

**Daniel Hall Presents**



## **Episode 101**

# **The 10 Stages of Selling Your Book Fast with Monica Leonelle**

Welcome to this episode of the Real Fast Results podcast! Monica Leonelle is today's special guest. She is an expert on writing, authorship, and publishing. Not only does she teach this stuff, but she does this in her day to day business as well. As a matter of fact, she's written over a half a million words of fiction, spread across numerous genres and series, most notably her young adult urban fantasy and paranormal romance series, which is called [Waters Dark and Deep](#).

Monica also writes about indie publishing at her site, [ProseOnFire.com](#). Her most recent non-fiction series is called [Growth Hacking for Storytellers](#) has helped thousands of authors to write faster, become better storytellers, and have more success. In addition to all of this, Monica is also the creator of a program called Breakout Masterclass. To find out more about Monica, and to gain access to her latest fiction updates, exclusive giveaways, and advance review copies, sign up at [MonicaLeonelle.com](#). Welcome to the show Monica...

## **Promise: Get Your Book Selling**

Our big, fat promise for today is that we are going to get your book selling. We have this framework called "The 10 Stages of Audience." This is a clear sales funnel that's specific to authors and the needs that they have. The first five stages focus on getting readers to your books and getting people to buy them, and the back stages focus on how you can turn your customers into readers, fans, and evangelists of your work.

# How This Works - An Overview of the 10 Stages

1. The first stage is finding your target audience,
2. and the second stage is turning that audience into a lead, so into someone that you have on your email list, or whatever it might be.
3. Then you'll want to get them to become a prospective reader, and that's someone who is actively looking for information from your books but haven't necessarily purchased anything yet. They know who you are, and maybe they've listened to your podcast or read your blog.
4. The fourth stage is about giving them something to try before they buy. This is a really important one. In a regular sales funnel, it would be called "the delivery." You'll want to give them something that demonstrates that your finished product is good and make them want a little bit more.
5. The fifth stage is about your product page and getting them to Amazon, or wherever your book is sold. You want them to take a look and make a decision as to whether to purchase or not.
6. Once they make their purchase, you enter into the sixth stage and they are a customer. Of course, you want your customers on your list because these are the people that are most likely to buy in the future.
7. Turning that customer into a reader is very important. This is something that a lot of authors skip. I don't know about you, but on my Kindle I have like ten books that I've purchased but haven't read. You want to make sure that you follow up with them and that you're still very visible to them. You also need to have a really enticing promise throughout your book so that they keep reading.
8. Turning them into a fan is really Stage #8, and getting them onto your email list as a customer.
9. Then you'll want to turn them into a true fan so that they'll buy whatever you come out with. A lot of that has to do with deepening your relationship with them.
10. The last stage is getting them to become an evangelist of your work. That's how you get word of mouth for your book. Most books are sold through word of mouth, about 85-90%. You also want to get them to write reviews, and share your social media posts, and other such things. Basically, you just want to activate those fans so that they can go out and gain more fans for you.

## Finding Your Target Audience

**The good thing about books is that they aren't complicated products. So, pretty much whatever book you have will fall into some sort of nicely-defined genre or sub-genre.** And, even if you're writing non-fiction, it will fall into a really specific niche or topic. What you can do, for books in particular, is to find books that are similar to yours. Those are books that are in the same niche or genre as your own. And, the easiest way to do that is to research on Amazon.

**Even if there is only one book that's similar to yours, you can just look at the "customers also bought" section to find more.** You can just make a list of what you find, which may consist of 50 or 100 books. You might even make a list of 500, depending on how big marketing goals are. Then, once you have that, the next step is just to get your name and your book in front

of those people because they are already a targeted audience, and they are most likely to purchase your book.

## Getting in Front of Your Audience

There are so many different things that you can do. One thing about the author community is that the tactics are changing constantly for how to start to get yourself in front of people. **So, I tend to focus more on strategy than the tactics.** A tactic would be like, “Put up a Facebook ad and get your book in front of this target audience.” Let’s say that you were trying to target *Fifty Shades of Grey* readers because you are a romance author. So you go on Facebook and define all of your target audience keywords and all of that, and then you could make a Facebook ad, and that would get you in front of them. But, the question is, “What is your strategy?”

What are you trying to achieve? Are you focused on fans, or are you focused on the Amazon algorithm? Are you focused on word of mouth, or are you focused on just the *Fifty Shades of Grey* audience? Are you focused on getting a movie deal? What are your goals? I think that you can then tweak your Facebook ad depending on that.

