



How I Sold 1 Million eBooks in 5 Months

John Locke

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Now, for the first time ever, John Locke reveals the marketing system he created to sell more than 1,100,000 eBooks in five months!

His Credentials:

John is the eighth author in the world—and the first self-published author in history—to have sold 1 million eBooks on Kindle!

He is the first self-published author to hit #1 on the Amazon/Kindle Best Seller's List, and the first to hit both #1 and #2 at the same time!

He is a New York Times best-selling author!

He has been featured in the Wall Street Journal and Entertainment Weekly!

He has had 4 of the top 10 books on Amazon/Kindle at the same time, including #1 and #2!

He has had 7 books in the top 34 and 8 books in the Top 50 at the same time!

These numbers are not positions within a category. They are positions that include all Kindle sales including fiction, non-fiction, magazine subscriptions, and game apps!

By the middle of March, 2011, it had been calculated that “every 7 seconds, 24 hours a day, a John Locke novel is downloaded somewhere in the world.”

...All this was achieved PART TIME, without an agent, publicist, and at virtually no marketing expense!

How I Sold 1 Million eBooks in 5 Months Details

Date : Published (first published June 15th 2011)

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Author : John Locke

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From Reader Review How I Sold 1 Million eBooks in 5 Months for online ebook

Dana Burnett says

I downloaded this for a quick read, thinking it was going to be the same old advice every other How To publishing book drips out, but I ended up reading it four times and counting.

Many Indie writers know the advice given for how to be successful: Write Good Books, Well Designed Cover, Price Right, Blog, Promote on Kindle Boards, Get Reviews, and Buy Advertising. Guess what? It's all wrong!

You still need to write a good book, have a nice cover, and the price debate still rages on, but everything else has been a lie. John Locke breaks down his marketing system into easy to follow steps. Because it's so different from what we've all been told you might have to read it a few times for it all to sink in, but I still highly recommend it to anyone considering writing a book. Even if you are going the traditional publishing route, you'll need it for promotion tips.

Kimberly Kinrade says

I'm 28% of the way through this book, and as many have pointed out, the first part is mostly John Locke selling himself. I have a sales/business background, so I get this. Why should we care about his technique? He tells us why. Is it a little heavy handed? Yes. Am I still reading? Yes.

Why? Because this man is a marketing genius. Because unlike Amanda Hocking who keeps saying no one can duplicate what she did because it was a fluke, he actually tells you how to duplicate his success.

I find it laughable that many who give this book a low review, do so with the argument "If you want to make money and market your book, this is a great book, but if you want to write quality books, not so much..." I mean, come on, this book is not misleading. "How I Sold 1 Million eBooks in 5 Months" NOT "How to Write the Great American Novel."

I don't get it. If you're not looking for a marketing book, don't buy this book. If you want a book on how to write, look elsewhere.

I, for one, know how to write. And I'm not bad at marketing. But I haven't sold 1 million eBooks. And I want to! And I plan to! So I will listen to the man who has done it. What impresses me is that he's done it AND he has a strong business background where he made millions. I trust his business sense, and make no mistake, writing and self-publishing is a business. Too many writers are brilliant wordsmiths and epic fails at the business part.

I'll let you know my final review when I'm done. But so far, I'm impressed.

~~

Finished this book in 1 night.
A few thoughts.

One: I used to be in sales. Insurance (Like the author) & business consulting. So I come to my writing career

with many years of professional writing under my belt, as well as a sales career.

Two: Anything can be sold and sold profitably with the right system in place. Success is possible to duplicate if the person who generates the success knows what system they used, how and why it works and how to present it to others.

Three: The book business is no different. The only difference in the past was lack of control over our own product. We couldn't be business owners, therefore we were at the whim and mercy of publishing companies. Not so now. Now, with self publishing options so easy, we are our own boss and can create and follow systems of sales that work.

Four: John Locke knows this and uses this. He created a system that worked after trying everything that didn't work. And now he's sharing it with us. I'm sooo excited I can't even tell you.

Five: You don't have to be a sales genius to do what he's saying. But his techniques are subtle. They are not hard, but please don't read "Get a blog" "Get twitter" etc. and think "oh I'm already doing that." Unless you're making serious sales, you're likely NOT doing this.

In sales you learn fast that small tweaks to what you do or say can MAKE OR BREAK the game. Tweak what you're doing the way he tells you to and it may well work. I'm banking on it.

thank John!

And for those who come to this book and complain that it's all about the money and not the art of writing. #um #yeah Read the title. Not hard to figure out!

Will Once says

This is one of those books where I want to give one star and five stars at the same time. I am in equal parts appalled and inspired. Very odd.

The good news first. John Locke did indeed sell a million ebooks on Amazon, so his credentials are sound. This book (eventually) tells you how he did it. Well, most of the way that he did it. And I have little doubt that his method would work for others. He gives some good advice - write more than one book, price lower than the competition, market strongly, have a plan.

