

THE BOOK LAUNCH JOURNAL:

**A PEEK INTO MY CRAZY LEADING UP TO THE
RELEASE OF MY FIRST BOOK PROJECT**

INTRODUCTION

Fear is a part of releasing your creativity into the world. They co-exist.

I have worked with over 100 authors from brand new ones releasing their first book, to authors that have multiple bestsellers on their resume. I've gotten to see behind-the-scenes on what really goes on. And fear always plays a part.

When I launched my first book, *Your First 1000 Copies: The Step-by-Step Guide to Marketing Your Book*, one of my clients convinced me to keep a journal throughout the process. I tried to capture both my emotions around the launch along with the todo list I was desperately trying to finish in time.

Looking back now, there are parts I'm proud of and parts I'm embarrassed of, but I do feel like I captured a snapshot of the anxiety, excitement, fear and hope that goes into the release of something new into the world.

Also, keep in mind that this is an unedited journal that I'm showing to you with only a couple changes so it would make sense. Otherwise, I left in all the grammar and spelling mistakes as-is.

My goal with sharing these journal entries with you is that it will help you feel normal. And help you finish. When the anxiety comes and the lizard brain tries to tell you to trash the whole project, you'll remember that you're not alone. Every author feels this at some point.

Over the following pages, as you get a glimpse into my crazy, I hope you can see a little of yourself in there too and that it will help you finish that writing project and put it out into the world.

- Tim

JUNE 9, 2013

18 DAYS TO LAUNCH

Gene Kim (one of my clients) said I should be keeping a journal of the book launch process so here goes.

Editing

At this point I'm 2/3s of the way through the editing process with Matt Gartland of Winning Edits.

Overall the editing has gone very smoothly. Matt has given a ton of insightful comments and feedback and rewritten a large part of the book to make much more sense.

The way that he suggested doing the edit was cutting the book into the 1/3s. On the second 1/3 that he edited he came across a section of the book that he had to do a lot of rework on. His note made me think that he wanted me to rewrite the section because it didn't make sense plus write additional material around that section to make it flow better.

I, of course, immediately went into a tailspin. "My book makes no sense." "People are going to hate it." "Why did I do this at all?" "I could delete everything and just stop now!"

After talking to him, it wasn't a big deal. he just had to rewrite that section more than normal and his note was meant to make sure I read over it carefully before approving it.

It's been amazing through all of this how quickly I go into an emotional free fall on stuff.

When a good friend gave me 8 pages of notes on the book that I needed to change/fix it took me 3 weeks before I could work up the emotional fortitude to rewrite the sections and fix everything.

When I hit this heavy, repetitive editing stage it felt like dumping a puzzle out, putting my nose to the table and then trying to put it together. Everything was blurry, I wasn't sure if what I was doing was making it better or worse and I completely lost site of the full picture.

I had to rely completely on other people's feedback which was extremely scary and not fun.

Picking a title and cover

Picking a title for me has been a weird, unemotional part of the process. The cover is pretty much the same.

I know people make split second decisions on the book based on the title, subtitle and cover so all I care about is it gets people to buy the book.

I started by coming up with as many different ideas as possible. I also tapped a bunch of people to get their ideas. Then, from there, I ran all of the ideas through Pickfu to find winners. The one that I finally landed on wasn't my favorite but it won over and over so that's what I'm going with.

Cover is similar idea but harder to iterate on. I basically wanted it to look cool and be easy to read. I think Lauren (my fulltime designer at Out:think) did a good job on that too.

JUNE 10, 2013
17 DAYS TO LAUNCH

Finishing up the editing

I got the final edits back from Matt Gartland on Wednesday which was interesting... It put me on the path to actually going out and getting blurbs.

Getting blurbs

This was hard. I give this advice so flippantly to clients and then when I go to do it myself it's really hard emotionally. I rewrite the emails a ton. Hesitate. Put them off. Send a couple and then stop. I got yes's across the board, but even that made me feel bad because I don't know the motives for why they're doing it. Do they want to? Do they feel obligated? Do they feel bad saying 'no'?

What a painful part of the process.

