

# 2012 Digital Publishing Industry Report

How Online Entrepreneurs Are Using  
Digital Publishing to Grow Their Businesses

Presented by



Dear Online Entrepreneur,



Welcome to **The Digital Publishing Industry Report!** Digital Publishing is a “hot” topic and rightly so. People who read ebooks are buyers and are much more likely than printed content consumers to have purchased their most recent book, rather than borrowed it.

2011 saw an **explosion of ebook sales**, which rose an astounding 117% for publishers who report data to the Association of American Publishers. In the U.S. alone, 70 million avid readers buy 10 or

more books, paper or electronic, each year.

The phenomenal popularity of ebook reader platforms, especially Amazon’s Kindle and Kindle Fire models, Barnes and Noble’s Nook and Apple’s iPad tablet has undoubtedly fueled much of this growth.

In this 20 page report, you’ll get **valuable insights** into how online entrepreneurs are currently using digital publishing to market and grow their businesses and how they plan to use it in the future. You will want to take a close look at this report, as we reveal the “behind the scenes” **findings and important takeaways** from the data.



This report dives deeply into nearly every aspect of digital publishing and we are pleased to report that **more than 1000 of your fellow online**

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**entrepreneurs** (including coaches, consultants, trainers, speakers and other small business owners) took part in this ground-breaking study, providing information and insight you are unlikely to find anywhere else.

We sincerely hope you enjoy reading, as well as using this report. And, if you find value, **please let your business friends and colleagues know** about it as well by **clicking on the share buttons** in this report or by sending them directly to the download page at the following link:

[thefutureofink.com/digital-publishing-industry-report-2012](http://thefutureofink.com/digital-publishing-industry-report-2012)

Write on!



Ellen & Denise

Ellen Britt, PA, Ed.D.  
Denise Wakeman  
Founders, The Future of Ink

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# Executive Summary

This study surveyed **over 1000 online entrepreneurs** to attempt to understand how they are currently using and plan to use digital publishing to promote and grow their businesses. In the pages of this report, **you will discover:**

~ **The top 10 questions online entrepreneurs want answered:** We analyzed more than a thousand open-ended responses and we summarize all of the major questions that small business owners want answered.

~ **The benefits of digital publishing:** This section reveals all of the principal advantages online entrepreneurs are getting with their digital publishing activities.

~ **The top 3 used digital publishing/ecommerce platforms:** Discover which platforms are the most popular.

**Other analysis:** We look at exactly how much priority online entrepreneurs are giving to online publishing in the coming months. Plus, we look closely at the digital publishing experience level of our survey participants.

**How to get the most from this report:** Regardless if you are new to the world of digital publishing or you are a seasoned professional, you'll gain valuable insights from this report. If you are new, take some time to look at the many benefits of digital publishing and what the most popular publishing platforms are in use by your peers.

If you are a pro, compare yourself against other online entrepreneurs who are using digital publishing and see if you are getting the same benefits from publishing as they are.



You'll also want to pay close attention to the top 10 questions section, as this area is full of material that can help you develop instructional programs and courses.

## Major Findings

Here's a "fast-start" summary of our main findings:

~ **Online entrepreneurs place a high value on digital publishing:** A whopping 86% of survey participants indicated they are planning to publish a digital book in the next six months.

~ **Top ten questions small business owners want answered:** 58.8% percent of online entrepreneurs indicated determining how to get started with digital publishing and how to market digital content were the top digital publishing questions they want answered

~ **Top three benefits of digital publishing:** Generating business exposure (39%), getting an increase in traffic, subscribers and opt-ins (23%) and generating qualified leads (15%) were the top three benefits touted by online entrepreneurs who are currently using digital publishing as a marketing tool.

~ **Top three digital publishing/ecommerce platforms:** Amazon, BN.com and Smashwords are the most popular digital publishing/ecommerce platforms used by online entrepreneurs and in that order.

