

Author Platform Rocket

Email Marketing for Authors: How To Transform Subscribers Into Buyers

Handout for Part 4: How to Create a Personal Reader Campaign (aka Drip Campaign) to Turn Your Subscribers into Devoted Fans

Use All of It, Some of It, or None of It

Keep in mind that this entire document is just one approach to the marketing of your books. You don't HAVE to do everything I'm laying out before you. The plan I'm about to share is something I have done with my own books and mailing list (Arial Burnz) and it has worked very well for me on many levels. The two most important elements I've derived from this method is...

1. I've built very devoted fans and fun relationships with the people on my list
2. I'm starting to pay my bills with this method!

My goal is to provide enough money from the sales of my books so I can support my family.

And I know that personal goal is one I share with many other authors.

So it's up to you if you wish to implement all, some or none of what I'm detailing. At least you'll have the information at your disposal and you can use at your leisure. :D

The Point of the Drip Campaign

Remember that the point of the entire drip campaign is to slowly feed all of your books to your new subscribers as they join your list. BUT we also suggest the content be something your readers will *want* to keep receiving, so sending them a string of buy-my-book ads doesn't accomplish the goal of bringing in steady, reliable income.

Let's keep things in perspective, too – readers are NOT your friends. They are your **customers**. Though we touch them on a very emotional and visceral level with our stories, we have to remember that at the end of the day, they are customers. With that being said, remember their main reason for becoming involved with you at all is because of your books. You would be wise to keep it professional and stay focused on the books instead of sharing pictures of your kids, your spouse...your pets are probably okay, but keep it limited. We live in a strange world, so be careful! The safety of your family should come first and being private helps ensure they're protected.

We're suggesting that your drip campaign **give back** to your readers by giving them book-related freebies that continue to advertise your books in subtle ways with *branding* while giving them a value-added features and benefits to being a member of your list. As we mentioned in the last webinar, freebies about your books (e.g., graphics), freebies which demonstrate your writing abilities (e.g., short

stories), and exclusive content that will entice readers to want to dive into your books (e.g., character interviews). These are all things readers seem to enjoy and want because it's about them and the stories they love...YOUR stories.

How a Drip Campaign Creates a Steady Income

Some people have asked questions that lead me to believe they're not entirely clear on the concept of the drip campaign *timeline*, so I'll take a moment to clarify. A drip campaign is not just a series of emails that go out to your subscribers in a certain order. They are indeed that, but the timeline for the drip campaign is different for every subscriber who is added to your list. For example: Let's say you have three books in your backlist and you send four messages per book, sharing snippets, freebies and teasers and each message goes out one week apart. This gives you 12 weeks of emails, which go out once a week after a person is added to the workflow. So here's what it might look like...

Reader #1 joins your list on Monday and immediately receives Message #1 for your Reader Club campaign when she joins. Her timeline begins ticking the moment she signs up, so that means next Monday, she'll get Message #2. And if you have the messages going out one week after the previous message for the rest of the campaign, then Reader #1 will continue to get her messages automatically on Mondays until the drip campaign has run its course through all 12 messages.

Let's say **five weeks later** you participate in a Facebook party on a Wednesday and 50 people signed up for your Reader Club. All 50 of those readers will receive Message #1 as soon as they joined the workflow when they signed up. And all 50 of those readers will get Message #2 one week later, the next Wednesday...and so it will go.

At this point in time, **Reader #1** has received 5 messages because she is 5 weeks into her timeline. While she's getting notices about Book 2, your 50 new subscribers above are getting their welcome message and hearing about Book 1 for the first time.

Everyone who joins your list and is run through your drip campaigns will all be on different timelines...and this is the power of the drip campaign! Automatically, your books are being fed in order to a new person every time they join, which means the potential for sales is a continuous stream of advertising that creates a steady flow of income 365 days a year. And every new person starts at the beginning and you will never have to worry about them missing the messages you sent before they joined.

Overview of The Plan

BEFORE you can launch your Reader Club (aka drip campaign or Personal Reader Campaign), you need to come up with a detailed plan so you know what you need to create and setup on the back-end. It's more than just setting up a string of emails and turning on the switch!

The webinars are going to give you a very high-level view of what to do. I'll try to drill down into the smaller parts of this process during the sessions, but that's going to be difficult since we only have one hour to cover all the material in the webinars. So I thought you might benefit if I detailed everything here. Use this document to accompany the webinars.

No matter how many moving parts your plan may have, though, just remember to TAKE YOUR TIME. Take it slow and fight the inner urge to get everything up and running NOW! Your readers aren't going anywhere. Don't rush it! Take baby steps.

There is indeed a LOT of planning and work to be done, so we're going to take this in small, manageable chunks. Here's an overview of what you'll be doing...

1. Drafting a plan (outline)
2. Creating the content
3. Publishing the content
4. Creating the drip campaign, which links to some of the content
5. Informing your mailing list about the program for the first time
6. Turning the switch ON
7. Ongoing Maintenance - Letting it run, fixing as needed, and adding to it as you write more books and learn more about marketing.

