

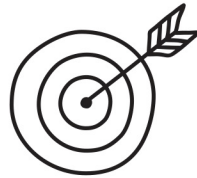
The 80/20 Rule states that 20% of your effort produces 80% of your end results. Failure to focus on the core 20% will produce no results.

**PRODUCTIVITY**, **CRAFT**, and **MARKETING** are the core 20%. All three are vital to your success; none is more important than the other. Each of these elements act as a multiplier; they're not additive.  $10 + 10 + 10$  doesn't equal 30;  $10 \times 10 \times 10 = 1000$ .

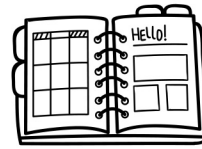
You must be strong in all three areas to maximize your chances of success.



## PRODUCTIVITY



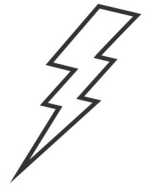
CORE OBJECTIVE



PLAN



DAILY HABITS



ENERGY



MARKET RESEARCH



CONSISTENT PRACTICE

## CRAFT

## MARKETING



PRO COVERS



BLURBS



NEWSLETTER

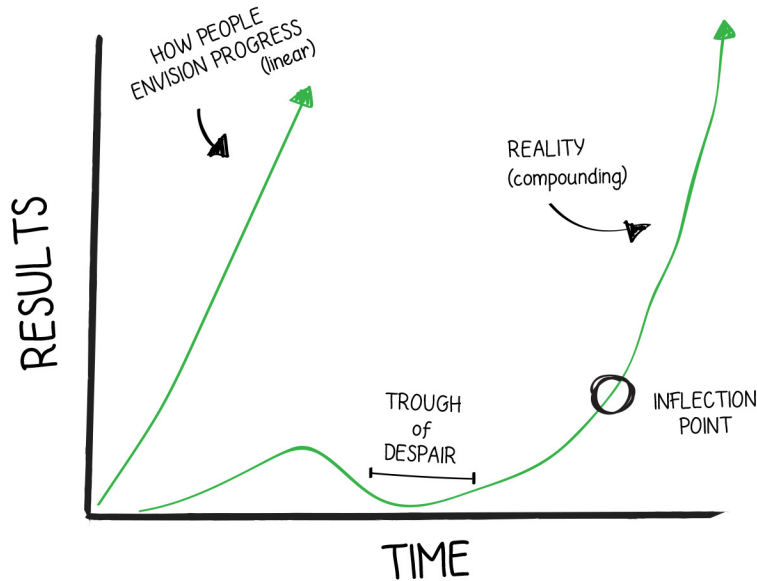


TRAFFIC

"We don't rise to the level of our **EXPECTATIONS**,  
we fall to the level of our **TRAINING**."

- Archilochus

# PRODUCTIVITY



Compound interest applies to everything from money to newsletter subscribers to skill acquisition.

**Get 1% better per week; 1% per week compounded over 5 years is a 13x increase.**

Initial progress is modest—until you hit critical mass (an inflection point), which people mistakenly call “overnight success.”

## THE FIVE STEP SYSTEM

### 1 IDENTIFY A GENERAL VISION/DESTINATION

This is what you'd like your life to be long-term. Where do you want to end up? And what do you want the road there to look like?

### 2 REVERSE ENGINEER A PLAN

Working backwards from that destination, break it into smaller milestones and daily keystone habits that push just at the edge of your current abilities.

### 3 BUILD KEYSTONE HABITS

All habits follow a trigger – behavior – reward pattern. By testing triggers and rewards, we can change old habits and construct new ones.

- ➡ Routines are chains of habits performed back-to-back.
- ➡ To ensure the neural grooves remain uncorrupted by noise and burn in faster, you want to perform a habit the same way, in the same order daily or multiple times a day.
- ➡ The triggers and rewards are the most critical parts of habit building.
- ➡ Habits that impact your energy/focus will often have the biggest immediate impact: sleep, exercise, diet, meditation.

### 4 INTRODUCE HARD DEADLINES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### 5 TWEAK AND OPTIMIZE BY KEEPING RECORDS

Check off each day you perform your keystone habits. Form if-then plans (*if I get an email, then I will wait until after I'm finished writing*; *if there are donuts at the office, then I will get a glass of water instead*) for common obstacles throwing off your adherence. For habits you're not maintaining, analyze the triggers/rewards and whether you actually want to add this behavior to your regimen. Assess whether a habit or routine is getting you closer to your destination.