~ **The majority of online entrepreneurs in this survey have little to no experience with digital publishing:** 35% of respondents state they are just getting started and 28% say they have no experience at all but plan to publish an ebook soon.

The summary above is **just a sample** of what's in this report. On the following pages you will find charts and further description that will enhance your understand of the findings.



# Top 10 Digital Publishing Questions Online Entrepreneurs Want Answered

We asked, “What question about digital or traditional publishing do you most want answered?” A significant **756 participants** provided an open-ended response. We then categorized the answers into groups and ranked them below.

The top ten digital publishing questions entrepreneurs most want answered can be summarized by the following terms: getting started, marketing, formatting, publishing platforms, getting exposure, outsourcing, niche questions, writing, making money and selling my services (and in that order.)

Below is a more complete version of the digital publishing questions entrepreneurs most want answered:

## **#1: GETTING STARTED: How do I get started with digital publishing?**

The number one question entrepreneurs want answered is how they can quickly and easily get started publishing their content in digital form. A sampling of the questions included in this category include:

- ~ What is the best way to get started in digital publishing?
- ~ Where exactly do I start?
- ~ How do I turn my existing book into a digital report or ebook?
- ~ Is the move to digital publishing worth my time and effort?

## **#2 MARKETING: How do I market my ebooks?**

Online entrepreneurs want to know how to best market their digital content. Here are some of the questions related to this category:

- ~ How do I properly price my digital books?
- ~ How can I find out what will sell?



- ~ What are the best ways to promote my book and build my list?
- ~ How can I get more qualified traffic to my book offer?

### **#3 FORMATTING How do I properly format my digital books?**

Many online entrepreneurs are concerned, and rightly so, with proper formatting. Here are a few sample questions in this category:

- ~ How can I learn to format my digital content for all the different publishing platforms?
- ~ What security precautions should I take in formatting my book so my content is protected?
- ~ How do I put live links into my digital books?
- ~ What is the best software to use?

### **#4 PLATFORMS: Which publishing platforms should I use to publish my content?**

Many online entrepreneurs want to know how to choose which publishing platform to use. Here are some sample questions in this category:

- ~ Which digital publishing platform is best?
- ~ What are the best POD (print on demand) providers and should I consider publishing a POD book to go along with my digital version?
- ~ How do I go about comparing all of the various digital publishing platforms?
- ~ Why does formatting have to be so difficult (or does it?)

### **#5 WRITING: How do I get the knowledge that is in my head, out into an ebook?**

Many online entrepreneurs have concerns related to the actual writing of the book, whether digital or print. Here are some questions typical of this category:





- ~ How can I find the time to write when the editing and formatting process is so cumbersome?
- ~ How do I get the expertise I have in my head into an actual ebook?
- ~ How can I stay motivated to continue to write and produce content?
- ~ What is the best way to avoid overwhelm when it comes to digital publishing?

## **#6 EXPOSURE: How to I get more exposure and visibility for my digital books?**

Many online entrepreneurs are very concerned about getting maximum exposure and visibility for their digital books. Below are a few questions related to this category:

- ~ How do I get my ebook ranked in the bestseller lists on Amazon?
- ~ What are the best ways to get quality reviews for my digital book?
- ~ What steps can I take to make sure my ebook stands out in a crowded marketplace?
- ~ How can I effectively leverage the various distribution channels?

## **#7 OUTSOURCING: Where can I find trusted places to outsource work?**

Many online entrepreneurs want recommendations for places to outsource many of the tasks associated with digital publishing. Some representative questions in this category are as follows:

- ~ How much will it cost to outsource the formatting of my ebook?
- ~ Where can I find someone to design an attractive cover for my book?
- ~ Where can I find trusted people to do some of this work?
- ~ How can I find a good editor?



