



Six Simple Steps to

EFFECTIVE BOOK MARKET RESEARCH

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This is a companion guide for Mohawkmomma Studio's, Chapter 3 in the Book Publishing Options eCourse



01

Find Comparable Best-Selling Titles

Finding comparable titles, or “comps,” means you want to find similar books that are already published and selling well in your market. You want to find the bestselling books in your market so you can learn from them.

After you find comparable books in your market, you’re going to want to make a list in a program like Excel or Google Sheets that includes the book title and a link to that book’s Amazon page so you can easily keep track and do further research in the future.

Two Ways to Find Your Comparable Titles

- You can go to Amazon and search keywords related to the book you’re writing. So if you’re writing a vampire romance, you would go to Amazon.com and type in the keywords “vampire romance.” You’ll then find comparable books in the search results.
- You can use Amazon’s bestseller lists. Simply go to [Amazon’s Kindle Store Categories](#), find your genre, and drill down until you get to the most specific category you can.

The more specifically you can identify your niche or sub-genre, the more likely you are to be successful, because specific categories have less competition and more targeted readers.

If you want to save time, you can sign up for [Bestseller Ranking Pro](#), the proprietary web-based software developed by TCK Publishing. It helps you search Amazon’s 42,000+ bestseller categories in just a few minutes.



02

Analyze Bestselling Book Covers

Your book cover is a crucial piece of branding for your book. The more you can make your book cover look similar to other books in your category, the more likely your target readers are to click on your book and read your product page. This gets you one step closer to the sale.

This is where your list of comparable book titles comes in handy. You're going to look at the covers of the books on your list of comparatives.

What you'll notice is that a lot of these books have similar covers. That's not an accident. Book covers should be designed to get your readers to click on your book and buy it. The best book covers speak to your readers on an emotional or subconscious level.

For example, romance book covers often feature sexy images of male or female models while books about business success often feature images of money or lifestyles.

When you look at the book covers in your market, pay special attention to:

- The colors
- The fonts
- The images
- The size and placement of text on the book cover
- The emotion(s) that the cover makes you feel



02

Analyze Bestselling Book Covers

You want your book to look like it belongs in the category you put it in. If your romance book cover makes it look like a business book, or your self help cover looks depressing, you're not going to attract your ideal readers.

People buy books primarily based on emotion, so you have to make sure you understand who your readers are and which emotion(s) your cover should elicit in order to get them to pay attention and choose your book.

Book Market Research Tip: Never miss an opportunity to have an actual conversation with readers of your genre. You can learn so much from just talking to people about why they read the books they do.



03

Analyze Bestselling Book Titles

The title of your book is another crucial piece of the puzzle when it comes to marketing and selling your book.

The number one reason people buy books today is still word of mouth.

In order for a word-of-mouth sale to occur, a book title needs three things:

1. The book title has to be memorable.

The book title has to be easy for people to remember so they can easily recall it to tell their friends to buy it.

2. The book title has to be repeatable.

The book title should be understandable and easy to repeat in a conversation. You want to avoid confusing book titles as much as possible—being too clever can actually backfire because it can confuse potential readers. You want a book title that is easy to communicate.

3. The book title has to be searchable.

After you've created a book title that is memorable and repeatable, you need to make sure it is unique enough that it will rank in the search engines online.

The ideal book title is easy to remember, easy to understand when spoken, and easy to find online in search engines.



03

Analyze Bestselling Book Titles

Using Keywords in the Subtitle of Your Book

Another thing you're going to learn when you study the titles of other books titles is the keywords and key phrases they are using to attract the attention of your audience.

This is especially true for nonfiction books. A subtitle that clearly describes the benefit that your audience will receive from reading your book will help you sell.

You can also use your subtitle to stand out. If you're writing a book on investing and every book in your comparable list uses the words "low risk" in their subtitles, you don't want to use the exact same words in yours.

You want to stand out and be different. If you look just like every other book in your genre, people who don't know you aren't going to want to take a chance on your book.

Studying the book titles in your target market gives you an idea of where the gaps are so that you can craft a title that sets you apart from the crowd.



04

Study Other Book Descriptions

When you read the book descriptions of other books, you're looking for the keywords and key phrases they're using to sell their book to your potential customers.

You want to look at the keywords, key phrases, and concepts that jump out at you as you're reading book descriptions. After you read the book descriptions, model what works and avoid what doesn't work as you write the draft for your book description.

This is actually a great exercise to do before you write your book. Your book description needs to be short (less than 700 words) and yet must include enough information to get your reader to actually want to buy your book and start reading it right away.

If you can't clearly summarize your book in a well-written book description, you need to spend more time understanding who your audience is and what makes your book different from everything else out there.



05

Study Book Reviews in Your Market

Read the book reviews of your comparable books. This is how you're going to find out what people like about books in your genre, as well as what they don't like.

This is the most important step in the market research process. If you don't listen to your readers to find out what they love and don't love about other author's books, you're likely to make the same old mistakes others have made.

Have your notebook with you so you can jot down notes.

The more reviews you read, the more data you will have and the better you will understand your ideal readers.

If you half-ass this market research process, you'll miss out on important information that could make a huge difference in your sales.

As you read these reviews, you're going to find there are patterns to what people like and don't like. Pay attention to those patterns.

Knowing what your readers want allows you to edit your story based on what will serve your readers best. Most smart authors will end up making rewrites and edits to their book after going through this market research process. Reading reviews can help you identify gaps in the market that you can fill, allowing you to position your book uniquely in the marketplace.

The more unique your book is while still delivering a compelling message to readers, the more likely readers will be to actually buy your book.



06

Research Author Websites

After you have done the market research on Amazon, go and look at the websites of the authors you've been researching.

What are they doing on their website to market to their audience?

Do they:

- Have a blog?
- Have a podcast?
- Have a YouTube channel?
- Have an email list?
- Basically, is their website a part of why they're successful?

If you find an author with a very active website with tons of traffic, you should study their top blog posts and pages to see what kind of information they're posting resonates most with their audience.



Questions to Ask Yourself

Questions to Ask Yourself as You Go through the Market Research Process

As you go through your research process, you'll want to pay attention to some specific elements.

1. In which market or sub-genre does your book fit?

Get really clear on which market you're in. The more specifically you can define your market, the easier it will be to serve the needs of your audience and market to them.

2. Who is my ideal reader?

Have this question in the back of your mind as you're reading reviews. Get as much information as you can about who these reviewers are.

What is their age group?

Are they mostly men or women?

What kinds of careers do they have?

What do they value?

What are they afraid of?



Questions to Ask Yourself

Questions to Ask Yourself as You Go through the Market Research Process

3. What do my readers love?

What do your readers love about life in general?

What do your readers love about books in your market?

4. What do my readers dislike?

What do your readers dislike about the issues or problems they're facing?

What do your readers dislike about books in your market?

By understanding what your readers love and hate, you can better craft a book that meets their needs.

Now that you've gone through this market research process, start applying it, and you should see how you can make your brand, book and your message clear and appealing to your audience.



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