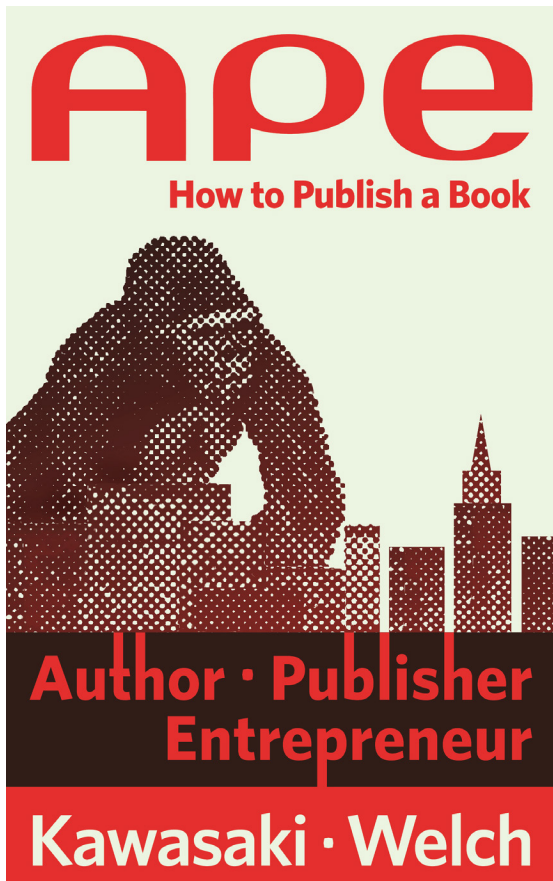




BOOK EXCERPT



APE: Author, Publisher, Entrepreneur

HOW TO PUBLISH A BOOK

Guy Kawasaki and Shawn Welch

In 2011 the publisher of Guy Kawasaki's *New York Times* bestseller, *Enchantment*, could not fill an order for 500 ebook copies of the book. Because of this experience, Guy self-published his next book, *What the Plus!* and learned first-hand that self-publishing is a complex, confusing, and idiosyncratic process. As Steve Jobs said, "There must be a better way."

Learn more about the book: <http://apethebook.com/>

How to Build an Enchanting Personal Brand

“If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I? And if not now, when?”

Rabbi Hillel, *Pirkei Avot*

The Brand Called You

This chapter explains how to create an enchanting personal brand. In the next chapter, we’ll examine the tools to spread your brand. The goal of these two steps is to build a “platform” for your book.

“Platform” is marketing-speak for the sum total of people you know and people who know you, including:

- Friends and followers on social media services
- People in your email address book
- Readers of your blog
- Readers of your previous books
- Bloggers
- Reviewers
- Other authors
- People who have seen you speak

In the old days, authors used the platforms of their publishers. Indeed, this remains one of the reasons to seek a traditional publisher, although I’ve never come across an author who was happy with the marketing efforts of his publisher.

Many experienced authors consider self-publishing once they have established their own platform beyond their publisher’s. However, as a novice self-publisher, you may experience no marketing instead of insufficient marketing unless you build your own platform.

The process of building a platform takes six to twelve months—the same amount of time it takes to finish a book—but you cannot start the process after your book is done. If you don’t have a platform yet, you need to build one as you are writing your book.

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Step 1: Trustworthiness

Call me idealistic, but your platform is only as good as your reality. If you suck as a person, your platform will suck too. The three pillars of a personal brand are trustworthiness, likeability, and competence: TLC.

Trustworthiness means that people can depend on you because you are honest, forthright, and effective. Here are four ways to build trustworthiness:

- **Trust others first.** If you want people to trust you, you have to trust them first. This isn't a chicken-or-egg issue—the sequence is definite: you trust, and then you're trusted. Give people the benefit of the doubt and assume that they are good until proven bad. Then give them another chance.
- **Underpromise and overdeliver.** Do what you say you're going to do, early and under budget. People should be able to depend on you. If you achieve this goal 75 percent of the time, you're better than most people.
- **Deliver bad news early.** If you can't deliver, then tell people as soon as you know there's a problem. Waiting until the last minute in hopes of a miracle doesn't build trust. You should communicate the problem as soon as possible to increase the opportunities for fixing the problem.
- **Bake a bigger pie.** There are two kinds of people: eaters and bakers. Eaters think the world is a zero-sum game: what someone else eats, they cannot eat. Bakers do not believe that the world is a zero-sum game because they can bake more and bigger pies. Everyone can eat more. People trust bakers and not eaters.
- **Tell people what you don't know.** No one knows everything. There's nothing wrong with this. You can build trust by explaining what you don't know. Then people will believe you when you say you do know something. Acting like you're omniscient reduces trustworthiness.
- **Figure out what you don't know.** To take trust to the next level, figure out what you don't know and then provide the answer. For example, you may have never visited Hawaii, but if you see someone ask what the best shaved-ice store is in Honolulu, you can still figure this out with Google or Yelp. This shows your ability to do research and to follow through—both powerful components of trustworthiness.
- **Disclose your interests.** There's nothing wrong with making a living. What's wrong is not disclosing conflicts of interest. For example, when I shared [three posts about Microsoft Office templates](#) for raising venture capital, I added the text “Promotional consideration paid by Microsoft.” I took some heat for doing a promotion, but not for trying to hide it.