## **#8 NICHEs: How do I research the best niche to write about?**

Many online entrepreneurs had questions about researching and picking a niche. Some sample questions from this category are below:

- ~ How do I go about researching a good niche?
- ~ How do I know which niches will make me money?
- ~ What are "best practices" for developing topics in niche markets?
- ~ How do I know my niche is large enough to make writing an ebook worth my while?

## **#9 MAKING MONEY: Can I really make money with digital publishing?**

Naturally, many online entrepreneurs want to know how to make money selling their digital content. Some typical questions in this category are below:

- ~ Is it really possible to make money with digital publishing?
- ~ What is the fastest path to the cash?
- ~ What are some good business models for digital publishing?
- ~ What are the most profitable ways to publish an ebook online?

## **#10 SELLING SERVICES: How can I best market my services to people interested in digital publishing?**

In addition to questions directly related to digital publishing, some online entrepreneurs want to know how to sell their services to people interested in digital publishing. A sample of questions in this category is below:

- ~ How can I best market my editing skills to this audience?
- ~ How can I become a digital publisher?
- ~ What are the best ways to market my book coaching services?
- ~ How can I find work as a ghostwriter?



## Conclusions from Part One

58.8% percent of online entrepreneurs indicated “determining how to get started with digital publishing” and “how to market digital content” were the top digital publishing questions they want answered.

When you closely examine the above list, you can see **the quality of the questions** asked by online entrepreneurs.

The remainder of this report will explore in more depth exactly how online entrepreneurs are using digital publishing and how they plan to use it in the future.

**Now on to part two...**

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Future *of* **ink** presents  
the

***How You Can Profit from Digital Publishing:  
3 Simple Steps***

**Wednesday, September 5th, 2012 at 4 PM Eastern  
(3PM Central, 1PM Pacific)**

Join **Denise Wakeman** and **Ellen Britt** for this **live, FREE one-hour training webinar** as they pull back the curtain on the one thing people most want to know: "Is it really possible to make money with digital publishing?"

Denise and Ellen will outline a simple 3-step "**Fast Path to Cash**" with digital publishing for online entrepreneurs just like yourself.

Plus, they have a surprise announcement at the end of the webinar for all who attend (and no, they are NOT going to sell anything!)

**Don't miss this!**

**Just [click here](#) to reserve your seat...**

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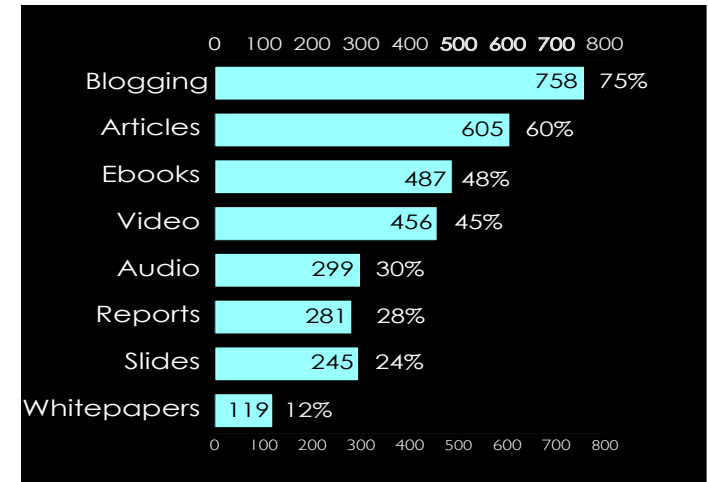


## Use of Digital Publishing

We asked three questions designed to find out the survey participant's current experience using both digital and physical content to market their businesses.