Marketing any product today is a moving target with all the plethora of technologies and methodologies and social media platforms, but one thing seems to remain constant in the marketing world – building your audience (aka mailing list) and staying in touch with them. This is my method to do just that.

And there are **two types of messages** you'll be sending to your subscribers through the year:

- Automatic – Your Reader Club (aka drip campaign)
- Broadcast Campaigns – These are done manually and will be periodic newsletters – to share current events and news (e.g., when you're appearing at a convention or book signing, your latest releases, Facebook parties and online events, group sales with other authors, etc.)

This session focuses on the Reader Club, which creates a steady stream on income. The periodic newsletters help keep your relationship with your readers fresh and current, but we'll be exploring this latter topic in **Session 7 - How to Engage with Your Subscribers and NOT Sound Like a SPAM Bot** (Ideas for personalization and other automatic campaigns). Ready to start your drip campaign? Here we go!

Step 1: List Your Books

Though coming up with a long string of messages for your Reader Club might sound a little overwhelming, there's really a very simple approach: Just list your books. In fact, we absolutely recommend that almost every single message in your drip campaign promote your products. However, this plan we're outlining will show you how to do that without sounding like a string of buy-my-book ads. Our suggestion is to keep your Reader Club content related to your books and build out from there.

For now, just make a list of all the books you have PUBLISHED – we need something tangible, so don't worry about WIPs right now. We'll address future story plans later. Today, list ALL of your novels, short stories and novellas, AND in which format they are published. I'm going to use my own books as an example:

1. Midnight Conquest – Book 1
 - a. eBook
 - b. Print
 - c. Audiobook

2. Midnight Captive – Book 2
 - a. eBook
 - b. Print
 - c. Audiobook
3. Midnight Hunt – Book 3
 - a. eBook
 - b. Print
4. Midnight Eclipse – Book 4
 - a. eBook
 - b. Print
5. Frostbitten Hearts – Book 4.1 in the above series – novella (25k words)
 - a. eBook ONLY
6. Midnight Savior – Book 5
 - a. eBook
 - b. Print
7. One To Die For – short story – erotic horror (less than 10k words)
 - a. eBook ONLY
8. Hot Rod Haunting – short story – erotic horror (less than 10k words)
 - a. eBook ONLY

As much as we would *love* to talk about our WIPs, let's leave them out of the drip campaign. WIPs are great for your periodic newsletters and other campaigns (discussed later in the webinars).

Side Note of Encouragement

I have a fairly small backlist, but I know some authors have even less. Here's something to keep in mind if you're one of those authors: Deborah Harkness – the author of the *All Souls Trilogy* (you might know her better by the first book in her series – *Discovery of Witches*) only has THREE books on her backlist. IF you go to her Amazon page, it looks like she has a lot more. However, the German translations of her books and the celebratory releases of the *All Souls Trilogy* might make you think she has more titles. Two other books on her list are non-fiction. She is, after all, a history professor.

My point is, she has THREE novels.

And she is indeed making a *fine* living off of those three books.

DO NOT let a small backlist intimidate you into thinking you can't do this or stop you in your tracks. The difference between YOU and Deborah Harkness is the publisher helped build her audience. You're starting out as an indie author and you have a higher hill to climb...but it is certainly possible to climb that hill! People just need to *know* about your books and that's why you're building your mailing list – to spread the word and build your audience! You can dooooo eeeeeet!!

Step 2: Prioritize Your Books

Once your books are all listed, let's look at them as a whole. What we're trying to do is determine which books provide the best first impression to hook your new readers AND which ones we can use as marketing tools. There are a few things I want you to keep in mind when you're examining your books:

1. Which ones can become freebies for your list only? (nice exclusive incentives)

2. Which ones can be lead magnets? (GREAT for the EW Gift)
3. Which ones are the most popular or the least popular?
4. Which ones are your BEST work? Or which ones best represent your talent as an author?

If you have several series under your belt, those last two questions will be very helpful. But those first two questions might be a little unclear about what I'm trying to help you discover about your backlist. Let's continue to use my own list as an example. And as you examine your books on your list, make notes about your observations.

Backlist: Exclusive Freebies

My two short stories – erotic horror tales under 10k words – are perfect examples of books I can use that are exclusive freebies. I have tried very hard to sell those two short stories, but they're too short to pay 99¢ for if you compare a full-length novel or novellas going for the same price. And I haven't written enough of them to compile into an anthology. Plus, my audience is primarily paranormal romance readers and these stories DO NOT have happy endings. In fact, people die at the end. So there they sit, collecting virtual dust and dipping into the millions in rankings. The reviews are great, but short stories just don't sell unless you're a well-known author and readers are gobbling up anything you've ever written, including the notes you made about a WIP on a cocktail napkin. Yeah...I'm not there yet. And most of us aren't.

However, these erotic tales are very good stories that show off my skills as a writer because of the whiplash, twist endings. They show my versatility as a writer even if they aren't very popular. Don't take my word for it. Read the reviews on my Amazon page. But I don't let that get me down in the dumps! In fact, I'm using it to my advantage. These stories are GREAT freebies. Since I have them for a price online and I'm giving them away for free ONLY to the people who are on my mailing list, this makes those stories a little more special. So if you have some shorter works of fiction that aren't selling well, you might want to consider giving them away exclusively to your mailing list.