What we're working on now

I've lined up Hugh Howey's guy ([Polgarus Studio](#)) to do the conversion to MOBI and ePUB. He's charging me \$50 to turn it around in 3 days. What a flipping' steal

- Getting the book layout done. I sent the first batch to Todd Sattersten and he gave me back some changes so we're having to work those in now. This part has me the most stressed because I want printed copies by WDS on July 5th. I'm offering the guy an extra 50% on his rate if he turns the entire book around by this coming Sunday
- Working on the website collateral still. almost done. I'm down to the last few that I've been putting off :)

Facebook

Today I posted the first thing publicly about the book... I put Hugh Howey's blurb about it and the response was the biggest I've got on Facebook about anything. So far 35+ likes and 20+ comments. It made me feel worse. What happens when these people that know me, like me, respect me, etc buy

my book, read it and realize I'm a fraud?

JUNE 11, 2013

16 DAYS TO LAUNCH

I always wondered what this dichotomy that my clients always dealt with was all about. On one hand they wanted to sell a lot of books but on the other hand they were terrified of having anyone read it.

I now understand.

Yesterday as people continued to "like" my Facebook update about the book, I got more and more terrified. It was nice when the book was this private thing I was working on that only a dozen or so people knew about. Now that it's time to actually start inviting people to buy it, I'm terrified.

I want to be the author that sells a lot of copies of his book without having any individual buy and read it. The dichotomy is now understood.

Jill helped me last night work through some of this... This book is about other people. I wrote it so I could share what I've learned with more people than my handful of clients. I

worked hard on it, put my best stuff into the book and it'll just have to be my offering and let the chips fall where they may.

I just finished up the final final edits on the manuscript and shipped them off to Matt to get final approval. My interior designer is working hard to have it done by Sunday so I can get some drafts printed from CreateSpace. I've also got my ebook conversion guy lined up and should have that done by the first of the week too. My launch date of the 27th won't be a problem for the (digital) book but it'll be cutting it close for the print book. We'll see how it goes.

Today I'm working on finishing up all the bonus material that I reference in the book. I really hate when you go to a link in a book and the material isn't there and it just says "coming soon" or something so I'm making sure that doesn't happen with this one.

Sent the first book announcement out to my email list... here's a good use of time:

- Constantly reloading the MailChimp stats page
- Obsessing over every single unsubscribe

JUNE 12, 2013

15 DAYS TO LAUNCH

Yesterday I sent out the first announcement about the book to the mailing list. It resulted in an obsessive reloading of the MailChimp stats and obsessing over every unsubscriber.

It was hard when a couple names popped through that I recognized. Suddenly the 20 great responses from readers didn't matter and those got in my head. It's much easier to tell your clients that people unsubscribing doesn't matter and it's actually a good thing. Different going through it myself.

This, I feel, will be a recurring theme. It's easier to talk someone else off the ledge.

The results were good though. Lot's of downloads of the introduction. Lot's of great emails from readers. I'm focusing on that part instead of the handful of outliers (especially the one person that emailed me and said since I asked for feedback I should have sent a better excerpt and he didn't

even finish it).

On a recommendation from Jill I started reading -- actually listening to since I'm hooked on Audible -- *Daring Greatly*. I think it will be a good companion for the next few weeks.

Today I'm putting together a video for tomorrow's email to the list and continuing to finish off the book bonus material.

We're putting the final touches on the cover now that I have Hugh Howey's blurb and a finalized sub-title. I should have the final .MOBI (Kindle) version from the guy doing the conversion by middle of next week. The interior design/layout will be done on Sunday and I can order a proof copy from CreateSpace then.

So far getting the ebook for sale by the 27th shouldn't be a problem. the print is going to be cutting it close. We're going to have to get it right on the second try. The big drop dead date is WDS. I want to have a bunch of copies to give away while I'm there.

JUNE 13, 2013

14 DAYS TO LAUNCH

This whole self-publishing thing is riddled with unknown unknowns.

This makes it really hard to be confident about anything.

Today I was looking over the final proof of the full cover of the book. Lauren did a great job and the design looks great but then I looked at the spine of the book then looked at my bookshelf and looked back and realized that the wording on the spine was (facing the) wrong (way). Not a big deal to fix, but I'm surprised I caught it... not something non-book design people would necessarily know to look for.

So what else have we missed?

JUNE 17, 2013

10 DAYS TO LAUNCH

The last 4 years of my career have been quite the roller coaster. Just in the last six months I've worked with almost a dozen nyt bestselling authors. I had five clients on the nyt list at the same time. I also ran the entire campaign for two different authors that debuted them both at #2 on the nyt list.

Those, to me, are marked achievements.

Here's what doesn't seem like near as big a deal...

Self-publishing a book about what I do.

Yet everyone in my life - old high school friends, my parents, my in-laws, my aunt-in-law, people at the gym, people at church, etc - are making a really big deal about this book. Even though I had mentioned to her before I was working on a book, my mom was a little hurt that she read about it coming out on Facebook.