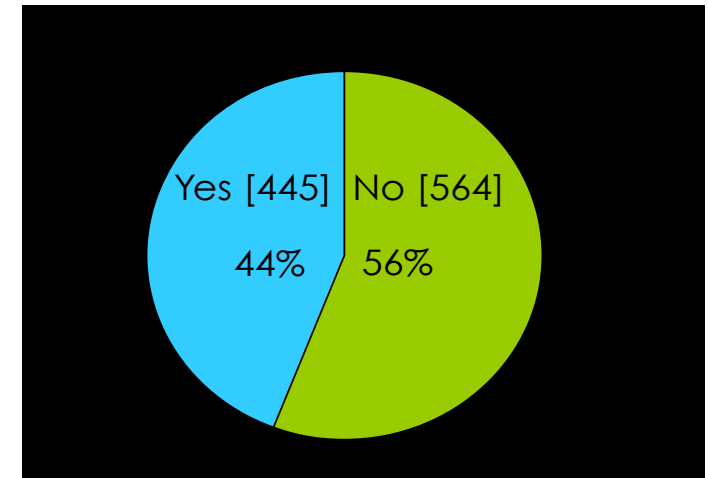
We first wanted to find out to what extent online entrepreneurs actually used the various forms of content marketing, such as blog posts, articles, reports, ebooks and so forth, to market their businesses.

Blogging won here with 75% of reporting they used blogging, with articles coming in a close second at 60%. Interestingly, ebooks were cited by slightly less than half (48%) as a current content marketing tactic.



## I have not yet had a digital book published

We then asked whether the respondent had a physical or digital book published as a business marketing tool and more than half the participants indicated they had neither.

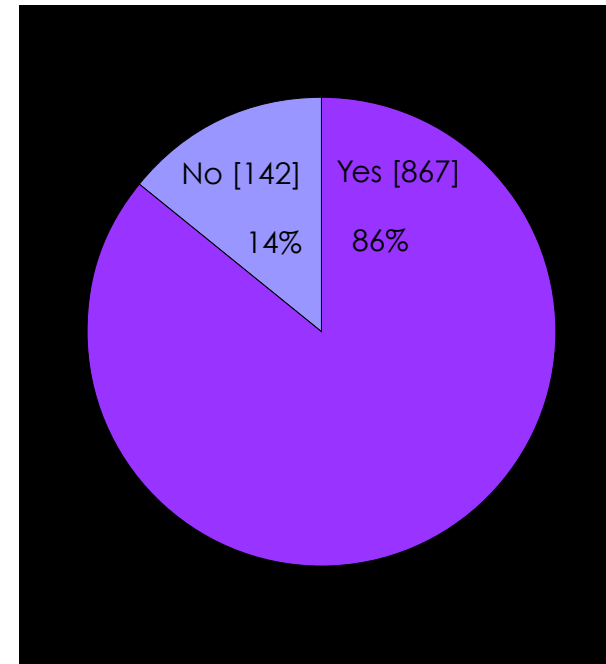


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## I plan on publishing a digital/physical book soon

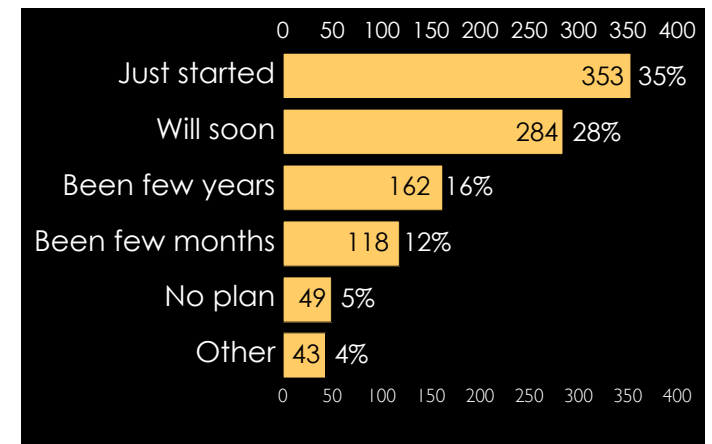
As a followup question, we wanted to know if our participants planned to publish a digital or physical book in the next six months. We got an overwhelming "yes" to this question, with a full 86% of all respondents stating that they were indeed planning to publish.