Do you have some short pieces of fiction like this already published? If not, you might want to consider writing a few and self-publishing them on *all* of the retailers (so you aren't locked into the whole KU exclusiveness), which can become excellent marketing tools for your talent. They can be related to your other books, or they can be completely unrelated like the stories mentioned here. These are not about making money. They're about adding value to your reader club.

Backlist: Lead Magnets

A lead magnet is what the marketing industry calls that first free sample to get your customers hooked on your products. For the giveaways, the EW (everybody wins) Gift falls into this category. What usually qualifies a book as a lead magnet is the first book in a series or a spin-off book from a series. Prequels make good lead magnets, too. And if you don't have either, a story that is unrelated to a series is fine as well – as long as you feel it leaves a good first impression with a brand new fan.

What makes a lead magnet different than the freebies mentioned in the previous section is those freebies are given out ONLY to your mailing list. The lead magnet is given out to anyone and everyone you can manage.

Lead Magnets are usually your main marketing tool.

For my list of books, that would be *Frostbitten Hearts*. It's a novella – which means I didn't slave over an entire in-depth storyline to create it, which makes it much easier for me to give it away for free. But don't get me wrong, I spent quality time developing a good story (or so my reviewers have said), but it's not quite as complex or layered as my main series. However, since it is a spin-off from my main series, it has the same voice in my writing style and it features some of the characters in my main series. For those fans who have read all the books in my series, I have tiny little tidbits – hidden treasures, if you will – that only a true fan would recognize and such treasures have opened up fun dialogues with my fans. But for those who are brand new to my series and writing style, this novella offers a great first impression for my writing style and tempts them to want to find out more about this world I've created...without leaving them hanging or getting lost. It is a stand-alone story and can be read independently of the series.

Do you have a book that sounds something like this? That might be a good lead magnet! Look at the book you've already designated as your EW Gift. Does it fit this description? If you don't, it is well worth your time to invest in creating one. In the meantime, the book you have as your EW gift I'm sure will do until you can create a new one...if you want to spend that time to work on a new piece.

Backlist: Most Popular vs. Less Popular

The books on your backlist that are more popular with your current readers – either they sell well and/or they have the most reviews – are a great way to put your best foot forward to your new subscribers. When they can read the string of reviews a book has and see how many other readers are enjoying the stories and the characters, it helps give them that extra push to make a purchase. So keep this in mind when prioritizing your backlist. Many authors want to put their latest releases in front of new people, but when the new subscribers check out the history of reviews...there are none because the books are brand new. I hear readers say all the time that reviews don't matter, but I also see many of their comments that say, "Yeah, I saw how many reviews it had, so I thought I check it out to see what the hype was about." Um...excuse me, Miss Reader, but you just said reviews DO matter because they influenced your purchase.

Books that are less popular or don't sell very well are good for freebies, but you should also try to examine why they aren't selling well or are getting mediocre (average star rating of 3 stars or less) reviews. In **Session 10**, we're going to explore this very topic – **How to Package Your Products** – so let's table that exploration until then. In the meantime, make your less popular books a lower priority in your backlist, as those will probably be further down the line of messages as it pertains to promoting them in your drip campaigns. Hopefully, by the time the readers get to those books in the drip campaign, they will have already read your best and will gobble up anything you write moving forward.

Backlist: BEST Work

This last examination of your books is more geared toward the author who has a larger backlist OR the author who has a backlist of stand-alone novels where the order in which they're read is irrelevant.

For example: I only have one series and I personally feel the last book I've written is my best because – as it is with most authors – the more we write, the better we get. Practice makes perfect. But it would be counterproductive for me to promote the last book in my series to my brand new subscribers. Even though each story in my series can be enjoyed as a stand-alone, the progression of my overarching storyline starts in Book 1 and moves chronologically through the series. Not only do readers *want* to

start at the beginning of a series, in my case they *should*. The series is best enjoyed from start to finish instead of jumping around.

Alternatively, Sherrilyn Kenyon's *Dark Hunter* series CAN be enjoyed by picking up any book, as all the stories are stand-alones and interdependent of each other even though they all take place in the same world. The chronology of the books is irrelevant to the series as a whole. IF your books are like this, then we recommend you NOT mention book numbers and only stick with the series title. Sherrilyn Kenyon's books all say, "A Dark Hunter Novel" with not a single mention of a number. Die-hard fans will do the research to find out which book came first OR what the chronological order the books fall into. In this case, she has all that information on her website. Many authors put this information on their product descriptions on Amazon at the end of the book blurb. "Though these books can be read out of order, for those fans interested in reading them chronologically, here's the lineup..." Or something similar.

How do your books compare? Do they all take place in the same world? Are they stand-alone novels, interdependent of each other? Or does the main storyline of the series start from the first book and move through the rest of the series in a certain order? If you write serials, the latter will definitely be the case.