And if that was as far as it went, I'd give the book the full five stars and move on. Job done.

But there is more to it than that. For a start, the book is very unevenly written. The beginning is distinctly weird with every other sentence ending in an exclamation mark! And you can't help feeling that this is because it's aimed at the people reading the look inside feature! Lots of promises about what the book is going to deliver!

I nearly stopped reading at the point. Of course a writer doesn't want to give all his secrets in the first few pages. And we don't mind a little hyperbole, but this had all the misplaced enthusiasm of a dog making lurve to your leg.

Then we get on to the method itself. And this is where it feels alternatively professional and icky. "Professional" because he works to a plan and sets achievable goals (good) and icky because of the methods

he uses (not good).

A core part of his method is to write a schmaltzy heart-tugging blog about a celebrity that he admires and then to link his writing (somehow) to that blog. Then he would tweet his blog individually to people who also like that celebrity. Instead of the usual spam of "please buy my book", his is the slightly more subtle spam of "I really admire Michael J Fox, please buy my book."

And the word that comes to mind is "manipulative". It's spam, but it's clever emotional spam.

Then we come to the elephant in the room. The method that he doesn't mention is that he paid for positive reviews on Amazon. In order to give his book(s) an initial surge in popularity, he shelled out money to have people give him a glowing review even though they had not read the book.

And it's that word again - "manipulative".

And here's a funny thing. He has written an okay "how to" book. It has some genuinely useful advice. It is a little short at 170 pages (especially when you skip the filler), but nowhere near as cynical as the sub 50 page scams that seem to be all the rage at the moment. I've never read his fiction, but I hear that it is okay too. His method ought to work (in part) for others.

But you can't help feeling more than a little ... that word again ... manipulated. Sold to. Marketed to.

And I have this horrible thought of all the copycat wannabes who will write their own schmaltzy blogs, fill the twittersphere with self-promotional spam and buy their first few reviews.

It's not a bad book, so I won't give it one star. But it's not great either, and it leaves a nasty taste in your mouth. Three stars. That feels about right.

Rolando Garcia says

This is not a book about writing. Mr. Locke admits that he is not a great writer, but he also states he doesn't "suck". And this is fine because, as he also points out, he writes to entertain, not to impress. So this book will not improve your writing. This is a book about how to sell what you write. Between being the best novelist and the best selling novelist, the author states he'd rather be the latter, and many would say he has succeeded.

Mr. Locke begins the book by telling us about all the mistakes he made spending thousands of dollars to market his books while his sales languished. Then he tells us about how he developed and applied his system, which caused his sales to take off. The interesting thing is that his system involves things many writers already do like writing a blog and using twitter, but he uses these tools in his own particular way which often runs against conventional wisdom.

For example, haven't we all been told that we need to constantly tend our blogs, posting daily if necessary? Well Mr. Locke posts only 12-15 times a year in his blog! And Twitter, I have used Twitter for one year. Well, after the author revealed how HE uses Twitter I had one of those "duh" moments. I can't believe I didn't figure that out by myself!

While many writers may find it difficult (I would even say "unnatural") to follow Locke's central directive on how to go about writing, I still think the book has a lot of great ideas to improve your sales strategy. At \$4.99

this e-book is towards the high end of what e-books should cost. However, as the author states (and he sounds very sincere), he would have paid \$10,000 for these ideas when he was in low-sales limbo. If you are also in this sales netherworld or want to avoid ending up there, this book may give you the framework that you need.

Rachel Simeone says

My recommendation to anyone who decides to read this book is to skip the first part. The first section is mostly self-congratulatory hype, and I suspect it is what the readers that gave this book very low scores found most annoying.

If you start in Part Two, you will find that Locke has taken standard book marketing 101 ideas and tweaked them in an unusual way to sell his books. Those reviewers that complain that there is nothing new are both right and wrong.

Tactically he is doing things that you can read about in other book marketing books. In fact, even his law of transference isn't new. Cialdini studied it and wrote about it years ago.

What makes Locke's approach interesting is his strategy. He thinks about twitter and blogging differently than other authors who have written "how to sell your book" titles. And he takes the reader step by step through his process, which has worked for him.

Overall, this book provides useful food for thought if one is looking for a way to customize existing practices into a plan that will work for your audience and your book. Finally, it is a helpful reminder that there are many ways to think about book marketing.

Stefan Emunds says

The basics are there. The book is outdated, but the price still justifies a buy. The highlight: the concept of 'fan transfer'. I read somewhere that Locke admitted he cheated, paying for reviews to boost his books. I didn't verify it. Anyways, these marketing principles only worked miracles in the early days. Everybody is using them now. It's a good buy if you just started to research this subject.