## I am just getting started

Next, we wanted to get a picture of our participants' experience level with digital publishing.

Over one third (35%) of our respondents indicated they are just getting started and another 28% indicated they have no experience but plan to publish an ebook soon. Only 5% stated they had no plans to publish an ebook.

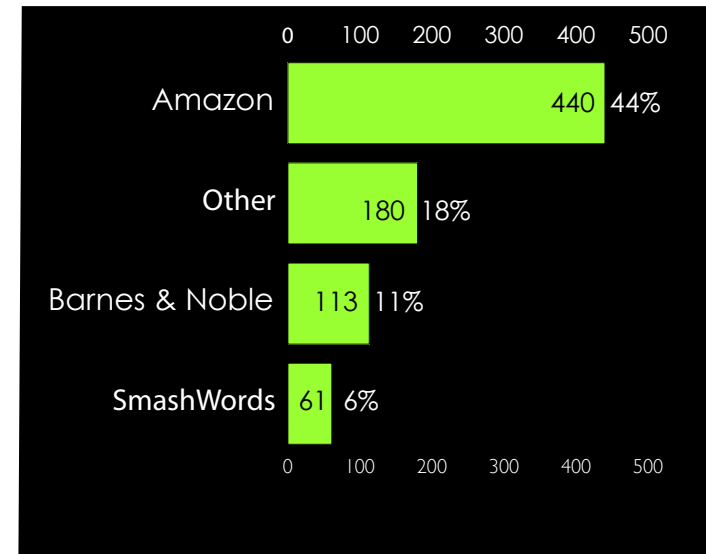


## Popular Publishing/Ecommerce Platforms

Of participants who have published books or other intellectual property, we asked what commerce platforms they used to sell their content.

Keeping in mind that respondents were able to select more than one answer, 44% of participants use Amazon, 11% use BN.com followed by 6% using SmashWords.

Amazon emerges as the key player in the online entrepreneur's choice of commerce sites used to sell content.

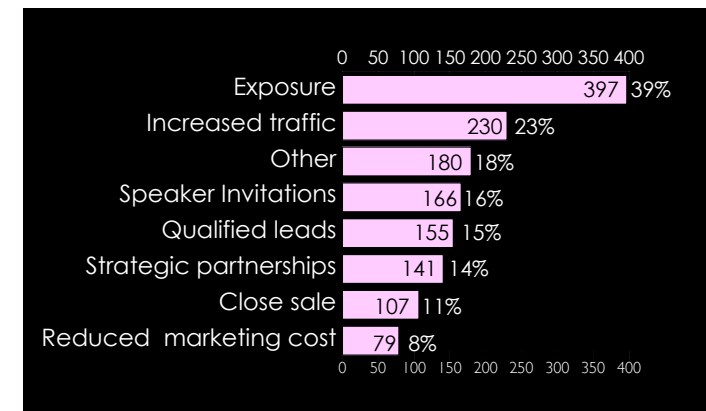


## Benefits of Digital Publishing

The top two benefits from digital publishing were: *generating exposure for the business (39%)* and *an increase in traffic, subscribers and opt-ins (23%)*.

Nearly equal in importance at 14 and 15% respectively were: *resulted in new strategic business partnerships or joint ventures* and *generated qualified leads*.

16% of participants indicated they had received invitations to speak as a result of publishing a book and 11% stated that having published helped them close a sale. Helping to establish credibility and expert status was frequently cited as an additional benefit of publishing.



## Survey Participant Demographics

We used a variety of channels to reach out to likely respondents for our survey. We each mailed our own email lists and used social media sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Google Plus.