However, keep in mind also that the series you are most know for or is the most popular with your readers might still be the best choice just because it has the most buzz or more people are talking about it. Even though you may have a brand new series that is written better than your older series, you might want to wait until you've generated more reviews before you present that series to new subscribers. You can always reorder your drip campaign later.

In **Session 8 – How to Build a Review Team** – we'll show you how you can use your mailing list to build up your reviews and better position your other books for promotion purposes and help generate some hype. Your Reader Club isn't written in stone and can always be changed.

If you write stand-alone novels OR you have more than one series, then prioritize your books where the best novels or series that shows the best of your writing abilities are promoted first in your drip campaign. First impressions are lasting impressions and a drip campaign is going to feed your list one book at a time to your new subscribers. Which one do you want them to read first? With everything taken into consideration above, which ones would make the most sense right now, working with what you have?

Step 3: Organize & Begin to Shape

Based on the above considerations we discussed in Step 2, let's revisit our list and the notes we may have made about our books so we can start thinking about content and how that content will promote our books. Again, I'll use my list as an example (notes are bolded to be easier to see):

1. Midnight Conquest – Book 1 – **Drip campaign should start here**
 - a. eBook
 - b. Print
 - c. Audiobook
2. Midnight Captive – Book 2
 - a. eBook
 - b. Print

- c. Audiobook
- 3. Midnight Hunt – Book 3
 - a. eBook
 - b. Print
- 4. Midnight Eclipse – Book 4
 - a. eBook
 - b. Print
- 5. Frostbitten Hearts – Book 4.1 in the above series – novella (25k words)
 - a. eBook ONLY
 - b. This will be my EW Gift and Lead Magnet**
- 6. Midnight Savior – Book 5
 - a. eBook
 - b. Print
- 7. One To Die For – short story – erotic horror (less than 10k words)
 - a. eBook ONLY
 - b. Use this as a freebie for members only**
- 8. Hot Rod Haunting – short story – erotic horror (less than 10k words)
 - a. eBook ONLY
 - b. Use this as a freebie for members only**

As you can see, I only have one series and it must be read in order, so I'm sticking with their original arrangement. No notes about which book is the best or which one should be read/introduced in a different order. I don't have much of a choice right now and feeding them from Book 1 through Book 5 is the best way to represent my series.

But I did make notes about my short stories and my novella. As I mentioned, my novella can be read independent of my series, so it makes a great lead magnet! Since my short stories have completely different writing styles and have nothing to do with my main series, they're going to make great freebies and exclusive content for my Reader Club. Also, we're going to start applying our list to what we might consider as content for each of the messages. Based on your list of books AND the various formats in which you've published your books, you could conceivably create one message per book and per format! At this point, we're only figuring out what we'll be featuring in each message AND how many messages we can line up.

So, below is my list that I have reordered based on which books are going to be introduced to my new subscribers, in the order they should be fed to them AND what format will be featured per message:

- 1. Frostbitten Hearts
 - a. eBook ONLY – **Lead magnet & EW Gift**
- 2. Midnight Conquest – Book 1 – **Drip campaign starts HERE**
 - a. eBook – Message #1
 - b. Print – Message #2
 - c. Audiobook – Message #3
- 3. Midnight Captive – Book 2
 - a. eBook – Message #4
 - b. Print – Message #5

- c. Audiobook – Message #6
- 4. Midnight Hunt – Book 3
 - a. eBook – Message #7
 - b. Print – Message #8
- 5. Midnight Eclipse – Book 4
 - a. eBook – Message #9
 - b. Print – Message #10
- 6. Midnight Savior – Book 5
 - a. eBook – Message #11
 - b. Print – Message #12
- 7. One To Die For – short story – erotic horror (less than 10k words)
 - a. eBook ONLY
 - b. FREEBIE for members only**
- 8. Hot Rod Haunting – short story – erotic horror (less than 10k words)
 - a. eBook ONLY
 - b. FREEBIE for members only**

Hrmmm...I'm not yet sure where to put those two short stories, so I'll leave them at the end for now. And though this first draft of my content outline for the drip campaign dictates which messages will be going out, it's still only a draft and subject to change. But it's beginning to take shape!

Let's get you caught up with me. Go ahead and do the same with your list:

1. Reorder your books based on how you'd like to introduce them to your readers
2. Put your lead magnet first
3. Move any freebies or exclusive content to the end of the list for now, like I have mine – just so you can isolate the order of the main portion of the drip campaign.

You don't have to put Message # at the end of each one. That was more of an illustration of how this particular example was beginning to pan out...but now you have an idea. So far, it looks like I'm spending at least two messages on each book. So far, so good!

Promotional Content

As I mentioned above, you want to be promoting a book in each and every one of your messages. So now that we know WHAT we're going to promote in each message. HOW we will promote our books is just as important because we don't want these turning into buy-my-books ads. We want to advertise our books in a way that introduces readers AND entices them to *want* to dive into those books and NOT feel like they're getting sales messages. As a recap, here are some of the suggestions we mentioned in **Sessions 3** of our webinar series:

1. **Book Cover & Blurb** – A great way to introduce each book in your backlist is the cover and the back of the book blurb. You should already have that, so there's content that's already done!
2. **Teaser Scenes** – We recommend you select or edit a scene down to 350 words or less to include as content. Don't forget to leave it with a cliffhanger – make them feel the pain of not knowing what will happen next! And be sure to include the cover again. They not only get a visual for the book you're promoting, but it increases the exposure of your book to them...BRANDING, BRANDING, BRANDING!

