

What Every Author Should Know About Amazon Optimization Rhonda Robinson

The original title for this handout was *Everything Authors Need to know about Amazon*. A little pretentious? Perhaps. After all, there are entire courses trying to live up to that title.

The truth is you don't have to know everything about Amazon to succeed. However, as an author, you need to know just exactly what Amazon is, what your book entails, who will buy it, and why.

Does that sound over simplistic? On the surface it well may. Nonetheless, too many authors I meet do not realize they don't know the answers.

Amazon is a search engine.

Unlike Google, which searches the web, it only searches its own property. A search engine is a bot. It is programed to serve searchers (read potential buyers) what they are looking for. Think of a tiny robot butler with a platter. When you enter its master's domain you are immediately offered goodies it thinks you might like, based on your searching history.

When the visitor types in the search bar, the bot pulls up what it thinks you are looking for. As you continue to narrow it down, you get closer to what you are looking for. The bot searches and returns with more offerings.

The only way your potential readers will find your books, is for you to put the information on the butler's (bot) platter.

What your book truly is.

In answering this question authors tend to think in industry terms. Fiction, non-fiction, devotional, bible study, but that is not always what a reader is going to look for. Those terms are too broad. While they may be accurate, are they precise? Bots need precise.

This is where your keywords are vital.

Dig deep into the book. If fiction, what other genres would describe your story? For example: History, Romance, Science, Dystopian etc. List all that could apply.

What are the strongest emotions you hope to invoke in your reader with this book? List them all. What is the setting for your story? Time period?

If non-fiction, is there a theme to your book? If so, what is it? For example: The power of the Holy Spirit.

What are the needs your book addresses? Grief support, divorce advice? What is the promise your book hopes to fulfill? A couple examples: leading to salvation or a healthy lifestyle.

When you think along these lines, you uncover what you have to offer your reader. Which brings us to the next question.

Who is your reader?

As authors, we tend to focus the majority of our time on the content of our book. But the secret of success content marketers enjoy is the amount of focus they place on the needs of the reader.

What are the needs of your reader? Again, go deep. What are they afraid of? What are the questions they whisper to God at night? Who do they hope to become?

If you can answer these questions, you can fill the platter with your offerings to someone who is looking for you, but they don't yet know your name or what you write. What they do know, is what they need.

Once you have the answers to these questions, you can break them down into short phrases for keywords and nail more precise categories.

Amazon gives you a platform. You have a page to write the description of your book, where you can speak to the heart of your reader, using the keywords that both reader and bot understand. Amazon also gives you opportunity to submit keywords. If you are self-published, you can change and add to these after publication.

If you are traditionally published, I recommend that you don't leave it up to your publisher. Give your publisher the best tools to work with. After all, no one knows the message God gave you better than you.

Some sources credit Amazon with as much a 70 percent of all book sales. You don't have to know everything about Amazon, but you do need to fill the platter with your books.

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