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Step 2: Likeability

Likeability is the second pillar of a personal brand. Jerks seldom build great brands. A great book can overcome an unlikeable author, but why increase the challenge? Likeable people bring a smile to the face of others. They radiate energy—they don't suck it up. Folks look forward to dealing with likeable people—even going out of their way to encounter them. Here are five ways to build likeability:

- **Accept others.** If you want people to like you, you have to like them first. This means accepting people no matter their race, creed, net worth, religion, gender, politics, sexual orientation, or your perception of their level of intelligence. It means not imposing your values on others. (Yes, this even means accepting people who choose a different computing or mobile-phone platform from you.)
It's even better if you delight in people who are different from you, because they add diversity to your life. Many people impede their likeability by rejecting people who don't share the same sensibilities. If you want only your clones to buy your book, you're not going to sell many copies.
- **Add value.** People like people who add value to the world. You don't need to be a Mother Teresa because making the world better can take many forms—for example, technical assistance and pointing out online resources are often enough. Give without expectation of return and, ironically, you'll probably increase the returns that you reap.
- **Default to "Yes."** When you meet people, always be thinking, "How can I help this person?" If they don't make a request, ask them how you can help them anyway. The upside of such a positive attitude far outweighs the downside of people trying to take advantage of you.
- **Stay positive.** If you want a likeable reputation, don't attack folks or denigrate their efforts. Stay positive. Stay uplifting. Or stay silent. Like my mother used to say, "If you don't have anything good to say, shut up."
- **Share your passions.** By sharing your passions, you provide fertile ground to begin conversations and to explore commonalities. My passions are hockey and photography. I've seldom met people who shared these passions and not liked them.

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Step 3: Competence

Competence is the third pillar of a platform. The goal is to establish yourself as a trusted source of information, insight, and assistance. When you achieve this status, people will read your book because of your credibility.

Competence is usually associated with nonfiction authors, but it applies to novelists as well. For example, Ray Bradbury achieved competence in science fiction, Patricia Cornwell in forensics, and John Grisham in law. Here's how to develop and demonstrate competence.

- **Own a niche.** Pick a niche that you love and focus on it. The [National Living Treasures of Japan](#) provide good examples. The Japanese Ministry of Education has designated these people as artistic and cultural treasures because they have mastered skills such as papermaking, ceramics, and metalworking. Watch the YouTube [video of swordmaker Gassan Sadaichi](#) to appreciate what it means to own a niche.
- **Let go of niches you can't/don't own.** Owning a niche takes lots of energy. Owning every niche takes infinite energy. You don't have infinite energy. If you want to own a niche, then give up the ones that you can't own or don't care about. Then, to repeat the lesson in the trustworthiness section above, disclose what you don't know.
- **Pay your dues.** When people ask how long it takes to write a book, my answer is "thirty years" because that's how long ago I started my career. While it may take six to twelve months of work at the keyboard to type in a book, the accumulation of knowledge and understanding is the harder and more time-consuming part.
This is why I throw up a little when a twenty-five-year-old tells me that he believes he should write a book about "all he's learned" by starting his \$1 million consulting company.
- **Watch and learn.** You can learn a skill by watching and copying someone who's good at it. This takes the humility to admit that you can learn from others and the open-mindedness to embrace their techniques. Few people seem willing or able to do this—for example, millions of people watched Steve Jobs introduce new products, and yet they still suck at the process.
- **Eat like a hummingbird, poop like an elephant.** Read voraciously outside your area of expertise. Attend conferences and trade shows that have (ostensibly) nothing to do with your niche. Think of ways to apply other niches to yours. And then spread your knowledge—don't keep it to yourself.

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Wondering about the bird and elephant? If humans had the metabolic rate of a hummingbird, we'd ingest 150,000 calories per day, and elephants poop 150 pounds per day. That's how much information you should consume and pass along.

- **Try new methods.** If you want to remain competent, you need to push the edge of knowledge by trying new methods. You'll experience failure, but failure can teach competence as long as you don't give up. It is part of the process of paying your dues. What separates competent from incompetent people is the willingness to try new methods and to learn from failure.

Summary

I'll tell you a story about competence. Shawn and I first met on Google+ when I asked my followers about self-publishing, and I got the eight different answers from five different people.

Shawn told me to use Adobe InDesign while other experts told me InDesign would not work. Then less than ten minutes after I sent him a chapter of *What the Plus!* that included bullets, images, and captions, he sent back a MOBI file and a picture of the chapter displayed on his Kindle.

This is why Shawn is coauthor of *APE*.