To me, this is just my job. If I was publishing a novel or, well I don't know, something besides a book about my job, it would seem like a bigger deal. But this book just seemed like the next step in my career so I did it. Not a big deal. And definitely not my biggest achievement... especially since we have no idea if/how it's going to sell.

But I'm seriously having to ward off my mother-in-law from setting up a book signing at the local indy book shop.

It's a little strange. I think it's because it's the most tangible thing I've done in a career that pretty much everyone in my life doesn't quite understand. And they all keep asking for a copy. And I'm like "why do you want to read it? are you coming out with a book soon?"

So I'm trying to be polite and accept the praise, but it's a little weird for sure.

The book interior design is 99.8% done. He's fixing a few things before, cross your fingers, I send off for a proof copy tonight.

the book is also going to the ebook conversion guy today so should have that back by Thursday. A week before I launch!

I've sent out a couple emails to the list so far and gotten great feedback. I really like doing the videos so I'm going to keep those up.

Thankfully a lot of my anxiety has gone down. I feel like the trains already moving so I just gotta keep shoveling the coal to get it there.

JUNE 18, 2013

9 DAYS TO LAUNCH

Last night I got the interior design back from Ben. He did a fantastic job! It took a couple rounds of submitting it to createspace and tweaking some things, but he got back to me with the changes within 20 minutes each time. Couldn't be happier. As soon as I'm done with this entry I'll be ordering proofs. I'm sending proofs to myself, Lauren (my designer) and Todd Sattersten (book guru extraordinaire) to look over.

Ok I stopped writing and went ahead and ordered the proofs. The bummer is I can only put one order in at a time so I shipped myself 5 copies (should be here Friday) and I will turn around and send copies to Lauren and Todd who both live in Portland.

I downloaded the digital proof and everything looks pretty good. I found a couple little errors but I noted them and figure we'll hit them all at the same time once I have the book in hand. I'm sure I'll have to make changes once I go through it with a

fine tooth comb.

This was really exciting! Even though it's not a perfect version, I'll have the first physical copies in my hand on Friday! crazy times.

More todos getting done today. I sent the ebook off for conversion last night and heard back from the guy this morning. He says he has everything he needs and I'll have the book back in 3 days, so that should be Friday as well. I'm also sending the digital proof to Matt (the editor) to do a final read through. I talked to Dan Heath yesterday about the book and he had found a couple small typos, but otherwise thought it was ready to go.

If everything lines up, I think I might have the digital AND print available next Thursday... we'll see.

Surprisingly the oh-dear-god-what-have-i-done feelings are gone this week. I'm mostly excited and less scared about the whole thing.

I just turned off unsubscribe notices on MailChimp. It just hurts too damn much, especially when I recognize the name...

Let's add something else to the mix... looks like I'll be recording the audiobook sometime this week or next with Chris Wygal. Now I gotta figure out the ACX system.

JUNE 19, 2013

8 DAYS TO LAUNCH

Not a lot to report today. Both ebook and print proofs will be back to me Friday along with any final edits once Matt (my editor) does a final review of the digital print proof.

Joseph (my developer) is building out the book site today. Should be ready for content tomorrow.

I've caught a cold so it's everything I can do to just get normal work done. Had to cancel the audiobook recording tomorrow because I'm way too congested.

One thing I've failed to do in the past is stop long enough to celebrate my "wins" so next Thursday, launch day, I've blocked it out and am not taking any calls. I'm bringing in some adult beverages to the office and Joseph and I are going to spend a good chunk of the day celebrating the book finally being out in the world!

JUNE 20, 2013

7 DAYS TO LAUNCH

Got a good night's rest last night and feel much better today. Still too congested to record the audiobook or a new video for the email list today so I guess it'll be written instead of spoken.

I just finished writing the draft of the script for the book trailer. We're looking to record it sometime in the next week and then be ready by the middle of July. I've got a great guy working on it that does fantastic work. I'm really excited about this part!

Today is finishing up the website and moving all of the book resources into the live site so all the links embedded in the book actually work! I'm also making final decisions on the bonuses I'm giving to people from my list that buy the book. Trying not to go overboard but do a couple cool things that will hopefully tip fence-sitters over to the buy side of the yard.

One week until launch day! It's on!

I think the most fun thing about doing my own launch is that I can do whatever I want. With every client there is give and take, which I expect and enjoy. They know their platform and readers better than I do so not all of my ideas are good ones.