All of the stuff that’s good in the next couple of stages, it tends to be very tactic-based, as to whether it will work right now. You can kind of do anything. **One tactic that has worked well for me and other authors is doing a giveaway of similar books.** You can start promoting your giveaway on Facebook, or Twitter, or wherever. The thing about a giveaway is that you have to collect an email address, and when you collect email addresses, you can have an auto-responder sequence set up to go out to people. This sequence of emails can consist of content that teaches people about who you are, inform them about the different books you have out, or will soon have out, and you can even send a freebie out to them to get them even more interested.

You can take people through some of the other stages through your email sequence. I think what should go on the frontend should just be something like, “You are my target audience. I want you on my email list. Then you’ll become a lead, and then I’m going to try to take you through these next couple of stages until you become a customer.”

## A Giveaway

**Give a bundle of the target books.** So, if you find a book that’s really similar to yours, or has a similar audience to yours, and you find a bunch of books that people “also bought,” because of that you could do a giveaway of, like, 5 or 10 of them to get in front of those audiences. When people sign up for that giveaway, they are added onto an email list. Now, this isn’t your customer email list. It’s your big email list, so just keep that in mind because you don’t want to dilute your customer email list.

**Through your big email list, you can start talking about your story and about how your book is similar to these other books.** You can talk about how it’s on sale, give away a free sample of it away, and all sorts of other things. From there, hopefully you’ll take them through

the rest of the stages until they get to that buying decision, so that they can make the decision as to whether they want to become a customer or not.

This is technically a sweepstakes because it's a random draw. A contest is similar, but it's more based on submissions that you have to take. So, they are two slightly different things. You'll definitely want to check the legalities of what you're putting together, of course, because there are some strict rules around all different types of giveaways. I use an app plug-in called KingSumo. There are a couple of others, like Rafflecopter is one and Gleam.io is another. A few more are coming out too.

Basically, what those plug-ins, or pieces of software do is they allow your entrance to share a giveaway and get more entries. So, they add this viral element to it. You can actually get that started, and you can get several thousand people interested in your giveaway. Let's say that you have a book called Real Fast Writing. You can buy several other books on writing fast and do the giveaway, or you could reach out to several of those authors and ask, "Can you donate copies of your book, and we'll promote this to all of our lists as well as through other avenues?" You can share those lists, and that way, you can partner up with several other authors that have similar audiences to yours and cross-promote with them.

You very often see authors doing promotional swaps. This is a "You share about my book, and I'll share about your book," type of thing. Maybe one author will have a special sale going on, and you can both promote together. This is definitely one of the best ways to get your book in front of other readers.

## Learn About the 10 Stages

**The next step is to learn more about the 10 stages, especially if you're confused about marketing or if it's not your favorite thing to do.** I think that if you learn more about the 10 stages, it will become clearer what kind of marketing you need to do. It will also become clearer where the gaps are in your funnel.

So, you can look at your funnel and say, like, "I have these giveaways, but I don't have this email sequence on the backend that kind of guides people through," or, "I don't have this trial where people can get samples of my book so that they'll be more likely to buy it." You should learn *The 10 Stages of Audience*, for sure, and the book that I have about that is called [\*Get Your Book Selling\*](#). It's at [ProseOnFire.com/booksales](http://ProseOnFire.com/booksales). You can check it out, and it just goes through all 10 of these stages.

## How Do I Get People to Actually Pony up and Buy My Book?

**One of the best ways is to do the trial and have sample chapters.** You might even have the book priced at \$0.99, for example. A lot of times the trial is a lower-priced product. You could

also do a sale on a related book in your back-list. In fiction, a lot of times you can offer something for free or for \$0.99. When the person trials that, you just have a link in the back of your book to have people go buy the next one.

**I think that it's really important to have a good product page, and that's something that a lot of authors neglect.** So, you could start by pulling out specific reviews from your book and then put them in the editorial section, for example. There's a little section on Author Central that you can add reviews and all sorts of other stuff, and there's also a lot of work that you can do on your description. If you download the section of your book that Amazon automatically generates, you can see if it's hooking and that sort of thing. You can improve your cover. I think the product page is incredibly important, and that's going to be where people make that purchase decision.

We just went through Stage #4 and Stage #5. After that stage, that's when they become a customer. Then you get into the back half of the stages.