3. **Review Snippets** – Another way to entice readers is with impactful quotes from other readers. “WARNING: You’d better put time aside to read this boxed set because you will NOT want to put it down!” or “Get ready to binge! This series just gets better with each book!” are exciting quotes that encourage readers to want the same experience.
4. **Character Interviews** – These are fabulous tools for readers to meet your characters and entice them into reading your books! Show off your sexy alpha hero or your intelligent police detective by conducting an interview that will highlight their talents and the things readers – and you – love about your characters.

All of the above are fantastic ways to showcase your books without having to say, “BUY MY BOOK”! Let the content speak for itself! Just make sure you put a buy link at the end of the message.

Step 4: Freebies & Content

The plan is starting to come together! Now it’s time to give your readers some incentives to not only dive into your books, but add value to being a member. This is where your freebies come in!

I already have two freebies from my own backlist, so I’m off to a pretty good start! BUT I personally recommend giving your subscribes at least one new freebie every week or every time you send out a message in your drip campaign.

Hold on! Don’t let that scare you! ;)

Creating freebies in the way I’m suggesting is NOT going to be difficult and it won’t strain your pocketbook. I promise! In fact, this is the fun part of the plan! The kind of freebies I’m suggesting will also continue to put you and your books in front of your readers in a very subtle and even enjoyable way. Here are some options...

Graphics

As we discussed in the last webinar, you can easily create desktop wallpapers and smartphone backgrounds themed around your books. In **Session 5 - Effective Marketing Techniques & Tools that Will Increase Your Sales and Save You Money** – I’m going to show you exactly how you can create those graphics easily and very inexpensively with an online tool called [Canva](#). So we won’t cover procedures here. Just remember when you make images, include your website address, your author name, and the title of your book themed in the graphic – all of which is called BRANDING. This is how you still stay in front of your readers in subtle ways. [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the Google Drive folder I’ve created for authors, which contains templates and ideas. If you go into the “Samples” folder, you’ll see examples of desktop images I’ve created for my readers and some I’ve done for my best friend AJ Nuest, which promote her book, *Jezebel’s Wish*.

You could, realistically speaking, create one desktop wallpaper and one smartphone background for every single book on your backlist. But there are also other options you can do in addition to the wallpapers and backgrounds. And don’t let these two options limit you for graphics. Do your characters have tattoos in your series? What about a symbol or icon (like the school houses in Harry Potter) or a family crest? You can get really creative with graphics that are connected to your stories! Sherrilyn Kenyon’s Dark Hunters all have a tattoo on their bodies, marking the fatal wound where they were killed – the double-bow of Artemis – showing they are branded by the goddess and in servitude to her. Many of Kenyon’s fans have gotten the very same tattoo on their bodies, showing their love of and devotion

to her books and characters! Do YOU have a logo that could be created into a tattoo? What a dynamite graphic to share with your readers! (**Tip:** If you like this idea, you might want wait until later in your drip campaign to share a tattoo from your stories. Your fans have to be devoted enough to your books to want to mark their bodies for the rest of their lives, so wait until you've introduced most of your books and they've had the time to read them!)

Short Stories & Flash Fiction

Again, in **Session 3** we discussed how short stories and flash fiction are great ways of showing off your writing talents AND providing extra content and freebies for your Reader Club. We also gave you two suggestions on how you can create this short fiction if you didn't have any ready to edit: **5-Minute Writing Prompt Exercises** and **The Ray Bradbury Challenge**. Depending on how fast you can generate this content – or how motivated you are or aren't – you could also conceivably include a short fiction freebie for every single message going out.

Creating Content that Encourages Interaction

Between the graphics and the short fiction mentioned above, you could have a ton of content already, but we're going to throw other suggestions at you, which will increase your activity and interaction with your readers on Social Media.

For the automation of your drip campaign, remember you want to create content that is evergreen. A post on Facebook can indeed be a lasting discussion that can continue to be added to and commented on. We mentioned some ideas like sharing recipes – for food or drink – or research articles based on the research you did for your books. Example: If you write thrillers or CSI-type police procedurals, articles about crime scene investigations and research you did on such topics is great material for open discussions. “Did you know bugs are the most accurate way of determining the time of death of a body?” Ewww, but what a great topic for your readers to learn about and make comments! So create an article on your blog/website, include the first part of that article in one of your drip campaigns, and then link to it so readers can comment and share. (See [Session 3 Handout](#) for detailed instructions on creating a marketing connection between your drip campaign, your blog/website and your social media accounts.)

Additional Content Ideas

Of course we don't want everybody doing the same thing for their drip campaigns, so here are some ideas that will not only help you create additional content, but also let your personality shine!