But with this launch, if I want to try something a little crazier or out there, I can just do it and see what happens. fun times.

JUNE 23, 2013

4 DAYS TO LAUNCH

Thursday evening I got the proofs from CreateSpace - a day early.

Candace was out for the evening so I left them sitting on the counter until she got home and could witness the revealing.

It was really surreal holding the book in my hand and looking at the cover and seeing my name.

Overall the book looked really great. There's a few tweaks to the cover I want to make and I found a few errors in the book that I'm getting the layout designer to redo for me. Otherwise, it's ready to go. I'm planning on putting it up for sale on Thursday along with the ebook.

I also had a bunch of text changes for the Mobi version as well. He charged me a little extra because we had so many changes, but I'm still getting the entire Mobi and epub conversion done in 5 days for \$75. Not too shabby. It looks great too.

So tomorrow starts the business week for my launch week. Thankfully most of the big stuff is done so there shouldn't be too much last minute stuff to do. I'm still working out how many emails I want to send to promote this week. Right now the plan is to send one on Tuesday and then a launch email on Thursday and another on Friday. Then next week I'll continue sending a couple emails and then transition into twice a month.

I was talking to a buddy about the book last week and he made a joke that I couldn't believe I had missed yet. When I told him the title of the book, he paused for a second and said "Well I hope you sell at least a thousand of them."

Good one.

I responded with "Or the second printing will be retitled as *Your First 262 Copies*".

I feel pretty confident I can move 1000 copies in the first month. My goal for the rest of the year is 5,000

copies. It's a big goal but would be great if I could hit it.

Overall I'm still feeling pretty calm about it. The book is done. It's the best I could possibly make it and I feel confident that it's going to help the authors that read it.

JUNE 25, 2013

2 DAYS TO LAUNCH

Two days.

Two friggin' days till the book is launched.

This seems crazy.

Thankfully all of the final stuff is done for the book to be for sale. Kindle file, check. Interior design, check. Cover, mostly check (waiting on one more blurb that I was promised would show up today).

All of the links in the book are working and up, so the book is 100% complete and ready to roll.

Today I'm finishing up the bonuses I'm giving to people that buy on the email list. I'm also finishing off the whole bonus delivery system. I've now built this a half dozen times so it's pretty straight forward.

Overall, it's a great time. I feel confident about the book and confident about the launch. It's a nice

place to be where I can say "welp, at this point I've done all I can do." and just let it roll.

JUNE 26, 2013

1 DAY TO LAUNCH

Holy moly, tomorrow is the day! I'm going to ask people to pull out their money and lay it down for a copy of my book.

I'm really excited about this! The fear and anxiety is mostly gone and I'm just going through my checklists and todos to get everything done.

The Kindle version is actually already live on Amazon which is very surreal. If you search "Tim Grahl" on Amazon, something actually pops up!

The race is on to get the print version up for sale by tomorrow too. I've got a couple last tweaks to the cover and interior that should be done around noon today so I can submit the final version and make it for sale. It's going to be cutting it close!

I'm finishing up the last of the bonus material today. I shouldn't have any trouble getting that done.

Then tomorrow is the launch! I'm doing an email this afternoon announcing a webinar and giving two excerpts away. Then tomorrow I'm sending an email first thing and then doing a webinar at 2pm ET.

I think the feeling I'm having more than anything right now is gratitude. I'm just so thankful for where I am today and to all the people that have been a part of getting me to this point. While this book isn't the biggest deal in my career and is just the next step in what I'm doing with Out:think, it's also a nice sign post to make me stop, be grateful and enjoy where I'm at in life.

Tomorrow is the day! Woohoo!!!!

a few hours later...

I'm dying... this is me dying...

The final blurb didn't come in so we had to rejigger the cover for that. Not a biggy. But then Lauren went through the interior layout and found

a couple things she wants changed so we're getting those fixed with Ben.

This book needs to be submitted to CreateSpace now! I really want the print book available tomorrow and this needs to be done.

Ahhhhh!

JUNE 27, 2013 LAUNCH DAY!

Well here it is. Launch day.

I got in this morning a little after 7am to finish up some last minute details and get everything setup and ready to roll. I just sent out the email to the list.

This morning will be spent tying off some loose ends and taking it slow. I'm going to lunch at 11:30, enjoying some adult beverages with Joseph after than and then doing the webinar at 2pm.

The first person to put something on social media about the book was Charlie Hoehn, which was pretty cool

I'm feeling simultaneous emotions of excitement and wanting to vomit.

