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THE **LOST** SECRETS

The *Dream* 100

RUSSELL BRUNSON

The Dream 100

*How to Find the 100 People Who Already Have
Your Dream Customers – and Build a Business
Nothing Can Shut Down*

By Russell Brunson

*With the foundational concept of the Dream 100
from Chet Holmes, author of The Ultimate Sales Machine*

Internal Training Resource | MarketingSecrets.ai

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The Dream 100 concept referenced throughout this book originates with Chet Holmes in his book *The Ultimate Sales Machine* (Portfolio, 2007). Additional frameworks referenced include Mark Joyner's Integration Marketing concepts from his book *Integration Marketing* (Wiley, 2009), and strategic marketing principles developed by Dan Kennedy over his multi-decade career in direct response marketing. Readers interested in the source material are encouraged to consult those works directly.

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INTRODUCTION

The Storm Is Coming

In my twenty years running direct-response businesses, I've watched the same cycle play out over and over again.

A platform explodes. Entrepreneurs flood in. People figure out how to make it work – Facebook ads, YouTube, Google, Instagram – and for a while it's the easiest money of their lives. Thousands of companies pop up. A few get huge.

Then the platform changes something. An algorithm tweak. A new policy. An iOS update. Ad costs go up. Conversion rates fall. And suddenly half the companies that depended on that platform are dead.

I've seen it with Google PPC. I've seen it with SEO, then the next SEO, then the next SEO update. I've seen the Facebook slap, and the next one, and the next one. Right now, as I'm writing this, one of my close friends just announced he's shutting down his company. The reason he gave: the iOS updates hit his ad costs too hard. He couldn't get profitable anymore.

Here's the question I asked a room of entrepreneurs at my last inner circle meeting: if all your ad accounts on every single platform got shut down today, could your business survive for at least a year based on everything you're doing right now?

About half the room raised their hands. The other half I'm a little nervous for.

This book is about making sure you're in the first half.

The Timeless Alternative

For the first thirteen or fourteen years I was in business – the first decade and a half – I never bought a single ad. Ever. Not one Facebook ad, not one Google ad, not one YouTube ad. And in that window, we built a company that did over ten million dollars in sales.

When Facebook ads got easy, I started running them. They were a gift. For a while, the whole direct-response industry jumped on them. But I never forgot the method that built

the business before the ads existed, because I knew the ads would eventually get harder. They always do.

What built the business was a concept I learned from one of my mentors, a man named Chet Holmes. He called it the Dream 100.

The Dream 100 is simple to state. Somewhere out there, your dream customers are already gathered together. Not scattered one by one across the internet – gathered, in groups, around specific people, on specific platforms, reading specific blogs, listening to specific podcasts. Your job as a marketer is not to go hunt them down one at a time through paid ads. Your job is to find the handful of people and places where they're already congregating, and then market to those places.

If you can figure out which 100 people have your dream customers already assembled, and you can either work your way in or buy your way in, you've solved the traffic problem. Permanently. For as long as those people keep their audiences, you have a way to reach your market that doesn't depend on a platform's algorithm not changing.

And here's what's crazy. Click Funnels is close to a billion dollars in lifetime sales.

Every single customer we have ever acquired traces back to a Dream 100 list I sat down and built before we launched. I've been teaching this principle for twenty years. I put it front and center in my book *Traffic Secrets*. And yet when I ask rooms full of entrepreneurs how many of them have actually built out their Dream 100, the number is usually a single-digit percentage.

That's what this book is going to fix. We're going to build yours together.

What This Book Teaches

This book has two parts.

Part One is the core Dream 100 framework. Where it came from, why it works, how to set up your Dream 100 board in a kanban tool like Trello, and how to build out each column platform by platform. Authors. Facebook groups and fan pages. Podcasts. Instagram influencers. YouTube channels. Email newsletters. Blogs. By the end of Part One, you'll have a living board of 100 people per column – a map of the entire known universe of your marketplace.

Part Two is what I call the Attention Transfer. This is the partnership layer that sits on top of the Dream 100. Once you know who your 100 people are in each column, what do you

actually *do* with that list? I'll walk you through the five levels of partnership I've used to build my business: affiliate programs with a recruitment funnel, integration marketing, co-branding, co-authoring books, and certification programs. Each one is a different way of transferring attention from somebody who has it to you, and each one becomes a traffic source that no platform can shut down.

By the end of the book, you should have two things: a Dream 100 board you can actually look at, and a game plan for which of the five partnership levels fits your business right now. That's the work.

THE STORM RULE

If all your ad accounts got shut down tomorrow and you couldn't survive a year, you're not a business owner. You're a platform's tenant. The Dream 100 is how you become the owner.

How to Read This Book

You can read this book two ways.

The first is cover to cover, once. Part One gives you the foundation – the principle, the stories, and the mechanics of building the board. Part Two then shows you what to do with the board once it exists. If you read in order, everything compounds.

The second way is as a reference while you're doing the work. Each chapter is organized around one specific piece of the framework, and each one stands on its own when you need to come back to it. If you're setting up your board, reread Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. If you're launching an affiliate program, come back to Chapter 7. If you're thinking about a certification program, Chapter 11 is the one.

However you read it, at some point you're going to have to sit down and actually build the board. That's not a fifteen-minute project. It's three to five hours of focused work. And most people, when I tell them this, skip the work and try to get the result without doing it. Twenty years of teaching this has shown me that the people who do the work get the result, and the people who don't, don't. There's no middle ground.

So before you keep reading, ask yourself whether you're willing to actually build your board. Because the book works when the board gets built. Without the board, the book is

just interesting information.

One Last Thing

The Dream 100 isn't a marketing hack. It's not a growth tactic. It's not a clever trick to squeeze a little more juice out of whatever platform is hot this year.

It's a way of running a business.

When you build your Dream 100, you stop depending on any single platform. You stop panicking when Facebook changes something. You stop feeling like you're one algorithm update away from losing everything. Your traffic stops being rented from Zuckerberg or Alphabet or ByteDance, and starts being something you actually own, built on relationships with real people who have real audiences that aren't going anywhere.

Those relationships take time to build. They take effort to maintain. They take years to compound. But once you have them, they don't evaporate because a platform changed a policy. They're yours.

That's the promise of the Dream 100. And the work starts in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ONE

The Dream 100 Principle

I want to be clear about something before we go any further. The Dream 100 isn't my idea. I didn't invent it. The temptation in marketing books is to claim every framework as something the author came up with, and that's not the case here. This concept came from one of my friends and mentors, a man named Chet Holmes.

Chet passed away a few years ago, but before he did, I had the chance to work with him directly. We did projects together inside his business. I got to see how he thought about marketing up close, and what struck me about Chet was that he could distill enormous amounts of business experience into just a handful of simple frameworks anybody could use. He was the rare kind of mind that made things simpler, not more complicated.

The principle that hit me hardest, the one that has shaped almost every business I've launched in the twenty years since, came from his book *The Ultimate Sales Machine*. He called it the Dream 100. And if you only ever take one thing from anything Chet wrote, this would be the one.

How Chet Discovered It

Early in Chet's career, he worked for Charlie Munger, who you may know was Warren Buffett's business partner in Berkshire-Hathaway. Chet sold advertising for one of the company's legal magazines. At the time, they were really struggling. They were dead last in their market - number fifteen out of fifteen magazines in their industry.

Chet was working with a database of over two thousand advertisers. He made calls and sent out materials every day. But nothing was working.

Then one day Chet had an idea. He did some research and discovered that out of those two thousand advertisers, one hundred sixty seven of them were spending ninety five percent of their advertising budgets with his competitors. So, he defined those 167 as his best buyers - they were the ones spending all the money in the industry. Once he figured that out, he stopped marketing to everybody else, and focused his time and efforts on just those 167 advertisers.

His strategy was relentless. He sent out direct-mail pieces with lumpy objects in them every two weeks, then he followed up between packages with a phone call. Twice a month he'd mail. Twice a month he'd call. Same 167 people, over and over again.

Because these were the biggest buyers in the industry, they were also the hardest people to reach. After four months of following this strategy, he got zero response. (Pretty discouraging, right?) Chet was known for what he called PHD - Pig-Headed Determination. He refused to give up.

Then in his fourth month, something changed. He landed his first big account: Xerox. It was the biggest advertising buy ever for the company. By the sixth month, he had landed 28 of the 167 advertisers. And with those 28 advertisers, Chet doubled the sales over the previous year. They went from number fifteen in the industry to number one in just over a year. And he kept doubling sales for the next three years in a row.

By the end of year three, he had successfully brought in ALL 167 of his Dream 100 as advertisers in their magazine.

That's the original Dream 100. A focused list of the exact people who could change your business if you could just get them to say yes - plus relentless, creative, multi-touch outreach to those people until they did.

What Chet Actually Said

Here's the principle, distilled to its core.

Chet would say it like this: "The goal of the Dream 100 is to take your ideal buyers from 'I've never heard of this company' to 'What is this company I keep hearing about?' to 'I think I've heard of that company' to 'Yes, I've heard of that company' to 'Yes, I do business with that company.'"

That's the whole framework. Pick the right list of people. Stay in front of them consistently. Don't give up at month one or month two or month three or month four. Move them up the awareness ladder until "yes" becomes the natural answer.

And once you have a yes, you don't have one customer. You have a relationship that opens up everything that comes next.

