remember, you're not necessarily creating a tribe, you're giving the tribe that already exists about your topic a place to gather and talk, not just to you but to each other). So if they're having that conversation on Pinterest, you really want to be on Pinterest.

If they're not on Pinterest, just let it go. Our tribe for our WordPress plugin wasn't really on Pinterest. That's not where people are talking about WordPress. "Oh man. Here's seven great plugins for your WordPress website. Let me post that as an infographic on Pinterest." Not happening. Didn't mean people on Pinterest don't use WordPress, but that's not where they went to have their WordPress conversations. So this step may be very useful for you. But if Pinterest makes you queasy inside and you're like "I don't know anyone who uses Pinterest," chances are it's not the right social network for you.

[Mary] And we have something that we'll give you about how to create a pin. That's what they're called, the images that you create. How to create a pin on PicMonkey, which is one that I use. It's a very simple software program that's free. As a photographer, I have my own images. But there are other places on the web where you can get stock images and pay a fee. You just need to be sure you're citing the artist or the site that you've gotten that from and that you don't plagiarize an image.

I've learned how to do it, and now where my Pinterest pins end up is on every single blog that I write. The first image is a pinnable image that has the little words "Pin It" on it, and then I also place that on my Facebook page. It also goes on Google+ which we'll talk about in a minute. It goes on LinkedIn and then it also goes on Pinterest on one of my boards that has to do with the topic that I'm blogging about. That one little image that you create goes to a lot of places.

If it's eye-catching and people resonate with it, particularly on Pinterest, when someone clicks on that image it goes directly back to my blog. That to me is so important because it's generating traffic. Once someone is there, I have a captive audience where they can choose to sign up for my newsletter, they could begin to trust me, they could learn about a book that I've written that they did not know about before. It's a really cool organic way for someone to come to your site.

[Thomas] And we will have a lot more information about Pinterest inside the PDF that goes along with this audio including links to that guide that Mary mentioned. We also have a 2-hour audio product specifically on how to understand and leverage Pinterest. It's Mary and I and Melissa Taylor talking about how to Pinterest. There's a 20% off coupon for that also in the notes.

Coupon code: "crowdception527" (without the cotes)

Step 7: Set up Google+

So with that, let's go to step seven: set up Google+.

[Mary] This is my favorite one. Ha ha.

[Thomas] She said with a strong ironic tone.

As much as Pinterest is for women, Google+ is the inverse. Google+ is the only social network online with more men than women. But another thing that's interesting about Google+ is that it's actually the second biggest social network. So Google+ has either ten times or a hundred times more active users than Pinterest does. Part of the reason is that Google has hooked Google+ into pretty much everything else that Google does. You now can't even leave a comment on YouTube without having a Google+ account. Every Android user is an active Google+ user. So you might be surprised. You might not be an active Google+ user, but there's a huge conversation going on that you're missing out on.

People talked about WordPress on Google+. It's slightly nerdier. Definitely not nearly as fashionable as Pinterest. But another reason why Google+ is important is it goes back to step number one which had to do with your blog and your website. Google uses +1s

to determine who ranks number one on Google for various search phrases. So having a Google+ presence, +1ing your own content and having a following that will +1 your content helps you rank better.

In terms of traffic to your website, which again is your number one source of new subscriptions to your email list (and your number one source of donations) is that email list. If you think of it as a funnel, you have your social networks at the top where the goal is to go from your social network to your website/blog. And then the point of the website/blog is to get them to get onto your email list. And then you ask them to make that donation once they're on your email list.

If you analyze your Google Analytics, I would guess probably half of the traffic comes from search and only 25% of the traffic comes from social media. Google+, although it may not be the biggest social network, can account for more traffic than all the other social networks combined because Google uses it for the algorithms. If you're a lifestyle blog and you're blogging about fashion, probably not the case because people aren't searching for fashion on Google+, they're searching for fashion on Pinterest.

But again, I would encourage you to get on Google+, set up your profile, connect with Google+ Authorship so you get your face next to your blog posts on Google when someone does a search. We'll have a step-by-step guide on how to do that in the doc that goes along with this.

Again, you don't have to use Google+ actively. If this isn't where your tribe is hanging out, set it up, start an authorship account, and then you can kind of put it on the back burner. But I would at least check to see if your tribe is there.

One of the reasons it's the second most popular social network, more popular than Twitter and the others is that it has the best privacy controls, which is a little bit of a shock because Google in general is not known for being a privacy friendly company. But they give you 100% control over who sees your content. You can post one thing that goes to your church friends and another thing that goes to your business friends. Even though they may not be interested in each other's content, Google+ makes it very easy to share different content with different groups of people.

[Mary] Every blog post gets a little share on Google+ because Google tends to look more favorably on your posts and index you better if you just do that with every post that you've written. It doesn't involve a lot of my time, it's just a matter of hey here's my post about this and that's it.

[Thomas] Because when you hit that +1 on your blog post, Google adds it to their index. You get added right away. The best way to get added to Google, all you have to do is +1 it. You can even get a browser plugin that does it for you.