Cara says

Very interesting. It's a quick read, explaining the simple system that got him over a million sales in the Kindle store. This makes it seem doable--I'm interested in trying it.

What kills me about this book is the guy's writing style is ok in most of the book--not great, not terrible. But he quotes some passages of the promotional stuff he uses for his fiction, and it's the worst crap I've ever read! Yet ingenious in how perfectly it's targeted to the people he wants to attract. He's crazy like a fox. My hat's off to him.

Some of the scornful reviews on Amazon (calling it social media 101, mainly) almost dissuaded me from buying this, but it's worth a read. I've heard a ton of stuff about how to use social media, and his twist on it is

a bit different from anything else I've seen. More importantly, he shares the details of how he got his stuff selling in the Kindle store and the strategy of how it works. I'm not sure his exact strategy is for me--it relies heavily on direct email contact with all of your fans, and you need a shitload of fans if you're making 35 cents per sale, which you are if you price your books at 99 cents. Good lord that's a lot of email. :P

Misha says

This guy is a liar and a cheat. Not only is his book just a bunch of repackaged techniques used by car salesmen, but John Locke has openly admitted to paying people to review his books. He said that it's easier to just buy people's respect than actually earn it by writing good books (which his aren't). John Locke and this new generation of self-published, egomaniacal ebook authors have taken the magic out of writing and replaced it with a glorified pissing contest. The actual quality doesn't even matter anymore. The only thing that matters is that a lot of people buy it. This is not the art that writing is supposed to be. These people don't care about creating art that makes people happy. All they care about is being able to say "hey, mom and dad, look at me! I sold a million ebooks!"

M.A. Nichols says

I read this because I'm jumping into the online publishing world and I have to say this was not a great read. It read like an infomercial (especially the first quarter of the book) where he kept trying to tell me what great ideas this book contained without a great assessment of how to accomplish his marketing strategy. There was one or two good ideas and I'm sure that he has more (as he has sold a lot of books), but his organization and writing kept me from absorbing much. It felt like he was constantly trying to sell me the book when I'm already reading it. I kept hearing the, "but wait, there's more!" voice in my head as I read it. As it's only three bucks, I don't feel cheated, but I certainly didn't find it helpful and I really have no interest whatsoever of reading anything else (fiction or otherwise) from this author.

I would suggest "Not a Gold Rush-The Taleist Self-Publishing Survey" as a much better guide of how to succeed in the publishing world.

Gary Marshall says

200 words padded out to ebook length. You know those "when I explain the secret of my sales technique / kung fu style / fried chicken recipe you'll be blown away" books that are 99% repetitive "don't skip this bit, because nothing will make sense if you do!" padding and 1% content? It's one of those. You could cover the whole method in a pamphlet, and I think some of the Twitter-related suggestions come perilously close to spamming.

Although the fact I bought it suggest that I'm the dumbass here.

Then again, it was recommended to me by a friend who said it was great.

So who's the dumbass now?

That's right. It's my friend Kyle.

Kyle the dumbass.

Donna Brown says

As my husband has just self-published his first novel this seemed like a must read but I found myself quite disappointed. The book is quite short but, as Locke points out, he tells you what you need to know so length isn't really an issue. However, the book does build up Locke's strategy throughout the chapters about what doesn't work and how to plan and I was a little deflated when I reached the part that details his strategy.

There's no doubt that Locke has done remarkably well from his books but it's very clear from this that his books, his blogs, his Twitter feed etc are very much a business and approached with what I can only describe as an almost cynical approach. Some people will love his strategy and do very well from it but for others I suspect it would take much of the pleasure out of being a writer.

Laura says

As someone who has been in the writing business a long time, I'm constantly looking for new ideas to market my work. In today's publishing climate, publishers--traditional and indie--are throwing ideas against the wall to see what sticks. There is no magic formula. I repeat: There is no magic formula. Success is built on trial and error, and by looking at the successes and failures of those who have gone before. Young writers are taught (or should be, anyway) to model the work of exceptional writers, to feel how the writing happens, to try it on for size. Writers are now also required to be marketers. It's a ridiculous situation. Artists are not temperamentally suited to endure the vagaries of the business world, but that's the reality. We need marketing guidance.

I've read both Konrath's Newbie's Guide and Stephen King. Now John Locke. All are crazy-smart and successful. Why wouldn't a writer who is about to plunge into the wild world of publishing--indie or traditional--want to be armed with good information and ideas? Locke's enthusiasm may sound over-the-top to some, but I find his approach humorous and encouraging. I, for one, am thrilled to have his ideas for cheap, and can't wait to give them a go.

Ruby Barnes says

Locked In

Ruby's review of 'How I sold 1 Million eBooks in 5 Months!' by John Locke

In the last two months I've been devouring non-fiction as research to support my new project – a how-to book on novel writing, social media and independent epubublishing. It's been an interesting journey and my final port of call was the much talked about million selling method book by Mr Locke.