THE DREAM 100 PRINCIPLE

Identify the small group of people who can change your business if you can just get them to say yes. Then do whatever it takes – with creativity, persistence, and pig-headed determination – to move them from ‘never heard of you’ to ‘doing business with you.’

Chet didn't just use this strategy in B2B. He used the same playbook to break into Hollywood. He had written a screenplay called *Emily's Song*, and he wanted to sell it. The only problem was, he didn't know anybody in the entertainment industry. So he bought an issue of *Premiere* magazine that listed “The 100 Most Powerful People in Hollywood.” That list became his Dream 100. He used the same process – lumpy mail, persistent follow-up – and within months he'd gotten LeAnn Rimes to read the script. Together, they walked it into Warner Bros, and Warner Bros bought the screenplay from him.

Why “100” Is Just the Starting Point

People ask me sometimes, why 100? Why not 50? Why not 500? Why not 10?

Honestly, 100 isn't magic. It's the number Chet happened to use because that's how his market sized up – he found 167 best buyers in his magazine's niche, and 100 was a good round target to anchor the framework around. It stuck because he wrote a great book about it.

But here's how I think about the number for my own business, and how I want you to think about it for yours.

100 is the minimum. It's the floor, not the ceiling. The way I build out my own Dream 100 board is I try to find at least 100 people on each platform I'm focused on – 100 podcasts, 100 YouTube channels, 100 Instagram influencers, 100 newsletter operators, and so on. So depending on how many platforms I'm targeting in a given market, my real Dream 100 might be 500 names. It might be 700. It might be 1,000.

In today's world, that's totally easy to find. When Chet was doing this in the 1980s, his universe was small – he was working from a fixed database of advertisers in one specific magazine's industry. There were only so many people he could target. But when we're looking at influencers on Instagram or TikTok, hosts on Apple Podcasts, channels on YouTube, newsletter writers on Substack, the universe is huge. There's so much volume now that the bottleneck isn't finding the people. The bottleneck is getting through the list.

Which means the Dream 100 is faster and easier today than it's ever been. There are more potential partners. The discovery work takes hours, not weeks. The outreach can be sent in minutes, not months. But because the list is bigger, there are also more rejections to filter through before you find your yeses. The math hasn't fundamentally changed - it's just bigger numbers in both directions.

And one more thing on the volume question. We built a tool inside [MarketingSecrets.ai](#) called Influencer Secrets, specifically to make this part of the work fast. It lets you email and direct-message your Dream 100 list at scale - a hundred personalized outreach messages a day, easily. What used to take Chet weeks of physical mail and phone calls, you can now do in an afternoon. I'll come back to the tool side of this at the end of the book. For now, just know: the volume game is much more on your side now than it was on Chet's.

100 IS THE FLOOR

Chet's number was a function of his market. Yours doesn't need to be 100 total - it should be at least 100 per platform you're focused on. For most modern businesses, that means 500 to 1,000+ names across the whole board, totally findable in today's world.

What This Built

I want to be specific about how powerful this framework has been for me, because I think the abstract version of any marketing principle lands kind of flat. The concrete version is what makes the case.

When my partner Todd and I launched Click Funnels back in 2014, the very first thing I did before any of the marketing or any of the launches - before we wrote a single piece of copy, before we had a sales page, before we had anything - was sit down and build out a Dream 100 list. I literally pulled out a notebook and started writing names. Authors I respected in the marketing space. Bloggers who covered the topics our customers cared about. Podcasters who interviewed people in our world. Influencers on Facebook. People with email lists. People who ran events. I made a list and kept making the list, and being who I am, I kept going past 100 until I had a few hundred names in there.

That list - built over a couple of afternoons while Todd was in the next room writing the actual code - became the foundation for everything that followed.

Click Funnels is now coming up on a billion dollars in lifetime sales. And every single customer we have ever acquired, every single dollar that has ever come into the company, traces back to people on that initial list. Either directly, by having those people promote us, or indirectly, by having those people send their audience to us, who then sent their audience to us in turn. The list compounded. One yes from one person on the list led to ten more yeses from people in that person's orbit. Those ten led to a hundred. The hundred led to a thousand. And the thousand led to the company we have today.

A billion dollars in lifetime sales, traceable to a list I built one weekend in a notebook. That's the power of doing this work.

One Yes Can Be Enough

Let me make this even more concrete with a single story.

When my book *Dot Com Secrets* came out, I built a fresh Dream 100 specifically for the launch. We sent out free copies of the book to 100 podcast owners, 100 YouTube channel owners, 100 email list owners, 100 bloggers – 100 of every type of person on every platform we could reach. Each one got a physical book in the mail with a short personal note from me. No pitch. No ask. Just “hey, thought you might enjoy this.”

One of the people who responded back was a guy named John Lee Dumas, who hosted a podcast called *Entrepreneur on Fire*. I'd never met John. We had no relationship. He was just a name on my Dream 100 list, on the column where I tracked podcasts.

He read the book. He liked it. He emailed me back and asked if he could promote it to his audience. We did a podcast interview together. He emailed his list once. That was it.

From that single interaction – one mailed book, one podcast interview, one email to one list – we sold hundreds and hundreds of copies of the book. From one yes, from one person, on a list of hundreds of names that we just mailed books to.

THE PATTERN

Built a Dream 100 across multiple platforms – 100 podcast owners, 100 YouTube channels, 100 email list owners, 100 bloggers, 100 of everything. Sent each one a free physical copy of the book with a short personal note. No pitch. John Lee Dumas at Entrepreneur on Fire was one of the responders. He asked to promote. One podcast interview. One email to his list. Hundreds of book sales from one yes.

That's the pattern. And it's repeated, in different shapes, with different people, on every product I've launched in the last two decades. One yes from the right person on the right list, and you have access to a market it would have taken you years to build on your own.

That's the principle. Find the right list. Get the yeses. Use each yes to leverage into an audience you couldn't have reached one customer at a time.

Where We Go Next

Now, I want to point out something I just slid past in the John Lee Dumas story – because it's actually the single most important thing about how I use the Dream 100, and it's where my version of this strategy diverges from Chet's in a really important way.

Chet was using the Dream 100 to chase 167 advertisers. Each of those advertisers, when they said yes, became one customer. One yes equaled one buyer. That's a powerful strategy for some businesses – if you're selling something high-ticket to a small number of big customers, Chet's exact playbook still works.

But what I figured out, somewhere along the way, was that there's a different version of the same framework that's more powerful for businesses like mine. The version where the people on your Dream 100 aren't your customers. They're the people who already have your customers gathered around them. So when one of them says yes, you don't get one customer. You get hundreds. Or thousands. Like John Lee Dumas saying yes and turning into hundreds and hundreds of book buyers.

That shift – from Chet's one-to-one Dream 100 to my one-to-many Dream 100 – is the entire next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

The Power of Congregation

Here's the difference, in one sentence.

In Chet's version of the Dream 100, the people on your list ARE your customers. They're the 167 advertisers you're trying to sell magazine ads to. Every yes is one customer. The math is one-to-one.

In my version of the Dream 100, the people on your list are people who have already gathered up your customers for you. Authors with email lists. Podcasters with audiences. Influencers with followers. Bloggers with readers. They're not your customers - they're the people who already reach your customers. So when one of them says yes, you don't get one customer. You can get hundreds. Or thousands. The math is one-to-many.

That shift is the entire chapter. And to explain how I got there, I have to back all the way up to a moment that happened years before I ever heard about Chet's Dream 100. A moment in a study hall, in college, when my ADHD got the better of me.

The Study Hall Moment

As a college wrestler, I had mandatory study hall most weeknights. The reason it was mandatory is that, left to our own devices, most of us would have flunked out. So they put us in a room with computers and made us "study."

One night I had a paper due the next morning. I knew I was supposed to be writing it. But my ADHD mind couldn't take it anymore. I had to stop writing for at least a few minutes. I looked around to make sure no one else was looking, and I opened a new tab on my browser.

I started typing www.themat.com, and within seconds I was taken to a new universe - a universe occupied by hundreds of thousands of wrestlers just like me, all around the world. This was our playground, where we could talk about wrestling, post pictures and videos, and debate about who was going to win every match happening at the next big tournament.

I read a few articles. I watched a video showing a new way to finish a single-leg takedown. Then I went to the forums. Oh, how I loved the forums. “Who is better? Dan Gable in his prime or Cael Sanderson now?” someone had just posted. Of course I had an opinion, and it took everything I had to not spend the next 90 minutes writing my thoughtful response about how, if we shrunk Cael down to Dan’s size and took him in a time machine back to the seventies, Cael would have destroyed Dan head-to-head. But I knew I couldn’t. The paper was due the next day. Angrily, I closed the tab and sat back in my chair to stretch before I started the trip back to reality.

As I was leaning back, I started looking at my other college wrestler friends who were locked away in study hall with me because of our bad grades. As I glanced toward our 133-pounder, I noticed a smile on his face. “What!?” I thought. “How could he be smiling in study hall?” Confused, I tried to see what he was working on. As I shifted my gaze from his face to his monitor, I saw it. He was also on [themat.com](#), and he was writing HIS comments on why he thought Dan would actually beat Cael.