## Improving Your Amazon Listing

Everything I've learned about descriptions has been from two different books, so these will be my recommendations. One is a [Libbie Hawker](#) book, and the other is from Bryan Cohen. I can't remember the name of the book I read of Hawkers, but it's not the "Take Off Your Pants" one; it's [Gotta Read It!: Five Simple Steps to a Fiction Pitch that Sells](#). Cohen's book is called [How to Write a Sizzling Synopsis](#). **Some of the things that I've learned from them are that you want to keep your description a bit shorter and that you really want to focus your description on a small number of details, especially if you're doing fiction.**

A lot of people try to throw a lot of character names, or a ton of locations and world-building stuff, into their descriptions. Both of the authors mentioned suggest that instead you pick your main character, like your protagonist, and focus on just their story. Another thing that I've learned is that with both fiction and non-fiction, it really helps to write a description before you write your book, in many cases. Not everyone can do this, obviously. So, what you can do is look at the bestsellers and see how their descriptions are written.

Like, one trope in romance right now is the "roommate trope," so two friends are roommates and then one of them starts wanting more, and that causes a lot of conflict in the relationship. Maybe they've been best friends for years, or whatever it might be. You can look at that trend, and if your story has two best friends, you might make them roommates. So, you can kind of come up with that sticky story before you even write the book. Then, when you publish it, you'll have a lot of that marketing baked in already.

There's a great book about this called [Write to Market](#). It's by Chris Fox. This book can help you learn how you can use Amazon. Amazon is a great research tool if you are writing a book. You can use Amazon to see what's popular and what's trending now, as well as to see how other independent and self-published authors are marketing their books. Like, kind of what's working and what isn't. You can see a lot of that data on Amazon. But, the book, [Write](#)

[to Market](#), will help you understand this concept a little more. He goes through it in a little more detail, and it's a nice, short read. I think it only takes about 1 ½ - 2 hours to read.

## Get Them to Read the Book

We've got to get them to read the book. **This is a step that we kind of forget as authors because we're really going for the sale at first, but actually, getting people to read the book is an important investment in future sales.** After all, they can't recommend the book if they don't read it first. So one of the most important things for you to do is, if you are doing Facebook ads, or giveaways, or whatever it might be to get people in the door to get leads, you want to keep following up with them.

**One of the best ways that I've found to get people to read my book, aside from making sure that it has a hook and all of that good stuff, is to ask people for reviews.** You can do this in so many different ways. Something that I do, for people that are on my email list, is what I call a "review drive" every six months or so. Basically, I'll go to them and ask them, "Hey, I need reviews for these specific books. If you've had a chance to read them, can you post something by this date?" Just try to get people to do this because when you do that they either say to themselves, "I read that book, but I never got around to reviewing it, but I'm more than happy to review it now," or, "I need to read that now."

In non-fiction, it's very important for readers to get a result from your book. They may give you five stars and then be like, "I haven't tried anything in this yet, but it was really good." That's still a great review, but it's not quite what you are looking for. You want people to say something more like, "I read the book six months ago, and I have now done this, and this, and this because of it, and it has been working out!" Sometimes I get reviews like this when I do a review drive, but there are also people that are like, "I haven't quite gotten through that," but my message still reminds them and gives them a deadline to read the book and review it. This has really helped to increase my reviews.

On my growth hacking series, for example, most of those books have over 100 reviews, and they've been out for more than a year. I do get some organic reviews, but a lot of that is because I'm asking my list specifically to review my books and giving them a deadline, like, "I need these reviews by this date because of [blank]." It could be because I'm having a \$0.99 sale and want to have fresh reviews. You can give any reason, really, but that's something that I do pretty regularly.

## Do You Offer Your Customers Any Incentive for Giving You an Honest Review?

**You aren't allowed to offer incentives, but one thing that I do is say something like, "In order to be on our launch team for a new book, we need to see that you reviewed a previous book."** So, sometimes with an upcoming book, I'll send out a message like, "Okay, I'm going to

send out review copies on this date for the launch team. If you would like to be part of this team, send a link to one of your reviews on one of the other books in the series to this email address. Then we can approve you for the launch team, but you have to be on the launch team by this date to get a review copy of the next book.”

Another thing is to distinguish specifically whether you are giving someone a review copy or a free copy. I think that distinction is important. If you are giving them a review copy, they know it's in exchange for a review, and they know that they are voluntarily reviewing it. You definitely need to be cautious and make sure that you are staying within the terms of service on Amazon, but there are things that you can do to increase the number of reviews you have.

## What Else Do I Need to Know?

We can talk about the last couple of stages. They kind of start to blend together, in terms of tactics. So, you have them reading, and you know that because you just got the review about it. That's Stage #7. Stages #8, #9, and #10 are fan, true fan, and evangelists. **Just because someone reads your book doesn't mean that they are necessarily a fan of your work.** To get them to be a fan, you'll definitely want to get them to read multiple books in your series. That's a really big one. Then they'll become a fan of the series.