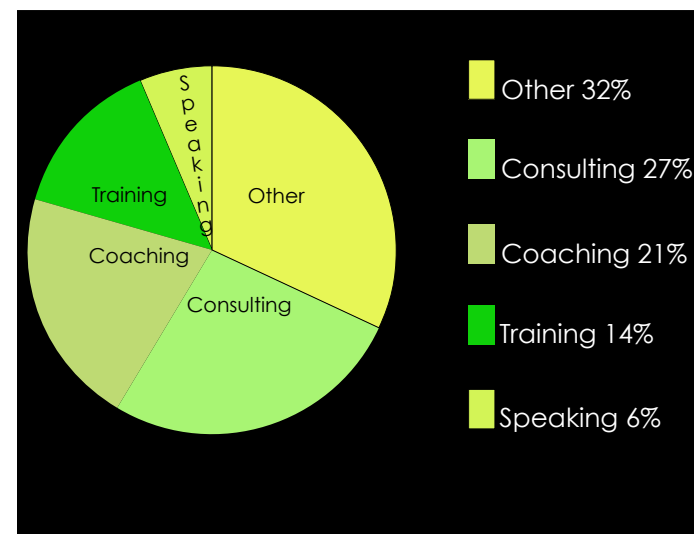
Also important in helping us to extend our reach were a few \*key partners who are influential in the industry and who helped us get the word out by emailing their lists as well as promoting the survey on social media.

We also asked survey participants themselves to help by providing them with social media tools to connect with their business colleagues and friends. The survey remained open for a total of 21 days, and we closed the survey with a final total of 1009 participants.

### Demographic breakdowns

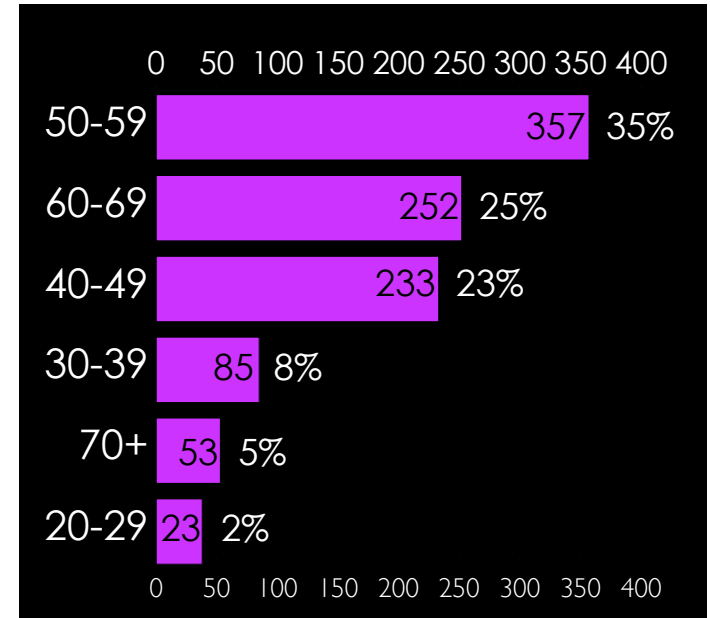
#### Survey respondents:

The largest single group who took the survey identify themselves as consultants (27%) followed closely by coaches (21%). A full 32% of survey participants checked the “other” option as their primary business and consists of publishers, artists, writers, sales people and teachers among others.