Then, looking at the other wrestlers in the room, I decided I had to know what they were doing. Faking that I had to go to the bathroom, I stood up and started to walk past their desks. I looked at our 157-pounder’s screen. Yup, he was on [themat.com](#) too. The 178-pounder? [Themat.com](#). “But what about our heavyweight?” I asked myself. “He HAD to be actually doing his homework, right?” Nope, he was also on [themat.com](#), and as I passed his computer on my way to the bathroom, I quickly read his forum reply that Bruce Baumgartner – the two-time Olympic heavyweight champ and four-time Olympic medalist – would beat both Dan and Cael at the same time.

“WHAT!?” I thought. “Was he crazy? There was NO WAY that Cael would lose to Bruce.”

That’s when it hit me.

The Realization

At that time, [themat.com](#) was our little corner of the internet. All of the wrestlers with me in study hall were congregated together on that website talking about wrestling, but we weren’t the only ones. Wrestlers in other colleges across the country, along with high school wrestlers and their parents, were on the website too. All around the world, hundreds of thousands of people were all congregating together in this one spot to talk about the topic that we loved most: wrestling.

Honestly, that is the real power of the internet. It allows us to connect like-minded people together in a way that wasn’t possible before. It’s allowed each of us, with our unique and

sometimes weird hobbies and interests, to congregate together with our people to discuss the things that mean the most to us.

It wasn't always like that, though. When I was in high school, we didn't have [themat.com](#), so the only people we had to talk to about wrestling were the few dozen wrestlers in our school. We weren't the only group, though. High school was full of different groups. The basketball players. The band kids. The weightlifters. The student government crowd. The kids who played Magic the Gathering. Before the internet, each of those little groups was limited in size to how many people they could find that had the same interests and were located geographically around them.

Pre-internet, it was expensive for a marketer to sell products and services to each of those small groups. After all, how do you target just those people in each city who were interested in what you have to sell? If you had a huge mass-market product like shampoo or pain killers, you could run ads on TV and know that mostly everyone who saw your ads probably had hair or got headaches sometimes. But it was way too expensive to run an ad for wrestling shoes or training DVDs and pray that the dozen wrestlers in each city actually saw the ad.

The internet changed everything. It took the dozen wrestlers from my high school, and every other school around the world, and congregated them all together in one spot. One place to target every wrestler in the world. If wrestlers were my dream customers and I had a product to sell to them, I didn't have to run huge mass media campaigns. Instead, I could go directly to [themat.com](#), or wherever they were congregating, and just buy ads there – knowing that a hundred percent of the people who actually saw my ads were wrestlers.

This same principle is true no matter who your dream customer is. Those people are already congregating together online. The internet has made it so that when you find those existing congregations of your dream customers, it's literally like catching fish in a barrel. You simply have to find the barrels, and then throw in your hooks.

THE PRINCIPLE

Your dream customers are already congregating online. Your job isn't to create traffic. It's to identify where they're already gathered – and then figure out how to get in front of those existing congregations.

The Questions That Find the Congregations

Once I understood this, the question of “where is my market?” stopped being abstract. It became a concrete checklist I could run for any product, in any niche. The same nine questions, every time:

- What are the top websites that my dream customers already go to?
- What forums or message boards do they participate in?
- What are the Facebook groups they’re inside of?
- Who are the influencers they follow on Facebook and Instagram?
- What podcasts do they listen to?
- What email newsletters are they subscribed to?
- What blogs do they read?
- What channels are they following on YouTube?
- What keywords are they searching for in Google to find information?

These nine questions, run for any market, give you the map. The list of every place your dream customers have already gathered themselves up. And if you understand your dream customer well – if you know where they go to get out of pain and where they go to move toward pleasure – the answers to these questions are usually pretty easy to find.

The reason most people struggle with the answers is that they don’t actually know who their dream customer is yet. If you don’t know that, you can’t know where they’re hiding. But once you do know, the map almost draws itself.

From One-to-One to One-to-Many

Now here’s the part of the story I want you to pay attention to.

That study hall realization was years before I ever heard Chet teach his Dream 100 framework. When I finally did read Chet’s book, my first reaction was that his concept didn’t apply to companies like mine. Chet was teaching how to chase a small number of high-ticket B2B customers – magazine advertisers, Hollywood studios. Most of the things I was selling at the time were 20-dollar info products. It didn’t make financial sense to send packages and make phone calls to try to close a 20-dollar sale. So I dismissed Chet’s framework. I figured it just didn’t apply to me.

Then one day, while I was writing my first book, *DotCom Secrets*, I sat down and ran my own nine-question checklist on my market. I made a list of everywhere I could think my dream customers were congregating. By the time I was done, I had identified more than ten top websites and forums, fifteen Facebook groups, fifty influencers on Facebook and Instagram, thirty podcasts, forty email newsletters, twenty blogs, and twenty YouTube channels. A hundred and eighty five communities, give or take.

Then I added up the audiences. I started counting subscribers, listeners, followers, readers. By the time I was done, I realized there were over thirty million of my dream customers congregated together inside that little list of communities. Thirty million people. All in one place. All gathered around a hundred and eighty five hosts, channels, and accounts.

That's when it hit me like a bolt of lightning.

THE Dream 100.

Chet's framework wasn't about the customers. It was about who you put on the list. And when I put 185 audience-holders on my list instead of 167 advertisers, the math flipped. I wasn't chasing one customer per yes anymore. I was chasing thousands of customers per yes. Each name on my list was a doorway into an audience that was already built. One yes meant access to that whole audience.

That's the one-to-many version of the Dream 100. And once I saw it, I never went back.

Why This Is the Big Magic

Let me bring this all the way back to John Lee Dumas, because his story is the cleanest illustration of why this matters.

In Chet's version, JLD would be a customer. A potential buyer of one product. A single yes that turns into a single sale.

In my version, JLD wasn't the customer. JLD was the host of a podcast with hundreds of thousands of listeners who were my dream customers. He had already done the work of gathering them up. So when he said yes - when he agreed to do a podcast interview and email his list one time about my book - the result wasn't one sale. The result was hundreds and hundreds of book sales, plus the goodwill of his entire audience hearing about my work for the first time.

Same outreach. Same effort. Same one yes. Two completely different outcomes, depending on who you put on the list.

That's the big magic. The Dream 100 isn't powerful because it's a clever sales technique. It's powerful because, when you build the list right, every name on it is a multiplier. One relationship gives you access to thousands of relationships. One yes gives you reach you couldn't have built in years of grinding alone.

THE BIG MAGIC

Put audience-holders on your Dream 100, not customers. One yes from someone who has already congregated your dream customers doesn't bring you one new buyer. It can bring you thousands.

Where We Go Next

Now you understand the principle. You understand the why. You see the difference between the one-to-one version of the Dream 100 and the one-to-many version that's going to drive almost every move I teach in the rest of this book.

The next question is the practical one. Once you've identified the people who have already congregated your dream customers, how do you actually get in front of those audiences? There are two ways to do it. You can earn your way in over time, by building real relationships with the people who own those audiences. Or you can pay your way in, by running targeted ads to those same audiences.

Both are valid. Most successful businesses use both at the same time. And the next chapter is where I break down how to think about each one.

CHAPTER THREE

Work Your Way In or Buy Your Way In

You've got the principle now. You understand that your job is to find the people who have already congregated your dream customers, and that your Dream 100 is the map of those people.

One quick note on the size of that map before we go any further. When Chet was building his original Dream 100 in the 1980s, his universe was small – he was working from a fixed database of advertisers in one specific industry. There were only so many people. Today, when we're looking for people who've already congregated our dream customers, the universe is huge. There aren't a hundred audience holders in your market. There are usually thousands. Sometimes tens of thousands. The map is much bigger than it used to be – which is good news, because it means there's far more potential opportunity than there was even a decade ago.

Now the question becomes: what do you do with the map once you have it? How do you actually get inside those audiences?

There are exactly two answers. Either you work your way in, or you buy your way in.

That's it. Those are the only two paths. And the two paths together are the framework I want you to keep in your head whenever you're looking at your Dream 100 board.

Working Your Way In

The first path is what I call earning your way in. You're building a real relationship with somebody who has an audience, until they trust you enough – or like you enough, or believe in your work enough – to put you in front of their people for free.

This is the path where you go on someone's podcast as a guest. Where you write a guest post for somebody's blog. Where someone shoots you a shoutout on Instagram because they think your work is cool. Where you get included in someone's email newsletter as a recommended resource. Where a YouTuber invites you onto their channel for a collab.

Where a popular Facebook group admin lets you do an AMA with their members.

In all of these cases, you're not paying for the access. You're earning it. The person whose audience it is decides – voluntarily – to put you in front of their people because they think their people will benefit, or because they've come to like you, or because the relationship has matured to the point where helping you is just what friends do.

The big advantage of earning your way in is twofold. First, it's free. You're not writing checks for the access. Second, and even more important, the access carries the implicit endorsement of the person who gave it to you. When a podcast host invites you on their show, they're effectively saying to their audience, "this person is worth your time." That endorsement is worth far more than any banner ad ever could be, because audiences trust the people they've been listening to far more than they trust ads they happen to see.

The big disadvantage is that earning your way in takes time. Sometimes a lot of time. The relationships you're building aren't transactional, and they don't mature on a predictable timeline. Months. Years. Occasionally, if the person is big enough, more than a decade.