- **Food & Recipes** – Do you love to include food in your novel storylines or do any of your characters own a restaurant? Give your readers cooking tips and recipes that tie into your stories. Are one of your characters a bartender? Share drink recipes as free content!
- **Facts & Research** – As mentioned previously, don't let all that research go to waste! Write articles on your blog about the research you may have done for your books. Example: One author I knew wrote a novel in World War II and during her research she learned that Monopoly games were used to smuggle tools into POW camps for prisoners to escape! The heroine of the story used that tactic to help the hero of the story break out of prison, so she wrote an article about what she learned about these Monopoly games and how many people actually escaped, then tied it into her book. The book and buy link were at the end of the article and helped generate a lot of continuing sales for her novel.

- **Your Personal Hobbies & Interests** – Are you a connoisseur of wines? Do you raise and breed Great Danes? Are you a die-hard Star Wars fan or are you a gamer? Do you collect tarot cards? Are you a crafty person or do a lot of DIY? Perhaps you're a painter or do wood burning or have fun with origami! Any hobby or interest you have can be shared with your readers by giving them a tip, linking them to an article you've written or sharing a project you've done. Bestselling YA author Julie Kagawa creates little figurines out of polymer clay and sells them on Etsy. What a great thing to include in her newsletter – a figurine featured in each message and a link to her Etsy store! And the more you can tie these hobbies into your stories, the better! If you write what you know, then surely some of your hobbies or interests have made their way into your stories. I'm a painter and so is my mother...and the main character of my books is also a painter and his works are key elements in my plots!

All of the above are great ways to generate content but also allows your readers to get to know you as a person. If you share your personal interests and even how they tie into your stories, you readers become emotionally invested in you and are that much more driven to buy your books.

Step 5: Flushing Out Your Plan

So far, we have books to frame the order and they provide us promotional content. We have freebies, articles and interviews as incentives. Now let's start putting some of that together in our outline. Here's what my list of books looks like with those ideas inserted into the plan. Additionally, I've tried to use the freebies to connect to the promotional content (notes below) AND I've included other ideas to encourage interaction and personalization. ALL messages will have a strong call to action (e.g., [CLICK HERE](#) to get a HOT Scottish Vampire in your hands now!) and a buy link to the book I'm promoting. I've also done a little rearranging in this second draft of the outline, which is going to happen as you continue to massage your plan.

1. **Frostbitten Hearts** – Lead magnet & EW Gift - Even though I use this for all my promotions and some people may have it already, I'm also ensuring everyone who joins my list organically has this book in case they didn't come to my list through a promotion.
 - a. Welcome Message
 - a. FREEBIE: link to *Frostbitten Hearts* eBook on InstaFreebie giveaway – with a note that says if they already have this eBook, more freebies are on the way!
 - b. INCENTIVE: I list the benefits that are included in my Reader Club (e.g., freebies, exclusive sneak peaks, members-only giveaways, etc.)
 - c. INTERACTION: I invite them to my Review Team and give them the link to a separate form for them to fill out. I also ask them to update their profiles to be sure their experience in the club is as personal as possible
 - i. First & Last name
 - ii. Birthday – so I can send them greetings on their special day
 - iii. Location – so I can notify them when I'll be in their area for conventions or book signings
2. **Midnight Conquest - Book 1**
 - a. Week 1
 - i. PROMO: Book cover and blurb of Book 1
 - ii. FREEBIE: Desktop Wallpaper from Book 1 – vampire masks and popular quote
 - b. Week 2

- i. FREEBIE: Desktop Wallpaper– *Broderick MacDougal in the Flesh* image and popular quote (I put this first in the message)
 - ii. PROMO: Character Interview with Series Hero: Broderick ([CLICK HERE](#) to see the interview). I put this after the desktop wallpaper because first they get to SEE the character I created in my wallpaper image, then they get to MEET him in the character interview. I ONLY put the first 200-300 words of the interview, leave it on a teasing cliffhanger, then link to the full character interview on my website with a strong call to action – “CLICK HERE to find out if Broderick wears boxers or briefs!”
- c. Week 3
 - i. PROMO: Book cover & sexy teaser scene from Book 1
 - ii. FREEBIE: *Mystery Shoppers* Flash Fiction – again, only the first 200-300 words and then a strong call to action to read the rest of the story on my site.
- d. Week 4
 - i. FREEBIE: Smart phone background images of Broderick in the Flesh (the smartphone background version of the desktop wallpaper I made for Week 2)
 - ii. PROMO: Audiobook version of Book 1 for those readers who might enjoy audiobooks, along with an enticing quote from one of the reviews: “Listening the narrator’s Broderick voice is like being dipped in chocolate and rolled around in cocoa powder!” Yes...that’s a real quote!