## MARKET RESEARCH

**Writing to market** means actively writing your book's story and designing its packaging to fit a specific sub-genre's expectations. This may sound like a wildly new Internet-age concept. But it's really just **writing commercial fiction to a preexisting audience**. This has been dubbed "writing to market" in the indie community, but it's long been known simply as writing "genre fiction."

**Market research** is all about learning your genre's **tropes** and **expectations** so that you understand what makes a thriller different than, say, a romance.

## CONSISTENT PRACTICE

These are the five components critical to writing compelling stories:

- 1 **CHARACTER**
- 2 **PLOT**
- 3 **SETTING**
- 4 **SCENE & STORY STRUCTURE**
- 5 **DIALOGUE**



Some might add theme, voice, or style to this list. I wouldn't argue, but I will caution that **genre fiction is primarily about telling engaging stories**; the prettiest style in the world won't save you if your characters and plot are terrible. However, the inverse isn't true; if your plot and characters are compelling, but your style is unspectacular, readers will generally overlook that shortcoming, since they'll be too busy turning the pages.

For the first few novels, it is possible to improve all of these skills at once. Often, however, once you've hit an intermediate level of proficiency, making significant strides requires specific focus on a single area. Thus, you might **consider practicing one component per novel** - say, your dialogue - and honing that sub-skill throughout the production of that book.

This does not mean ignoring the other areas, merely being content with allowing those skills to remain at the same level for the time being. **Often you'll find that improving one area dramatically will lift the others as well**, however; more compelling dialogue creates more engaging characters, and also moves the plot along at a faster clip, for example.

# MARKETING

## THE ULTIMATE BOOK MARKETING FORMULA

MARKET RESEARCH + 3 TRAFFIC SOURCES + PRO COVERS  
+ GREAT BLURBS + NEWSLETTER + 4-6 NOVELS PER YEAR

CONSISTENTLY FOR 3-5 YEARS



FULL-TIME AUTHOR

Your **author brand** (*e.g. pen name*) is an implicit promise to readers—e.g., snarky urban fantasy with a kick ass protagonist and strong character voice. Work hard to understand your strengths, and why readers buy your books—and then give them more in future volumes.

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The best **market research** is done before you write a word. Find an intersection between what you like to write—and can write well—and what your audience wants.

**MARKET RESEARCH**

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**TARGETED TRAFFIC**

Target your **promotional efforts** toward readers who like similar books. This ignites Amazon's automatic recommendations, which are critical for getting your book sticky.

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The **mailing list** is your most powerful marketing tool. Start building yours immediately via links in your books' front/back matter.

**NEWSLETTER**

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**COVERS AND BLURBS**

Critical weapons in your marketing arsenal. Get the cover and blurb right, and some outside traffic can vault your book to the top of the charts.

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Readers like series, and having multiple series books to sell will make all your marketing and advertising efforts far easier.

**WRITE A SERIES**

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**CONSISTENT PRODUCTION**

You can paper over most marketing deficiencies with volume (*e.g. a full-length novel a month*), provided your market research is on point. As production rises, however, fewer resources are available for marketing and craft. Find the balance that works for you and plays to your strengths; more novels does not necessarily mean more money.



# 80/20 CHECKLIST

## 1 PRODUCTION

☐ Write **1,000 words** a day.

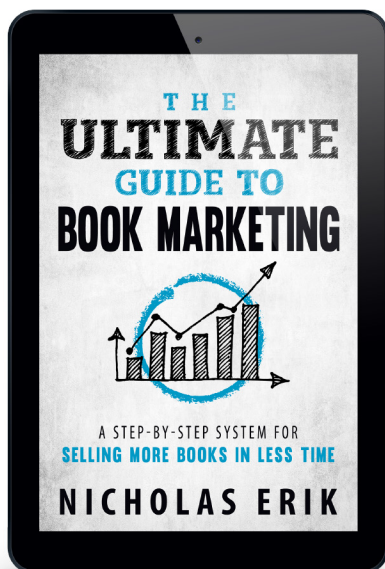
## 2 CRAFT

☐ Read **30 minutes** of fiction or craft books a day.

## 3 MARKETING

☐ Do **ONE** marketing related task a day.

Do this for six months, and you'll have three 60,000 word novels, have read 12+ books, and have your entire marketing infrastructure in place (with the chops to match). All in less than two hours a day.



Looking for a place to start with your daily marketing?

Check out the Ultimate Guide to Book Marketing at:  
**[nicholaserik.com/ultimate](http://nicholaserik.com/ultimate)**

OR the PPC Masterclass at:  
**[nicholaserik.com/ppc](http://nicholaserik.com/ppc)**