Let me tell you the story of one of those decade-long relationships. Because it's the cleanest example I have of what working your way in actually looks like – the slow part, the awkward part, the part where you're not sure anything is happening, the part where it eventually pays off in ways you couldn't have predicted.

Tony Robbins

About fifteen years ago, when I was in my early twenties, I was sitting on a couch one night and a movie called *Shallow Hal* came on. There's a scene in that movie where this guy with crazy intensity gets stuck in an elevator with the main character and basically reprograms his brain in five minutes. I sat there thinking, who IS this guy?

That guy was Tony Robbins.

I went on eBay that night and bought every Tony Robbins course I could find. The old cassette tapes. The CDs. The DVDs. Whatever I could get cheap. And I started listening to Tony every single day. On my drive. At the gym. Walking around. He started shifting how I thought, how I held myself, how I approached my business.

And as my own company started growing, I had this thought that wouldn't go away. Man, it would be so cool to actually work with Tony on something. To have him know who I was. To do something together. I just wanted to figure out a way to get to know him.

Here's the problem. Tony Robbins coaches Presidents of the United States. He runs fifty-four different companies. He does five or six billion dollars in sales a year. He's on Netflix, in movies, on stages in front of fifty thousand people at a time. The gatekeepers around him are massive. So the question I had to answer was: how is a 22-year-old kid supposed to figure out how to get access to one of the biggest people on the planet in forty different industries?

I couldn't. Not directly. Not by walking up and knocking on the door.

But what I could do was Dream 100 the people who were a couple of tiers below Tony. The people who were already inside Tony's orbit, but who weren't so famous that they were unreachable themselves. People like Frank Kern, John Reece, and Eben Pagan. All of them lived in San Diego, close to Tony. All of them were people I could realistically get to know if I worked at it.

So I Dream 100'd those guys. I built relationships with them. I showed up where they showed up. I added value where I could. And one day, one of them got a chance to meet Tony directly - and when he got into Tony's circle, he brought everyone in his orbit along with him. Including me.

I didn't even know I was in at first. Until one random day I got a phone call from Tony's team asking if I wanted to come experience UPW - Unleash the Power Within - as Tony's guest. And then sit down and meet with Tony in person.

I flew to Toronto. I sat in a private section right at the front. And every time Tony was talking about something on stage, he kept looking at me, and looking at me, and looking at me. That night was the famous Fire Walk - the part of UPW where you walk barefoot across burning coals as a metaphor for breaking through your fears. Tony came up to me before it started and gave me this huge hug. "Russell," he said, "so glad to have you. Come on, let's go walk on fire."

That night I called my wife from the hotel room. "I walked on fire and I met Tony Robbins. It was crazy."

And in that hotel room, Tony said something that surprised me. He goes, "I read about your story. You got started with potato guns, right?"

That was so embarrassing. Years earlier, before any of the marketing stuff, I had made a DVD called How to Make a Potato Gun. It was the kind of thing a 22-year-old does. Tony somehow knew about it.

After UPW, I kept thinking about what to send Tony as a thank-you. He's a man who can buy anything. He has everything. What could I possibly send him that he'd remember? And then it hit me. The most unique thing I could send him was the actual potato gun from the DVD. The original one we built. Just to make sure he'd remember my name.

So I shipped him the potato gun. And then I waited. A week. A month. Two months. Nothing. I figured maybe it was a stupid idea.

Then one day I got an email from Tony. "Russell, I just got home and there's this huge box on my front porch." He told me he and his son Sage had taken the potato gun out into the backyard and shot it together that night.

That's when I knew I'd planted a flag. Tony Robbins now associated my name with something specific. The potato gun guy.

Then Nothing

Now here's the part of the Dream 100 nobody talks about, and the part I want you to really sit with. Because if I stopped the story right here, you'd think Dream 100 is fast. You'd think you make a list, send a clever gift, and you're in.

That's not how it actually works.

After the potato gun, Tony's assistant called me one night out of nowhere. "Tony wants to know if you want to speak in Fiji." My wife Collette was sitting next to me on the bed. She heard "Fiji" and started jumping up and down on the bed mouthing "TELL HIM YES, TELL HIM YES." So I told him yes. Next week we were in Fiji. I spoke at Tony's event. He sat in the back of the room taking notes the whole time. After the event he asked me to be on a DVD he was making for a new product called New Money Master. I said yes. We filmed it.

And then - nothing.

Not for a year. For four or five years.

Tony got busy. I got busy. Click Funnels was just starting to get off the ground. Tony was working on his next book and his next event and his next thing. The Dream 100 relationship I had built didn't evaporate - but it didn't accelerate either. It just sat there. For half a decade. Most people would have given up on the relationship by then. They would have decided Tony was a one-time thing and moved on.

I just kept showing up where I could. Kept being friendly when paths crossed. Kept doing the work in my own business that I knew, eventually, would make me valuable to Tony in some way I couldn't predict yet.

The Slow Climb Back

Eventually, an opening came. Tony was launching a new book – Money Master The Game – and somebody on his team emailed me about helping promote it. I could tell they were going to do the launch wrong. So I messaged Tony directly. “Hey, we just launched our book through a funnel. It worked great. I'd love to build the same kind of funnel for you, as a gift.”

Tony said yes, but his team gave us exactly one hour with him to film all the videos we'd need. We flew to Vegas, rented a suite, set up the cameras, and shot every video we needed for the funnel in one hour. We built the whole thing for him as a gift. He took it and ran with it. He was on every news channel – Today show, CNN, all of it – driving traffic back to that one funnel we built. The book was a massive success. Tony was grateful.

And then nothing again. Tony's the busiest man I know.

Around that time we were running our own conference, Funnel Hacking Live. The first one had no big keynote speakers. The second one we said, we should get a real keynote. By the third Funnel Hacking Live we said, you know what, let's try to get Tony. We didn't know what he charged. We didn't know if he'd even consider it. But we decided no matter how much it cost, this would be worth it.

Tony said yes. He came and spoke at Funnel Hacking Live for almost five hours. And on stage, in front of our entire community, he said something I'll never forget. “I don't do many private talks like this anymore. I pick the ones I want to do, and there are very few. But I'm here because of Russell.”

When Tony walked off the stage, the entire audience was on their feet, chanting my name. I didn't do anything – Tony did. But because I had brought Tony to them, our community felt something shift. The relationship had become real.

The First Ask

Here's something most Dream 100 stories skip past. By this point I had known Tony for about ten years. I had built funnels for him. I had paid him to speak at our event. I had given him access to our platform. I had consulted for him for free whenever he needed something. I had shown up at his events. We had become real friends.

In all of that time, ten years, I had never once asked Tony for anything in return.

Then my second book, *Expert Secrets*, was about to launch. And I thought, if I could get Tony to interview me on his Facebook fan page – which had 3.9 million fans at the time – it would be the perfect launch boost. But asking him scared me. I think this is true for most people working a Dream 100. You'll do all the relationship work for years, and then when the moment comes to actually ask, your stomach drops. "Will you promote me?" Those are the four hardest words in the Dream 100 playbook.

I finally just sent him a message. Within a minute, Tony texted back: "Yep, I'm in. I'll help you."

We did the Facebook Live the next day on Tony's page. That single video was viewed over three million times. The book launch was massive. Ten years of patiently working my way in, and the actual ask took less than a minute to land.

Becoming Partners

There's one more chapter to this story, because it's the part that, when I look back, still doesn't feel real. About six months after that Funnel Hacking Live, I got invited by Brendon Burchard to a private mastermind in Wyoming – helicopters, fly fishing, a small group of really impressive people. On the flight home, I was sitting next to Dean Graziosi in first class. Dean started telling me about a project he was building with Tony. A platform for people to launch their own masterminds. And he was running through different domain names they were considering for it.

I said, "Dude. You should call it mastermind.com."

Dean said, "Someone already owns it. They're asking a million bucks."

That night I was still thinking about it. I went to mastermind.com just to see what was there. And on the about-us page, the founders were holding a Click Funnels Two Comma Club award – which we give out to people who've made over a million dollars in a single funnel. They were Click Funnels customers. I had a way to reach them.

I told Dean. Dean negotiated the domain down to six hundred thousand. He gifted it to Tony and himself. And then, because Tony and Dean saw the move I had made for them, they came back and made me a partner in Mastermind.com.

We launched Mastermind.com a few months later. The launch did over thirty-eight million dollars in two weeks. The biggest launch in the history of internet marketing at the

time. The top ten affiliates flew in Tony's private plane to Fiji to celebrate.

From a kid on a couch buying Tony Robbins courses on eBay to flying in Tony's private plane as his business partner. About fifteen years from start to finish. And it all started with a Dream 100 list of people in San Diego who were one tier below Tony.

THE LESSON

Year one of my Dream 100 with Tony would have looked like a complete failure. I met him for five seconds and that was it. Looking at it over a decade, it was the most successful relationship I've ever built in business. Working your way in is the slowest path. It's also the deepest one.

Buying Your Way In

Now the second path. Buying your way in.

Instead of building a relationship over years, you write a check for direct access to somebody else's audience. This looks like running a Facebook ad targeted to people who follow a specific influencer. It looks like sponsoring an episode of a podcast that has your dream customers as listeners. It looks like buying a banner placement on a popular blog. It looks like paying to have your offer included in somebody's email newsletter. It looks like buying a sponsored Instagram post from an influencer in your space.