3. **Midnight Captive - Book 2**

- a. Week 5
 - i. PROMO: Book cover and blurb of Book 2
 - ii. INCENTIVE: Link to research article – How to Forge a Silver Blade
 - iii. FREEBIE: InstaFreebie link to *One to Die For* – I also caution my readers that this is meant for readers 18+, that it is officially classified as “dark fantasy” or “erotic horror” and that it doesn’t have a happy ending. Additionally, I included exciting review comments to soften the blow of the caution. Many readers have appreciated the warning and some have let me know they’ve passed on it because of the “horror” part. No problem! I still gave them a freebie. It’s up to them if they want to take it.
- b. Week 6
 - i. FREEBIE: “Sunset Over the North Sea” – Desktop Wallpaper with a lovely picture of a sunset over the North Sea, but it also includes a quote in the image, “Your smile is as radiant as a sunset over the North Sea”
 - ii. PROMO: Teaser scene from Book 2, which includes the quote used in the freebie above – nice tie-in to the freebie and the scene is left on a cliffhanger, with a buy link encouraging them to download to book to find out what happens next.
- c. Week 7
 - i. FREEBIE: Smartphone background version of the wallpaper in week 6 - Sunset over the North Sea
 - ii. PROMO: Character Interview with James (hero of Book 2) & Broderick (main hero of the series, also in Book 2)
- d. Week 8
 - i. FREEBIE & PROMO: Short story *Hot Rod Haunting* with link to InstaFreebie download – this is more of a promo of my writing versus a book in my series. Also a slight break from the promotion of the series.

- ii. INCENTIVE: the short story is loosely based on my own REAL ghost experience and gives links to information about the story setting - Bachelor's Grove: one of the most haunted places in Chicago, where I had the paranormal experience.
- iii. FREEBIE: *Seeing is Believing* Flash Fiction – since we were on the topic of ghosts, I included an extra freebie of a flash fiction piece I did for my Ray Bradbury Challenge.

I'm not going to keep boring you with my entire plan, but you can see a real example of how to implement the freebies and additional content to formulate your own Reader Club. And notice that I spend four weeks promoting each book. I did this for two reasons: 1) I didn't have a very large backlist and I wanted to keep my books in front of them for a long time, giving them time to read and explore; and 2) because I came up with so many freebie ideas, I wanted to stretch out the incentives/benefits of the club. So far, the feedback from my mailing list has been overwhelmingly positive and my list growing by leaps and bounds!

Your Turn!

Reorder the list of your books based on your notes about how you'll be using your books (e.g., lead magnets, freebies, which books come first, etc.). Then insert your freebies and additional content ideas. Remember, you don't have to know exactly what you'll do at this point OR even have them created. You could just put "Desktop wallpaper for book 1" and "5-min Writing Prompt exercise" without knowing exactly what images you'll use for the wallpaper or what the writing prompt will include. Placeholders will do while you create the plan!

Step 6: Getting to Work!

Now that you have a plan, you'll need to start creating the content. The upcoming webinars will have some demos on how to create the graphics and how to start drafting your plan inside your mailing list service. However, there are number of things you can do right now to get the ball rolling...

1. **Draft Your Campaign Messages** – Though I don't encourage you to go into your mailing list service at this point and start assembling your drip campaign messages, this is the perfect time to start drafting the content for your campaign. Use whatever writing tool you wish – MS Word, Scrivener, MS OneNote, whatever! Gather those teaser scenes and figure out where your cliffhangers will end. How many words are in the scene? Do you need to cut them down and create abridged versions? We recommend no more than 350 words per scene. How will you tie those freebies into the promotional content? Sometimes picking a scene or a quote will help you generate ideas for the images you can create – like my "Sunset over the North Sea" backgrounds I mentioned above. I picked the teaser scene first, then made an image to match it.
2. **Gather Images** – Once you have the above done, you'll be in a better place to decide what images you'd like to create. In Session 3, I gave you links to two resources – MightyDeals.com and DepositPhotos.com. Join the mailing list for Mighty Deals ASAP and keep an eye out for their Deposit Photos deal – 100 images for \$99 and 200 images for \$199. Also, go to DepositPhotos.com right now and create a free account with them so you can start collecting images for your free graphics. You don't have to buy them now. Just mark them as "favorite" and add them to "Lightboards", which is almost like creating a folder for a collection of images. As you browse through the images, look for scenes that remind you of your books, whether

they're beautiful country side landscapes, fantastical fantasy and sci-fi scenes or sexy encounters between couples (if you write steamy books). Mark them as "favorite" and put them into lightboards/folders named after the titles of your books. You could also create your free account with [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) and browse through their collection of FREE images.