I'm also giving myself permission to obsessively reload the stats page on EVERYTHING.

I'm sure I'll be updating this entry throughout the day.

I promised myself I wouldn't cry.

What a day! It's now almost 7pm ET. I couldn't be happier with how the day has gone.

As I write this I'm currently ranked #1 in the Marketing category on Kindle. I'm currently outranking *The Tipping Point*. That's pretty cool.

I'm not sure how many copies I've sold as I won't see the final numbers until tomorrow but the ranking is looking good.

I did a webinar at 2pm ET which was a lot of fun. Had more people than ever before logged in and had a lot of great questions. Also had a couple people say the webinar convinced them and they bought it.

It's also been neat to see the support of so many people for the project. Todd sent an email to his list just

about my book. Lots of people sharing on Facebook and Twitter, etc.

Very happy with how the day went!

JULY 1, 2013

4 DAYS AFTER LAUNCH

The last few days have been nuts.

My original goal for the book was to sell 250 copies in the first 7 days.

As of a few hours ago I was at 448 sales! So crazy!

Sunday was weird because I noticed in the morning that my ranking was starting to spike again and it ended up going even higher than Thursday. I ended up at #889 over all and #13 in all Business & Investing. Couldn't believe it!

I've had lots of emails coming in from readers and I've tried to answer all of them.

I've had 4 reviews on Amazon so far, all 5 stars. Two of the reviewers were people I knew but two others were people I didn't, which was nice.

Overall, I've had a lot of fun with this launch. I've enjoyed emailing readers. Had fun on Thursday's webinar.

Checked my ranking obsessively. I tried to really enjoy just getting this out into the world.

Now the "real" work begins!

Today begins my "shoe leather" campaign. A couple years ago I was having a discussion with Dan Pink about book marketing and how he made his first book successful and he just said "shoe leather". Pounding the pavement. Responding to every email. Following up on every lead. etc etc.

So today starts my "shoe leather" campaign for Your First 1000 Copies.

This morning I sent an email to everyone that purchased the book on Thursday and Friday to encourage them to leave an Amazon review. I'd really like to break the 25 reviews mark soon.

I'm also beginning my outreach campaign. Since the book is self-published with no goal of hitting a bestseller list, I decided to split the launch and have more of a long term plan. Plus now I can take the early

success of the book and hopefully flip that into some good coverage on other blogs and websites.

So emails are going out to different people hoping they'll cover the book in some way and emails are going out to other people, mostly past clients, that I want to send a copy of the book to. All of this is happening on an abbreviated week between July 4th and heading out to WDS on July 5th

Good times!

JULY 2, 2013

5 DAYS AFTER LAUNCH

Today is the first day I'm back to normal. I'm not obsessively checking stats, ranking, etc. I'm burnin' through todos and getting client calls done.

Today was also the first review from an established author outside of my network. Scott Berkun, who I knew of before this but don't know personally, left an amazon review and then wrote a blog post review:

<http://scottberkun.com/2013/book-review-your-first-1000-copies-a-guide-to-marketing-books/>

That was really cool to see an established author speak so highly of the book. Your friends and colleagues will either say "yeah it's awesome!" or just not saying anything. But once you get outside of that it's the worry of what other people will say and from what I've seen Scott doesn't pull punches when he speaks up so it was a really satisfying review.

I was working on an email to get out to the list today but I'm pausing it until tomorrow. Trying to figure out what should go in it.

I'm really really looking forward to WDS this weekend. I'll get to hand deliver copies of the book to a lot of friends along with take a nice break from work for a few days.

FINAL WORDS

As I write this, it's been four weeks since the launch of *Your First 1000 Copies*. I've broken through all my initial sales goals for the book and the reviews have been very positive. Most exciting has been the emails from readers thanking me for writing the book and sharing what they've learned and how they're going to use the ideas to be more successful.

Now, when I read back through my journal notes and see that at one point I just wanted to delete the whole thing and call it quits, it makes me sad that I almost made that decision but relieved I was able to push through.

Again, my hope in releasing this is to help you feel like you're not alone when all of that fear and anxiety hits. This is part of the writing process. Push through it. Release your work into the world.

- Tim

TWO THINGS TO DO

First, make sure you sign up for my email list at outthinkgroup.com. I'll immediately send you a free 30 day course on building your author platform.

Second, pick up a copy of *Your First 1000 Copies: The Step-by-Step Guide to Marketing Your Book*. See the results of this crazy journal!