In every case, you're writing somebody a check for direct access to an audience that they own.

The big advantage of buying your way in is speed. You don't have to wait ten years to reach Tony Robbins's audience the way I did. You can reach them this week, by writing a check. You decide when. You decide how much. You decide how often. It's a lever you can pull at will.

The big disadvantage is that it costs money continuously. The moment you stop paying, the access stops. You're renting attention, not owning it. And the costs only ever go up over time, as more advertisers compete for the same audiences and platforms tighten the screws to extract more revenue.

Why You Want Both

Here's the thing nobody tells you about earning your way in versus buying your way in. They're not actually competing strategies. They're complementary.

The smartest businesses use both at once. With some people on your Dream 100 list, you're going to spend years working your way in. With others, you're just going to buy ads to their followers and that will be the entire relationship. Both are completely fine. The same Dream 100 board serves both purposes – the names on the board are both relationships you can cultivate AND audiences you can target with paid ads.

Most marketers pick one path and stay there. The good ones run both at the same time, with different people, depending on what fits each specific relationship.

TWO PATHS, ONE MAP

Whether you're earning your way in or buying your way in, the Dream 100 board is the same. Each name on the list is both a relationship to potentially cultivate AND an audience you can potentially target with ads. Most marketers pick one path. The good ones run both at once – with different people on the list.

How the Two Paths Compare

Here's a simple way to think about when to lean toward one path or the other. Most businesses end up using a mix, and the mix shifts based on where you are in your business and what you're trying to accomplish.

	Earn Your Way In	Buy Your Way In
Speed	Slow (months to years)	Fast (days to weeks)
Cost	Free, but takes time and effort	Costs money continuously
Trust transfer	High - implicit endorsement	Low - audience knows it's an ad
Predictability	Low - timeline varies wildly	High - turn it on, get traffic
Durability	Compounds over time	Stops the moment you stop paying
Best for	Long-term relationships, real friendships	Immediate launches, testing offers

Most early-stage businesses lean more on paid because they need traffic now and can't wait years for relationships to mature. Most established businesses lean more on earned because they've had time to build relationships, and the costs of paid keep climbing. Both shifts are normal. What matters is that you're doing some of both at any given time.

One Last Note Before the Build

I want to make one important point before we move on. Whether you choose to focus more on earning or paying at any given moment in your business, the work of building the Dream 100 board itself is the same. Both paths require the same map.

If you're going to spend money on Facebook ads targeted to your dream customers, you need to know which influencers and groups and pages those customers actually follow - so you can target their followers. If you're going to spend years earning a relationship, you need to know which people are most worth pursuing - so you don't waste your time on small audiences when bigger ones are right there. Either way, you need the map.

And that map is what we're going to actually build together in the next chapter. Because everything in this book up to this point has been leading to one specific deliverable: a board, in front of you, with the names of every audience holder in your market, organized by platform, ready to work.

That's where we go next.

CHAPTER FOUR

Your Dream 100 Board

Everything we've covered up to this point has been preparation. The principle. The why behind it. The two paths to access the audiences. All of it has been leading up to this chapter, where we actually build the thing.

The thing is a board. A literal, visual, organized collection of every person and platform that has your dream customers congregated. It lives in front of you, ideally on a screen you check every day. It has columns running across the top, one for each platform – authors, podcasts, Facebook groups, Instagram, YouTube, email newsletters, blogs. And it has cards underneath each column for each specific person or page or group on that platform.

When you're done with the work in this chapter and the next, you'll have a finished version of that board. You'll be able to look at it and see, in a single glance, the entire known universe of your market. Every audience holder. Every doorway into your dream customers' attention.

That's the deliverable. Now let's build it.

Why Kanban Beats a Spreadsheet

The first decision is what tool to use. And before I tell you what I personally use, I want to make a case for why a kanban-style board is the right format for this work.

A kanban board is just a visual layout where you have columns running across the top, and cards sitting underneath each column. You can drag cards between columns. You can add notes to cards. You can attach pictures and links and files. Trello is the most popular kanban tool, but there are plenty of alternatives – Asana, Notion, ClickUp, even Microsoft Lists. They all share the same basic format.

Why is this format better than a spreadsheet for the Dream 100 work? Three reasons.

- First, the visual layout. When you look at a kanban board, you see all your columns at once. You can immediately tell which columns are mature (lots of cards) and which ones are sparse (need more work). A spreadsheet hides that structure behind rows

and tabs. Spreadsheets are great for analyzing data; they're bad for navigating a network of relationships.

- Second, the card metaphor. Each card on the board represents one specific person – Tony Robbins, John Lee Dumas, the host of a specific podcast. Cards have weight. They feel like real things. A row in a spreadsheet feels like a data entry. The psychological difference matters when you're trying to remember that the items on this list are actual humans you'll be interacting with.
- Third, the ability to attach context to each card. On a Trello card, you can drop a profile picture, a follower count, a link to their main platform, notes from your last interaction, drafts of outreach messages – everything related to one person in one place. A spreadsheet would require multiple tabs and extra columns and lookups to do the same thing, and you'd still lose the visual.

That's why I use a kanban board, and that's why I'd encourage you to use one too. But this isn't a religious thing. The format matters less than doing the work.

THE TOOL DOESN'T MATTER – THE BOARD DOES

When I built the original Click Funnels Dream 100, I didn't use Trello. I literally pulled out a big pad of paper and wrote names down by hand, organized into columns. That worked fine. The tool you choose matters less than the discipline of actually building the map.

What Goes on Each Card

Each card on your board represents one specific person, page, group, podcast, or channel on one specific platform. Think of a card as a profile of one audience holder in your market.

For each card, here's what I capture. Some of these are required. Some are optional but valuable. The whole thing should take you about one to two minutes per card once you're in the rhythm.

- The name. Person, page, podcast, group – whatever the unit is on that platform. "Tony Robbins" or "Entrepreneur on Fire" or "The 4-Hour Workweek Tribe Facebook Group." Required.
- The follower count. Whatever the audience number is on that platform, write it down. This becomes your quick reference for prioritizing who to reach out to first. Bigger isn't

always better, but it gives you a baseline. Required.

- A link. The URL to the page, the podcast, the channel, the profile. So when you come back to the card later – and you will, many times – you can find them in one click instead of searching all over again. Required.
- A picture. Profile photo, podcast cover art, channel banner – whatever the visual on that platform is. Optional but recommended. The picture is what makes the board feel alive when you scroll through it. Each card has a face. Real humans, not data entries.
- Notes. As your relationship with each person evolves, drop notes on their card. “Reached out via email March 12, no response.” “Sent them a copy of the book.” “They mentioned they like X.” Anything that helps you remember the state of the relationship next time you look. Optional but increasingly valuable as the board ages.

SAMPLE TRELLO CARD

Name: John Lee Dumas Platform: Podcasts Subscribers: significant monthly listens Link: entrepreneursonfire.com Photo: [JLD's podcast cover art] Notes: Sent Dot Com Secrets in mail – he emailed back about promoting. Did interview, sent one email to his list. Sold hundreds and hundreds of copies. Open to future collabs.

What Are Your Columns?

A column on your board represents one platform – one specific way that audiences gather online. Each column houses all the cards for people, pages, or groups in your market who use that platform.

For most businesses, you'll end up with seven or eight columns. Here are the canonical ones I use, and that I'd recommend you start with. The detail on how to actually find people on each one is the entire next chapter, so I'll just preview the list here.

- Authors – people who've written books on topics related to your market. Find them on Amazon.
- Facebook Fan Pages – brands and individuals with significant Facebook page followings.
- Facebook Groups – communities where your dream customers actively gather and talk to each other.
- Podcasts – shows your dream customers listen to.

- Instagram Influencers – accounts with relevant audiences in your space.
- YouTube Influencers – channels in your space with significant subscribers.
- Email Newsletters – newsletters that go out to lists of your dream customers.
- Blogs – sites with significant traffic in your market.

That's eight columns. Some markets won't have meaningful presence on every platform – if you sell to dentists, you might not need an Instagram column, but you'll definitely need a Facebook Groups column and a podcasts column. Some markets will have platforms that aren't on this list – if you sell to woodworkers, there's a giant Reddit community you'd want a column for. If your customers are on TikTok, add a TikTok column.

Use the eight as a starting point, but customize for your market. The point isn't to slavishly copy my columns. The point is to capture every meaningful platform where your dream customers congregate.

How to Keep the Board Alive

Here's the thing most people get wrong about the Dream 100 board. They treat it like a one-time project. They build it once, look at it for a week, then never come back.

That's the wrong mental model. The Dream 100 board is a living document. It gets updated every week, ideally every day. People rise and fall in your market. New podcasts launch. Old influencers fade. New Facebook groups emerge and old ones go quiet. You'll discover names you missed in the initial build. Your relationships with the people on the list will evolve, and the notes on each card will need to evolve with them.

The board needs to evolve with all of it.

At minimum, set yourself a recurring task to review the board once a week. Twenty minutes is enough. Add new names you've encountered during the week. Update follower counts that have changed significantly. Drop notes from any interactions you had with people on the list. Move cards if someone you originally tagged as a podcaster has now also launched a newsletter and a YouTube channel.

When you treat the board as a living document, it becomes the central nervous system of your marketing. Every decision about who to reach out to, where to advertise, what to write, what to record – all of it flows from the current state of the board. You stop guessing. You stop scrambling for ideas. The next move is always visible on the screen in front of you.