Closing Remarks

Speakers: Thomas Umstattd and Mary DeMuth   21

Those are the seven steps for building a platform. We would like to share a few final thoughts with you before we close out this program.

The first one is that building a platform is a journey, not a destination. You never arrive. There's never a point when Michael Hyatt descends from the clouds and gives you a gold star and says, "Congratulations. You have a platform."

[Mary] I want that to happen, Thomas. Darn it.

[Thomas] Where the choir "ahhs" and "You have arrived. Platform achieved." But that's not how it works. And the platform will work in reverse.

All of these things take time and investment. It's kind of like a garden and if you're faithful to tend that garden, you have this great produce that comes from the garden. But if you have neglected your garden, weeds grow in, you finally choke out everything, and everything dies. If you decide I want to take a five year break, you don't pick up where you left off; you pick up where you left off minus 75% or more of your following.

[Mary] You mean, Thomas, when I work out like a whole bunch in the month of May, it doesn't count in the month of September? Darn.

[Thomas] As much as you'd like it to. This is not revolutionary. All of life works this way. Relationships work this way, farming works this way, business works this way. This is a principle all throughout the Bible. Sewing and reaping. You have to be faithful in the little things.

You may be asking how do I know when my platform, when my tribe, when my crowd is big enough? Because when am I ready to pull the trigger? I want to give you some rules of thumb to help you make that decision.

The first is that it's all about the size of your email list. We were able, by looking at Mary's email list, to predict within a few thousand dollars how much she was going to be able to raise. We were able to do the math because of that list. Of all of the things that indicate the value of your tribe, it's really all about the email list. That's the point in the funnel where people actually make purchasing decisions.

I'll give you a way to do back of the napkin math here. Included in this crowdfunding course is a spreadsheet where you can do advanced higher math to get a more precise answer.

So here's the back of the napkin. Take your email list and assume 5-10% response rate. If you have a thousand people on your email list assume that 100 of them will back your product. If you've been following our advice and growing a list that's easy to subscribe to and easy to unsubscribe to with one click and you didn't force anyone on there, you can expect a 5-10% return if these people really are your true fans. If you

bought a list from someone or you've been using bad practices then it will be lower than this. But assume 5-10% and then try to figure out how much those 10% would donate to the project.

The average donation on Kickstarter is about $20-$35. That's been proven out with the campaigns I've worked with. That's about the average, so if you have an email list of a thousand people and you have a 10% return (so that's 100) times $30, that's $3,000. So if your funding goal is $2500 then your platform is big enough. You can expect success. If you're trying to raise $10,000 it's going to be very hard to raise $10,000 off of a list of a thousand people. That's expecting $100 per person that donates, assuming a 10% conversion. You're probably not going to get there from there.

Now you could if you have other people's platforms that you're able to borrow. This is a final tip or another final tip we'll put here in the conclusion. If you can partner with someone else, your product's being done by someone else or you have friends who will help you promote your product, you're going to find that you now have double the potential. How do you double your platform over night? Get a coauthor. I'm a big fan of coauthors for that reason among many others.

There are a lot of lone wolves out in the world, but most success is accomplished by teams. Most businesses that are successful involve teams. Churches are planted by teams. Books also require a team. Even as a single author, you still need a cover designer and an editor and a whole team around you. Why not another author as well?

We will have the spreadsheet to help you out. Don't give up.

One thing you might consider is doing a smaller crowdfunding campaign at first as you get a better feel for it and feel for your tribe and how much they're willing to back. You can do other crowdfunding campaigns in the future. I know companies, especially in the board game publishing space, that publish three board games a year. They crowdfund every single one of them, and each one is a little bigger than the past one.

The people who backed your last project on Kickstarter or on Indiegogo are a valuable asset. You can send them a message through the platform saying, "Hey, I have a new book out that I'm wanting to fund. Will you back me there?" These are folks where your conversion rate will be more like 50% because these are folks who paid already to back you on crowdfunding.

Mary, any final thoughts?

Conclusion

[Mary] I think you're probably coming to the end of this feeling a little bit overwhelmed. That's normal. What Thomas had to say is important, and it's really my philosophy. It is doing small things well over a period of time.

When we were raising support to be church planters in southern France we received an illustration that really has resonated with me in the writing journey. The illustration is you're at the bottom of a driveway that goes all the way up a hill. It's a gravel driveway and underneath five pieces of gravel is a red X. Your job is simply to turn those pieces of gravel over until you find the five red Xes that you need.

It may be frustrating. You have to try on some of these platform ideas for size. You might realize, "I don't like Twitter and I'm not going to do that." That's okay. Try it, turn it over, keep looking for the red Xes and eventually you'll see really good success from turning over rocks.

[Thomas] One more thing to help you make this not so overwhelming: we have a checklist that's a companion to this audio that will take you step by step. Just work on that checklist. If each week you check one thing off, you'll start to see those results. Little by little wins the race and step by step builds the platform.

Thank you very much.