3. **Pick Quotes** – Do you have favorite quotes from your books which you can include in your backgrounds? Have your readers told you about or quoted lines they loved from your stories in their reviews? Use those in your images and in your promo materials. Tip: Readers may have already been highlighting quotes they like from your books and you might not even know it! Visit your **Author Profile** on [GoodReads](https://www.goodreads.com) (what other people see, NOT your Author Dashboard) and scroll down to **Quotes by [Author Name]**. If a reader has highlighted or marked a quote from your books, you should see it here! If there are no quotes, this section might not be visible.
4. **Start Writing & Editing Short Fiction** – If you haven't done so already, start writing those 5-Minute Writing Prompt exercises and/or do the Ray Bradbury Challenge! You can do one of these per week to start building your content. AND if you're creating new content, how about trying writing prompts that might generate short scenes or short stories related to the worlds or characters already in your books? Example: One of the writing prompts I had was "Your character wakes up in a tent dressed in polka-dot pants and a midget strongman is looking at them...now write!" I started the scene from a totally new character, but put one of your own characters into the scene instead and see how it unfolds. Not only will your current fans get a kick out of the situation, but new readers will be intrigued...perhaps enough to open one of your books. OR you can start taking out those old short stories and start editing them. No matter what you do, post them on your blog so you can link back to them later in your drip campaign.
5. **Publish Articles on Your Blog** – If you haven't done so already, start creating those research articles and posting them on your blog. I created an interesting connection to the royal bloodline of the Scottish crown for the main heroine of my story and even included the information in a scene. However, because the scene dragged the storyline down with info, it was cut. PERFECT content for my blog! And now it can be content for my drip campaign.
6. **Character Interviews** - What about character interviews you've already done? I know many authors have done character interviews when they were blog guests or for blog tours and hops. Get those out, edit them and post them on your website! If you want to link back to the person who originally featured the interview, that's great! Linking to other websites on your blog helps increase traffic to your site.

Final Tips

Wait Until Session 6

Once you've drafted your materials and created them, you *can* start assembling your drip campaign inside your mailing list service. However, I'm going to say you *shouldn't* at this point. I want to discourage you from starting the assembly process until you've had the chance to see **Session 6 - How to Setup Your Personal Reader Campaign** – where I'll do an actual demo in MailChimp. There will be some tips and suggestions you'll want to know before you begin, otherwise you might end up having to redo all the hard work you did if you jumped ahead. So be patient! It's only two sessions away! You'll have plenty of things to do between now and then!

Take Your Time

As you can see, there is indeed a lot of work to be done! Materials need to be created, then posted on your website, the actual messages that will go into your drip campaign need to be drafted, and then you have to go through the task of setting it all up in your mailing list service. This is not a race! I know you may be anxious to put all of this into action as soon as possible because you want to start making money NOW! Heck, you wanted to start making money YESTERDAY! We get it! But wait.

How about this – Let’s compromise if you’re really in a rush to get your reader club turned on.

1. Wait until session 6.
2. Draft and completely flush out AT LEAST the first two months of your campaign.

If you plan out 8 weeks of messages and turn on the switch, you’ll have 8 weeks to come up with the next message in the series. If you can do one new message in the chain per week, you’ll always be 8 weeks ahead of the game.

And remember this: Once this is all set up, you will only have to tweak it here and there or continue to add new content as you write more books. For all intents and purposes, your drip campaign is a set-it-and-forget-it tool that will continue to make money for you while you’re writing!

Remember Your Enticing Subject Lines

Once you have the content of your campaign created, you’ll be in a better place to create those enticing and seductive subject lines that will encourage high open rates. Don’t forget what you’ve learned up until this point. We taught all that stuff so you can apply it. Don’t just have “Your Next Freebie” as your subject line. What is unique about the next message in the series? And keep it short so they can see the whole subject line in their email program on their devices! Examples based on the samples given in this handout:

- **CSI-type Article about Bugs and Determining Time of Death** – “How Bugs Solved a Murder” or “Bugs Told the Police the Time of Death” or “Bugs Can Talk? Well, Yeah!”
- **Sunset Over the North Sea Scene** – “What can YOU do with a silver tongue?!” or “5 Ways to Use a Silver Tongue” – Explanation: My heroine says to our sweet-talking hero, “Seems as if fencing school taught you more than how to wield a sword. Such a silver tongue you wield to coax a smile from me, Master James!” Of course, she turned and walked away before he could tell her what else he could coax from her with his tongue. CLIFFHANGER ENDING to the teaser scene. IF I used the “5 ways” subject line, I could pull 5 other things James indeed does with his tongue in the book. Not ALL of the ways are about sex! What do you think I am, a perv? Oh wait...I did confess that in the last session, didn’t I? *blushes*
- **Character Interview with Broderick** – “Boxers or Briefs? Inquiring Minds Want to Know!”

You get the idea, I hope. Remember to keep it specific enough to the content, but not too specific for those readers who haven’t yet read your books.

Questions?

Try as I might, I know I can’t be 100% effective in my communications. What sounds clear to me might be really confusing to you. No problem! If you have any questions about the ideas I’ve shared above, just email us at aprgiveaways@gmail.com and either I, Brenda or Jonny can answer your questions.

I hope you found this handout helpful and you're enjoying the webinars.

Thank you!!

Arial Burnz

Author of HOT Scottish Vampires

P.S. For some reason, the hyperlinks above are not working for everyone, so here are the raw links so you can copy and paste if you need to...

Canva – <http://canva.com>

Google Drive Folder with Photoshop Templates & Ideas:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B8ljxCAV3_wCQUJqZkhRMktTSHc

Session 3 Handout: <http://www.authorplatformrocket.com/session3handout>

Broderick MacDougal Interview (written in novel format): <http://www.arialburnz.com/reviews-and-press/interview-broderick-macdougal/>

Mighty Deals: <http://mightydeals.com>

Deposit Photos: <http://depositphotos.com>