What “Done” Looks Like

A finished board has 100 cards under each column. That’s the target. Some columns might have more, especially in mature markets. Some might have fewer if a particular platform isn’t dominant in your space. Don’t obsess about hitting exactly 100. Aim for it. Get close to it. Have at least 50 in every column you build.

The work to get there is roughly three to five hours of focused effort. Not fifteen minutes. This is the part where most people fail. They want the result without doing the work, so they spend half an hour, get bored, and quit. The people who get the benefit are the people who block out an afternoon, sit down with the platforms open in tabs, and actually grind through the build.

You’ll spend an hour digging into Amazon for authors. An hour searching Facebook for groups and pages. Forty minutes scrolling Apple Podcasts for relevant shows. Time on Instagram. Time on YouTube. Time hunting newsletters. Three to five hours total. That’s the price.

And when you’re done, you’ll have something I’d argue is more valuable than any customer list you could ever buy. You’ll have a complete map of where your customers are, who has their attention, and the doorways you can use to reach them. That map is the foundation of every marketing decision you’ll make from this point forward.

Now Let’s Actually Build It

The next chapter walks through each platform one at a time. Where to look. What to search for. What to capture. How to know when you’ve found the right people. By the end of the next chapter, your board will exist.

So before you turn the page, do this. Open up Trello, or Notion, or your spreadsheet, or your pad of paper. Create the columns. Title them by platform: Authors, Facebook Pages, Facebook Groups, Podcasts, Instagram, YouTube, Email Newsletters, Blogs. Adjust the list for your market if needed.

Now you have an empty board. The next chapter fills it.

CHAPTER FIVE

Building Your Columns

This is the chapter where the actual work happens. Three to five hours of focused, methodical effort, one platform at a time.

The good news is that the work isn't hard. It's not creative. You don't have to think strategically or come up with anything. You just have to know where to look on each platform, what to type into the search bar, and what to write down.

In this chapter, I'm going to walk you through each of the eight columns. For each one, I'll show you exactly where to go, exactly what to search for, and exactly what to capture for each card. By the time you finish reading this chapter and doing the work alongside it, your board will be full.

Before you start: have your board open in front of you. Have the platforms open in browser tabs. Block out a chunk of time – a Saturday afternoon, or three or four sessions of ninety minutes spread across a week. Either way, the goal is to come out the other end with at least 100 cards under each column. Or, in some columns, as close to it as the platform allows.

Let's go.

Authors

The first column I always build, and the easiest one to fill, is Authors. Why authors first? Two reasons. First, they're the simplest to find. Amazon literally has the entire database of every book ever published, and you can search it by topic in seconds. Second, authors who've sold real books are usually thought leaders with audiences that already trust them. If somebody bought their book, that person is already a buyer in your space. And if an author has a real audience, they probably also have an email list, a podcast, a YouTube channel, a Facebook page – every other column you're going to build is downstream of authors.

Open Amazon. In the search bar, type the broadest topical keyword for your market. If you sell a success product, type "success." If you sell golf coaching, type "golf instruction." If

you sell something for chiropractors, type “chiropractor business.” The broader the search, the more authors you’ll surface.

Scroll through the results. For each promising author, capture their name, the link to their book on Amazon, and – if you’re going for the polished board – the book cover image. You’ll come back to that link when you start building relationships, so it’s worth saving.

Two filters to apply as you scroll. First, look for books with substantial review counts – hundreds or thousands of reviews, not one or two. Lots of reviews means actual readership, which means an actual audience. Second, check that the author is still alive and active. Books from fifty years ago are great references, but if the author has been gone for decades, they’re not going to promote your product.

And don’t just search one keyword. Cycle through related keywords. “Success” leads to “personal development” leads to “self-help” leads to “high performance” leads to “achievement.” Each search uncovers different authors. Aim for 100 names. Realistically, you’ll get sixty to a hundred from a single afternoon of focused work.

Facebook Fan Pages

Facebook splits into two columns on your board because it has two distinct ways audiences gather: pages, where one person broadcasts to many followers, and groups, where members talk to each other. They behave very differently and need separate columns.

For pages, open Facebook and type your topical keyword into the main search bar. Facebook will show a mixed result – posts, people, pages, groups. Click the “Pages” filter at the top to filter just for pages.

For each promising page, capture the page name, the follower count, and the link. With Facebook pages, follower count is the main signal of importance, but don’t fixate on a hard threshold. Smaller pages with highly engaged audiences in tight niches often outperform massive pages with looser engagement. Capture both and judge engagement quality later.

One thing I want you to specifically include: the branded fan pages of major thought leaders in your space. If Tony Robbins has a page with millions and millions of followers in your space, add it to the column. Even if you’ll never get Tony himself to promote you personally, that page is a goldmine for buying ads to followers. The Dream 100 board isn’t just for relationships – it’s also your ad targeting strategy. Aim for 100 pages.

Facebook Groups

Same platform, different beast. Facebook Groups are where audiences actually talk to each other. They're typically smaller than fan pages but more engaged.

Same Facebook search bar. Same keyword. But this time click the "Groups" filter. For each group, capture the name, the member count, and the link.

Member count matters, but engagement matters more. Groups with 5,000 highly engaged members are often more valuable than groups with 50,000 mostly-inactive members. After you've added a group to your card, join it. Then watch it for a week or two. If posts are getting real engagement - comments, reactions, replies - it's a real congregation worth being part of. If posts are getting tumbleweeds, you're looking at a ghost town and you can move on.

Joining the groups you add isn't optional. Lurk for a few weeks. Get to know the rhythms. Eventually contribute. The goal is to become a known presence inside the group, so when you eventually approach the admin or pitch a collab, you're not a stranger asking for something. You're a familiar face making an offer. Quality matters more than quantity in this column - better to have 50 active groups than 100 ghost towns.

Podcasts

Podcasts are one of my personal favorites for the Dream 100, and one of the easiest columns to fill quickly with high-quality candidates.

Open Apple Podcasts - the app on iPhone or the section of iTunes on a desktop. Don't search by keyword first. Instead, go to the "Top Charts" section. Apple Podcasts shows you the top 200 podcasts ranked by category. This is gold. Pick the category that matches your market - Business, Health & Fitness, Education, Self-Improvement, Religion & Spirituality, whatever fits - and you're instantly looking at 200 ranked candidates, all with significant audiences.

Capture the show name, the host name, and the link to the podcast page. Anything in the top 200 of any reasonably-sized category has a real audience. The top 50 of any category typically have hundreds of thousands to millions of listeners. The top 200 still have meaningful audiences worth pursuing.

Your business probably fits multiple Apple Podcasts categories, and you should check all the relevant ones. If you sell to entrepreneurs, look at Business AND Self-Improvement. If you sell health products, look at Health & Fitness AND Education AND maybe Religion (lots

of wellness content lives in spirituality categories). Each category surfaces a different set of shows.

Aim for 100 to 200 podcasts in this column. This is one column where overshooting is easy and worth doing – podcast hosts are some of the easiest audience-holders to work your way in with, because most podcasters are actively looking for great guests every week.

Instagram Influencers

Open Instagram. Type your topical keyword in the search bar. Instagram returns accounts, hashtags, and locations. Look at accounts.

For each promising account, capture the handle, the follower count, and the link. Don't obsess over follower thresholds. Some of the best partnership outcomes come from accounts with smaller, highly engaged audiences – ten or twenty thousand engaged followers in a tight niche often outperforms a million casual followers in a broad niche. The biggest influencers, the ones with tens of millions of followers, aren't always the best partners. Sometimes the smaller accounts have a tighter relationship with their audience and convert dramatically better. Capture them all and figure out engagement quality later.

Instagram's suggested accounts feature is your friend on this column. Once you find one good account in your niche and follow it, Instagram will recommend similar accounts in the right sidebar. Each account leads to three more. You can fill an Instagram column in an hour by following the chain. Aim for 100 accounts.

YouTube Influencers

Open YouTube. Type your topical keyword. YouTube has a "Channels" filter you can use to filter just for channels rather than individual videos. Use it.

Capture the channel name, the subscriber count, and the link. Don't get too rigid about subscriber thresholds – a channel with tight engagement in your niche can outperform a much bigger channel with looser audience alignment. Channels in the millions of subscribers range are obviously worth pursuing aggressively, but smaller channels with a passionate audience often convert better than the big ones.

The pro move on YouTube is to look at who the creators in your niche collab with. If you find one good channel, watch their recent videos. They'll often be guesting on or featuring other creators in your space. Each collab is a lead for another channel for your list. The YouTube creator world is a network, and one good channel will lead you to ten more if

you follow the threads. Aim for 100 channels.

Email Newsletters

Newsletters have come back hard as a marketing channel in the last several years. Substack, Beehiiv, and the broader independent-newsletter ecosystem mean there are now serious newsletters in almost every niche, with engaged paying audiences.

Discovery is harder than for podcasts because there's no equivalent of Apple Podcasts charts. A few approaches that work. Search Substack's discover feature for your niche. Look at "best newsletters in [niche]" lists on Twitter or X. Check the "newsletters" sections of any major creators' link-in-bios. And use the recommendations sections inside existing newsletters – most newsletter operators recommend other newsletters they like, which gives you a snowball of leads.