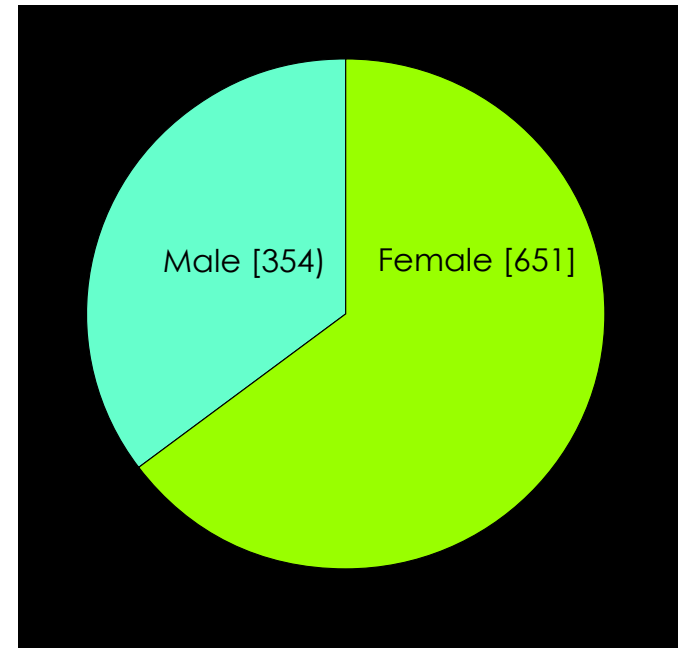
## Age of Participants

Most survey participants were between the ages of 40 to 69 (83%).  
The mean age was 53.52 years.



## Gender

Females outnumbered males in this survey, representing 65% of all participants.



## \*Acknowledgements

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the following **industry experts and colleagues** who helped us get the word out about the Digital Publishing Survey. Because of their generous help, we were able to reach many more participants, increasing the value of this survey to you, our readers:

Lou Bortone	<a href="http://www.LouBortone.com">www.LouBortone.com</a>
Kristen Eckstein	<a href="http://www.UltimateBookCoach.com">www.UltimateBookCoach.com</a>
Kathleen Gage	<a href="http://www.KathleenGage.com">www.KathleenGage.com</a>
Lori Gama	<a href="http://www.dagamawebstudio.com">www.dagamawebstudio.com</a>
Karen Greenstreet	<a href="http://www.PassionforBusiness.com">www.PassionforBusiness.com</a>
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Sandra Martini	<a href="http://www.SandraMartini.com">www.SandraMartini.com</a>
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Laura West	<a href="http://www.JoyfulBusiness.com">www.JoyfulBusiness.com</a>
Terri Z	<a href="http://www.solo-e.com">www.solo-e.com</a>

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Plus, we want to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Carol Brizzi, co-founder of Marketing Qi, for her expert design, layout and graphic work on this report.



## About Denise Wakeman and Ellen Britt

**Denise Wakeman** is an Online Visibility Expert and Founder of The Blog Squad. She works with service professionals and small business owners to leverage blogs for their businesses, as well as strategically use social media tools to boost online visibility to get more traffic, leads, customers and opportunities. Denise writes on two marketing blogs, is a co-author of bestselling books *Success Secrets of Social Media Superstars* and *Trust Your Heart: Transform Your Ideas Into Income*.

She frequently speaks at conferences about business blogging and how to gain expert status through social marketing. She has been quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Huffington Post*, *Newsday*, *Canada's National Post*, *FastCompany Online*, as well as many other online and offline publications. Denise was recently featured in the documentary film, *Women in Business 2.0*.

Connect with Denise on the web at <http://DeniseWakeman.com> or on Facebook: <http://fb.com/BlogSquad>



**Ellen Britt** is an award-winning Online Marketing Strategist, Amazon best-selling author and co-founder of Marketing Qi, where she teaches savvy women entrepreneurs (and a few cool men!) how to take their knowledge and expertise and transform it into Authentic Authority™. Ellen specializes in mentoring her clients to then claim and leverage their authority by presenting, packaging and delivering it to bring immense value to customers while getting extremely well paid for that knowledge.

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Drawing on her 22 years experience as a physician assistant in emergency medicine, Ellen has honed her interviewing skills to a fine edge and has had the opportunity to interview many of the most well known names in internet marketing and self-development. Her medical and academic training (a master's in psychology and a doctorate in biology) has also given her the gift of a precise, systematic way to analyze and solve business problems.

Connect with Ellen on the web at <http://MarketingQi.com/blog> or on Facebook at <http://fb.com/EllenBritt>

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