The first thing I do when considering a popular book is to browse the negative reviews. Locke's knockers were scathing, claiming he didn't really reveal his secrets, that his method wouldn't work for most people and he was on an ego-trip. Then I took a look at the three star reviews (the ones that Locke himself discounts

when he calculates the positive / negative review score of books). I sensed from those middling reviews that he was connecting with his readers. Not everyone felt they could emulate his approach but they began to give it credence. A sample of the higher scoring reviews showed genuine praise. So I One-clicked and slipped my few bucks into Mr Locke's bulging pocketbook.

First impression? An avalanche of advertising, branding and hammering out credentials. Close to sales pitch overload. I'm a bit of a straight-laced Brit and pushy product placement presses the wrong buttons for me. However, in between the lines of Locke's opening gambit, I sensed warmth and something akin to humility. So I read on.

It didn't take long before I realised that I was in the hands of a master of rhetoric. That's a positive superpower, when used for good. Locke's entrepreneurial understanding of sales and marketing, coupled with that gift for rhetoric, are a powerful combination. He's a rich man who has unsuccessfully tried to herd his ebook camels into sales heaven through the eye of a needle (or some more suitable metaphor). That was the first major learning. Money thrown at traditional product promotion won't propel an indie author onto the best seller list.

Locke went on to describe how his writing polarises readers and that demarcation defines his market niche. I read that on the day that Peril received its first ever one-star review. The reader had found my anti-hero thriller unpalatable, where others had lauded it. There, I had polarisation.

Donovan Creed, Locke's MC in his main series, isn't a regular guy and the quirky story lines aren't mainstream. Bells began to ring in my head as I compared the appeal of Creed with my Peril MC Ger Mayes. Locke has a series of Creed novels and that was where my hopeful comparison faltered (note to self – produce more!)

Then Locke went on to describe his GBL (Guaranteed Buyer List) and how these people have become personal friends who not only buy his new releases but are evangelical in spreading the word. I call them the Locked In. He explained his approach to social media and how he engages in a supportive social network where spam is anathema and everyone benefits, how he communicates personally and builds relationships. I thought of people I have met on Twitter, facebook, this blog and in chat forums. How they might have bought my book but I don't know. How I don't know if the 17,000 people holding ecopies of Peril even know that I've written and released The Baptist! I'm adept at the how-to aspects of social networking and e-publishing, and I think I write a decent novel but, compared to Locke's sleek, tight and smooth machine, my marketing is a pair of old lady's wrinkled stockings.

All the way through the book Locke promotes his sound marketing plan but the major catalyst for his success, the trigger that set Locke's snowball rolling down the hill, is his incredible rhetoric. He attributes the initial rush of sales to a series of blog posts that hit the sweet spot with potential readers and went viral. The resulting sales success fed into his business plan with all its carefully designed components and he leveraged the momentum to great effect as the Creed series rolled out.

If you are an indie author who understands product marketing, customer relationship management and the principles of persuasion, then you have to read Locke's book. If you don't understand some or any of those things then you have to read Locke's book.

At the end I wanted to hug John Locke. And I'm not the kind of guy who does man hugs. I don't think that many people will be able to fully replicate his method. Few have the skill set, determination and work rate that he displays, but there are nuggets in there for everyone and I'm thankful to the man for sharing. And I just bought my first Donovan Creed ebook.

Kevin Hill says

HE BOUGHT PUBLIC OPINION!!!

I was reading this book when I came across the NY Times article in which he admitted to paying to get false

reviews on Amazon. That should be the subtitle to this book. Once I read that I could not read further.

I'm 40% done. This is one of those books where I find myself thinking: Just give one paragraph of the info I need and I won't need to read more.

Also, and this is monumental: He didn't begin promotions until he had five books out. If this fact were on the cover, I'd guess that 90% of the authors who purchase this book would reconsider.

Great information, but by giving it to the reader we learn the title is misleading! The author SLOWLY built a following on twitter, and wrote 5 books, that took years! Not five months. That, I felt, was a violation of trust. Sorry Dude.

Douglas Audirsch says

This was an overblown effort to tell authors basically this: use social media to promote your book. If you are new to social media and don't understand some of the etiquette or if you have used it and have not been effective, this book might possibly provide you with a usable template. However, I found it to be rather superficial and shallow. It tells you exactly what to do in a "this worked for me" sort of way. Rather than teaching concepts, theories and methodologies, Mr. Locke simply recounts what worked for him and that he believes it will work for you too. The only difference is that you are instructed to "know your audience". It came across as a modern social media parody of John Goodman's Bible salesman training speech in "O Brother Where Art Thou". Unless you are lost and floundering and desperate for a basic "how to", I would avoid this book and encourage you to pursue a true social media guide by Brian Solis or someone else like him with a proven social media track record.