Capture the newsletter name, the author, the subscriber count if it's public, and the link. Subscriber counts are often hidden, so use other signals: how many social shares does the author get when they publish, are they monetizing the newsletter (a sign of real audience), do other people in your niche reference them by name.

Once you've added five or ten newsletters in your space to your column, sign up for all of them. Read them for a few weeks. You'll learn the rhythms of the newsletter ecosystem in your niche, see who recommends whom, and discover names you missed. Aim for 50 to 100 newsletters.

Blogs

Blogs are the oldest content format on this list and still one of the most reliable. The bloggers who rank organically on Google for the keywords your customers search are exactly the bloggers whose audiences are actively looking for what you sell.

Open Google. Type your most important keywords – the ones your dream customers would actually type into a search engine. Look at the page-one and page-two organic results. NOT the ads. The bloggers ranked there are the ones with audiences worth pursuing.

Capture the blog name, the author, and the URL. The main signal is organic ranking on competitive keywords. The second signal is an active publishing schedule – a blog that hasn't published in two years isn't really an active congregation anymore. The third signal is visible audience metrics: comments, social shares, links from other publications.

Most successful bloggers also have email lists, podcasts, or YouTube channels. When you find a blogger you like, check the rest of their footprint. Often you'll be adding the same person to multiple columns, which is fine and expected. Aim for 50 to 100 blogs.

Cross-Cutting Tips

A few rules apply across every column.

- Capture more than you think you need. It's easier to remove names later than to keep going back to research the same platforms.
- Save the link every time. Always. Future you will thank current you when you're trying to find that one podcaster six months from now.
- Don't optimize too much during the build. Just get names down. Refinement comes later, after the board exists.
- The same person often appears across multiple columns. That's fine – just create cards for each platform separately. A podcast host with a newsletter has a card in two columns, and that's how it should be.
- Don't worry if your initial list is heavy on the names you already know. As you do the discovery work, you'll find people you didn't know existed. That's the entire point of the exercise.

ON DISCIPLINE

The biggest reason people fail at this isn't complexity. It's that they get four or five names per column, get bored, and quit. Push past that. The board only works when it's actually full. Aim for 100, settle for 50, but don't stop at 5.

The Map Is Built

Once you've filled your eight columns, your Dream 100 board exists. You have the map. You've done what most marketers in your space have never done. You can look at one screen and see the entire known universe of where your customers are paying attention.

But knowing the map and knowing what to do with it are two different things. We covered the basics back in Chapter 3 – work your way in, or buy your way in. Both apply. Both work. The rest of this book is about the specific ways to actually make those approaches work – the partnership strategies that turn names on a board into traffic, customers, and

revenue.

That's where Part Two begins. And it begins with the bigger picture: why partnerships matter more right now than they ever have. Why ad costs keep climbing. Why platforms keep tightening the screws. Why the businesses that don't have a Dream 100 strategy are the ones getting hit hardest right now.

The storm is here. The attention is shifting. And the people with the map are the ones who are going to stay standing.

CHAPTER SIX

The Attention Transfer

Welcome to Part Two.

Up to this point, this book has been about the framework itself. The principle. The map. The board. By now, if you've done the work, you've got 100 names under each column and you're looking at a complete picture of where attention has pooled in your market.

Now I want to zoom out and tell you something about what's actually happening in marketing right now - because the world we're selling into in 2026 is fundamentally different from the world I started in twenty years ago, and the Dream 100 has gone from being one tactic among many to being arguably the most important thing in marketing.

Stay with me on this one. Because the framing in this chapter is what makes the next five chapters land.

The Storm Is Already Here

I told you in the introduction that a storm was coming. I want to be more direct now. The storm isn't coming. It's already here.

Look around at the marketing world right now. People who got really good at paid ads - some of them running nine-figure businesses on Facebook ads - are watching ad costs climb to the point where their unit economics no longer work. People who got really good at organic social are watching organic reach disappear. People who built businesses on Google SEO are watching AI search shrink their organic traffic. The traffic itself didn't disappear. People are still on Facebook, still on Google, still on every platform. But the way you access that attention has shifted, and the businesses whose models depended on the old way of accessing it are in serious trouble.

The reasons are stacked. iOS privacy updates broke ad targeting. Facebook ad costs have tripled - sometimes 10x'd - over the last several years. Conversion rates on the same products with the same offers fell off cliffs. Google's algorithm changes have hammered SEO traffic. AI search is gradually replacing organic search results entirely. Every platform that used to be a reliable source of cheap traffic has, one by one, become

unreliable for somebody.

Half the businesses that depended on those platforms are going to be dead in five years. Maybe sooner. The other half – the ones who are going to make it – will be the ones who built traffic sources that don't depend on any single platform's algorithm not changing.

Which means partnerships. Relationships. Direct access to other people's audiences through arrangements that no platform owns or controls.

Which means the Dream 100.

THE NEW MATH

When ad costs triple and conversion rates fall, the businesses that survive aren't the ones with better ads. They're the ones who don't depend on ads in the first place.

Where Attention Actually Goes

There's a financial concept I want to borrow for a minute, because it's the most useful frame I've found for what's happening right now in marketing. It's called the wealth transfer.

The wealth transfer says that money never actually disappears in a market crash. The amount of money in the system doesn't shrink. What happens is that money moves – from the people who lose to the people who win. From bears to bulls. From sellers to buyers. From the unprepared to the prepared. The total quantity of money is roughly the same. The distribution is what shifts.

Attention works the exact same way. There's not less attention online than there used to be. People aren't spending less time looking at screens. The total quantity of human attention available to marketers right now is, if anything, larger than it has ever been.

What's changing is who has it.

When Facebook ad costs go up and conversion rates go down, the attention that used to flow through Facebook ads doesn't evaporate. It moves. It goes somewhere else. To podcasters. To newsletter writers. To Instagram creators. To YouTubers. To people running engaged Facebook groups. To bloggers ranking for buyer-intent keywords. To affiliates with email lists. To people who built audiences before the storm hit and kept them

through it.

That's the attention transfer. The exact same fixed quantity of human attention is now distributed across a different set of intermediaries. The platforms still hold a lot of it, but the people inside the platforms – the creators, the influencers, the trusted voices – are now holding a much larger share than they were five years ago. And every time a platform tightens, more attention transfers from the platform itself to the people the platform built audiences on top of.

If you're depending on the platforms to send you customers, that transfer is happening against you. Every iOS update is shrinking your access. Every algorithm change is moving the goalposts. Every cost increase is squeezing your margins.

If you're building relationships with the people the attention is transferring to, the same transfer is happening for you. Every iOS update makes the influencers more powerful. Every algorithm change makes podcasters more valuable. Every cost increase pushes more advertisers into integration deals and affiliate partnerships and co-branded launches – because that's where the attention actually is now.

Same transfer. Two completely different positions to be in.

The Harmon Brothers Lesson

Let me make this concrete with a story I lived through personally.

If you've been in marketing for any length of time, you've probably seen Harmon Brothers' viral videos. Squatty Potty. Poo-Pourri. FiberFix. They're a creative agency in Utah that built a reputation in the 2010s for making absurd, hilarious sales videos that went viral and converted at unprecedented rates. They were arguably the best video sales agency in the world for a stretch of years.

I worked with them right in the middle of that run. They had done video after video after video, and each one was getting tens of millions, sometimes a hundred million views. They understood how to capture attention better than almost anybody on the internet. So when we did our first contract negotiation with them, they had all the leverage – because they could create a video and almost guarantee it would get a hundred million views.

Our first video with them was insanely expensive. Half a million dollars up front, plus 20 percent of any ad spend ever attributed to that video, for the lifetime of the video. They could charge that because they could deliver. We spent millions and millions of dollars on that one video alone, and it was profitable for us because the attention was there.

Then, in the middle of that era, the attention transfer happened. Facebook stopped rewarding those kinds of videos the way it used to. Videos that had been pulling 100 million views started pulling hundreds and hundreds of views – not because the videos got worse, but because the platform shifted what it was rewarding. The attention moved to TikTok creators, podcasters, Instagram influencers, YouTube collabs. And suddenly the agencies that had owned that earlier attention era didn't have all the leverage anymore.

So when I called Harmon Brothers back for a second video, the negotiation was completely different. Same agency. Same caliber of work. But the leverage had shifted. We ended up getting four videos for the price of that original one, and the revenue share was gone.

I want to be careful with this story – I'm not saying Harmon Brothers is somehow lesser now. They do excellent work. The point of the story is structural. The same agency that could charge \$500K up front plus 20 percent of revenue when they had everyone's attention couldn't charge that anymore once the attention transferred elsewhere. The leverage shifted with the attention. That's the whole story of attention transfer in one example.

That's how attention transfer works at the margin. It's not about quality. It's about where the audience is currently looking. And the answer to where the audience is currently looking is always changing.

THE SHIFT

Whoever has the audience's attention right now has the leverage. Not the most talented person. Not the smartest brand. Whoever has the attention. And the attention keeps moving.

Thirteen Years Without Ads

I've been doing this twenty years now. And for the first thirteen, maybe fourteen of those years – the first decade and a half – I never bought an ad. Not one Facebook ad. Not one Google ad. Not one banner placement. I didn't even know about ads until a year into Click Funnels. We'd been running Click Funnels for an entire year before we bought our very first ad.