**You'll want to start asking them to share stuff on social media.** Taking that action does make a person more of a fan. Asking for a review is another big part of this. The act of putting five stars next to your book, and then writing something about it, that's an action that a fan takes, not one that a reader takes. I think the best way to describe this next step is that you are asking people to take these actions. As they take this series of actions, they become more and more of a fan.

**A true fan, I would say, is someone that buys everything that you put out.** You've got to stay focused on what your brand is, and you've got to make sure that you are zeroed in on who your audience is. If you are all over the place, and you've got all of these different products, people are never going to graduate to that true fan level. Another aspect of this is having a community built around your products. That could be a Facebook group or whatever, but there's something interesting about this that a lot of authors don't know. When someone reads your book, that has value on its own, right? Well, when someone reads your book and talks to other people about it, the value of your book blows up.

When this happens, you haven't really done anything differently. Basically, you've just facilitated a conversation around your book. By doing that, you are allowing each person to connect with other people, and the value of your book becomes much higher. My favorite example of this is the Harry Potter series because the books are great on their own, but probably 60-70% of the value of that series, and of being a reader of that series, is that you have a community of people who love it. That community has created so much more.

Movies, merchandises, and a theme park have come about as a result of this, and even muggles have become a part of our culture because of this series. You have this shared culture with

others, and that is a massive part of the value of the Harry Potter series. It's critical to have true fans, and that's the kind of value that your true fans are getting from having a community and culture built around your books.

Finally, you have your evangelists. A lot of times people have fans but they don't activate them. The way to activate them is to give them something that they can give to others. It could be that you send your top 100 fans five copies of your book each, which is expensive, but imagine what you can get out of that. I'm really talking about fiction right now, but this could work really well for non-fiction too.

You can just imagine the swelling of emotion that would surround your fans getting those books for free and being able to find four of their friends who they could share the excitement of your book with. This would work especially well with a series because a person would get the first book, but then they would go off and buy books 2-7, or whatever, and then you would make your money back and more. Then they are more likely to tell other people. So, it's having those conversations that I believe take place mostly offline, and not as much online, but having those opportunities for people to say like, "Hey, I love this! You should check it out."

## What Should I Focus on Most in My Marketing?

I guess that I would say getting the sale is probably the most important. **You can't have fans without sales.** One thing that authors don't study, and often don't realize is incredibly important to book marketing, is the concepts of word of mouth and virality. Like I said earlier, about 85-90% of books are sold through word of mouth. I worked at a word of mouth marketing company, so that's why it's on my mind a lot of the time when I'm creating stuff. You should definitely study things like Jonah Berger's [Contagious](#), and my friend, Yu-kai Chou, wrote a book called [Actionable Gamification](#), which is this awesome book about how startups do gamification. He even goes over things like how Candy Crush gamifies and how companies become a viral hit because of this.

There are lots of other books too. Like, there's one called [Word of Mouth Marketing](#) by Andy Sernovitz. There's another one called [Brains on Fire](#), which is also by a word of mouth marketing company. There are so many books that cover word of mouth marketing, and I think that they are worth reading and that they will change your perception on how you create your book to begin with. A lot of marketing is baked into the book, at the end of the day, and as you learn more about marketing, you'll be able to write more marketable stuff.

## Connecting with Monica

The best way to get in touch with me is through my blog, [ProseOnFire.com](#). If you want to check out my Growth Hacking for Storytellers series, it's at [ProseOnFire.com/ghfs](#). That will take you directly to Amazon, where you can see all of the books in the series. [Get Your Book](#)



[Selling](#) is out, and it's at [ProseOnFire.com/booksales](http://ProseOnFire.com/booksales). Everything that we've been talking about, related to the 10 Stages of Audience, is covered in my book. Go check it out. It will help you to brush up on your marketing. I promise that the 10 stages are easy and fun, and once you start to learn about them, no matter how introverted you are or how much of an artist you are, I think you'll feel a lot more comfortable with marketing your book.

## Resources

[Get Your Book Selling](#)

[ProseOnFire.com](http://ProseOnFire.com)

[Gotta Read It!: Five Simple Steps to a Fiction Pitch that Sells](#)

[How to Write a Sizzling Synopsis](#)

[Write to Market](#)

[Contagious](#)

[Actionable Gamification](#)

[Word of Mouth Marketing](#)

[Brains on Fire](#)

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