And in that window – across all those years before the very first ad – we’d already built the company to over ten million dollars in sales.

How was that possible? It was possible because we had Dream 100 relationships from day one. We had affiliates promoting our products to their lists. We had integration deals with bigger companies. We had co-branded products with influencers in our space. We had certification programs that turned customers into evangelists. We had every form of partnership-driven traffic that doesn’t require a platform to send you customers.

When Facebook ads got cheap and easy, I jumped on them – because I’d be foolish not to take advantage of cheap traffic. But I never replaced the partnership infrastructure with paid ads. I added paid ads on top of the partnership infrastructure. The partnerships kept working through every algorithm change, every cost increase, every iOS update. The ads came and went depending on the platform of the moment. The partnerships compounded.

Now, looking at where the marketing world is headed in the back half of this decade, I’m doubling down on partnerships. Not because I think paid ads are dead – they’re not, and you should still run them where they work. But because the attention is transferring, and the leverage is moving toward the people who have direct relationships with audiences. Which means the people on your Dream 100. Which means the work in this part of the book matters more than ever.

The Five Levels of Partnership

Part Two of this book is organized around what I think of as the five levels of partnership. They’re ways to actually transfer attention from somebody who has it to you and your business. Each one is a different shape. Each one fits a different stage of relationship and a different size of opportunity.

In order from lightest-touch to deepest commitment:

Level	Partnership	What It Looks Like
1	Affiliate Programs	They promote, you pay a percentage when they sell.
2	Integration Marketing	Your offer lives inside their existing customer flow.
3	Co-Branding	You build a product together. Both names on it.
4	Co-Authoring Books	You write a book together for their specific audience.
5	Certification Programs	You teach their audience to deliver your method.

Each one of the next five chapters covers one of these levels in depth. I'll walk you through how the level works, what it looks like in practice, the specific stories of how I've used each one to build my businesses, and - most importantly - how to apply each one to your own Dream 100.

These aren't alternatives to each other. Most successful businesses use multiple levels at the same time. The right move at any given moment depends on where you are with each specific Dream 100 relationship. With some people, an affiliate deal is the natural fit. With others, integration is right. With a chosen few, you're going to end up co-authoring a book or building a certification program together. The Dream 100 board tells you who. The five levels tell you how.

Why This Order Matters

One quick note before we get into Level 1. The reason I teach these five in this specific order - affiliates, integration, co-branding, co-authoring, certification - is that they ascend in commitment, in revenue, and in defensibility.

Affiliate programs are the easiest partnership to set up and the easiest to lose. Somebody promotes you for a few months, then moves on to another offer. The relationship is light.

Certification programs, at the other end of the spectrum, are the deepest partnership you can build. You've trained somebody. They use your name. Their entire business runs on

your framework. That relationship lasts decades.

As you move up the levels, the partnerships get harder to set up but produce more durable, more defensible, larger-revenue outcomes. Most businesses start with affiliate programs because they're the easiest entry point. Over time, the partnerships that actually compound for you are the ones higher up the ladder.

That's the map of Part Two. Five chapters, ascending in depth and commitment. By the end, you'll have a clear picture of which levels fit your business right now - and a game plan for working your way up the ladder over the next several years.

Let's start with Level 1: Affiliate Programs.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Level 1: Affiliate Programs

The first level of partnership, and the easiest entry point into the world of working with your Dream 100, is the affiliate program.

The basic structure is simple. You have a product. Other people have audiences. You make a deal: when they promote your product to their audience and somebody buys, you pay them a percentage of the sale. Usually somewhere between 30 and 50 percent on digital products, sometimes higher on coaching or events. They get paid for sending customers. You get traffic you couldn't otherwise reach.

Almost every successful direct-response business has an affiliate program. They're universal. Every shopping cart and course platform supports them out of the box. They're the lowest-friction partnership you can offer. And because of that, they're where most people start when they first begin working with their Dream 100.

But here's the catch. Most affiliate programs don't work.

Why Most Affiliate Programs Fail

Walk into the back office of almost any online business and you'll find an affiliate program. There's a page on the website that says "Affiliates," and behind it there's a sign-up form, and behind that there's some kind of dashboard where affiliates can grab links and check their stats.

And almost none of those programs are actually doing meaningful revenue.

The reason isn't that affiliate programs don't work as a model. They obviously do - the entire internet is full of businesses driven primarily by affiliate traffic. The reason most programs fail is that the people running them think the program itself is the marketing. They put up the page, set the commission rate, and then wait for affiliates to show up and start promoting.

Affiliates almost never show up on their own.

Why? Because every successful affiliate – every person on your Dream 100 list who actually has an audience – is being pitched constantly. Their inboxes are full of “will you promote my course?” emails. Their DMs are full of “hey, would you mind sharing this with your list?” requests. Asking them to log into your dashboard and grab a link is, from their perspective, just one more thing to do for somebody who hasn’t earned their attention.

If you want successful affiliates, the program isn’t the marketing. The program is the *infrastructure*. The marketing is something completely different. The marketing is the way you actively recruit affiliates by selling them on the opportunity of promoting you in the first place.

That’s what most people miss, and it’s the single biggest unlock in this chapter. You don’t set up an affiliate program and wait. You set up an affiliate program and then aggressively recruit into it.

THE BIG SHIFT

Stop thinking of an affiliate program as a passive system that affiliates discover. Start thinking of it as a recruitment funnel. The program is the offer. Affiliates are your customers. You sell them on it the same way you’d sell anyone on anything.

The Recruitment Funnel

Here’s the move. You build a funnel – with a video sales letter, an offer, a pitch – designed not to sell your product to your customer, but to sell affiliates on the opportunity of promoting your product to their audience.

The funnel does for affiliate recruitment what a sales page does for customer acquisition. It walks the affiliate through why this is a great opportunity, what they’ll get, what they’ll need to do, and how the math works for them. It anticipates their objections and answers them. It builds trust. It makes the case so compellingly that by the end, the affiliate is excited to promote rather than reluctantly agreeing because you wore them down with five follow-up emails.

Think about it this way. If you have a product that retails for \$1,000, and your average customer ends up spending \$5,000 with you over their lifetime, and you’re willing to pay 40 percent commission on the front end – that’s \$400 to the affiliate for every customer they send you. If you can get that math in front of the right person on your Dream 100,

framed as an opportunity, you're no longer asking for a favor. You're offering them a revenue stream.

That reframe - from "will you do me a favor and promote my thing" to "here's a meaningful business opportunity for you" - changes everything about the conversation.

The 10X Growth Con Story

Let me tell you the story that probably crystallizes this best.

A few years ago, Grant Cardone invited me to speak at an event he was running called Growth Con - his big 10X conference, designed to teach entrepreneurs how to 10X their companies in the next twelve months. Nine thousand people in the room. I had ninety minutes on stage to deliver value and make an offer for Click Funnels and a training package.

That single ninety-minute presentation did over \$3.2 million dollars in sales right there in the room. The goal had been three million. We hit three-point-two.

That number alone is a great story. But it's not actually the point of why I'm telling you this. The point is what happened next.

After the Growth Con presentation, we decided to turn that pitch - plus a six-hour breakdown of every move I made on stage, every piece of psychology, every micro-commitment, every trial close, every part of the offer structure - into a product. We called the launch Connect Secrets. And to launch it, we needed affiliates to promote it to their audiences.

So I sat down and recorded a different video. Not a video to the public. A video specifically to potential affiliates. And the video told the story of the Growth Con pitch - the nine thousand people, the choreographed presentation, the \$3.2 million in ninety minutes - because the story itself is what makes affiliates want to promote. They watch a video like that and they don't feel like they're being asked for a favor anymore. They feel like they're being invited into something that's already working.

That single recruitment video was the centerpiece of how we filled the affiliate program for the launch. It hooked them with the story. It showed them the proof. And then it asked, plainly, do you want to be a part of helping us put this in front of more people?

That launch went on to produce multiple Two Comma Club awards - affiliates who individually generated over a million dollars in sales just from promoting that one

product to their audiences. Multiple of them. From a single launch. All because we sold our affiliates as carefully as we sold our customers.

THE RECRUITMENT VIDEO STRUCTURE

Opening: hook them with the story. The win you're inviting them to be part of. Why now: what makes this moment specifically valuable. Timing, audience demand, momentum. What's in it for them: commission rates, swipe copy, promotion calendar, tools, support. The numbers: realistic top-performer earnings, average earnings, what "good" looks like. The recognition: leaderboards, prizes, named recognition, status inside your community. Call to action: how to apply, when promotions start, what they need to do next.

How to Build Your Recruitment Funnel

You don't need anything elaborate. The structure is straightforward. A landing page. A video. A simple application form for interested affiliates. An email sequence after they apply that walks them through onboarding.

The piece that takes real care is the video. Treat it like the most important sales letter you'll ever write – because for the affiliate side of your business, it is. Spend real time on it. Tell stories. Show specific numbers. Anticipate objections. Make it feel like an event happening rather than a static page sitting on the internet.

Once the funnel exists, drive traffic to it from your Dream 100 list. Send personal outreach emails to your top 100 prospects with a link to the video. Make individual calls to the top 20. Show up at events where they'll be and pitch them in person. The funnel doesn't replace the relationship work – it amplifies it. Every one of those conversations gets easier when you can say, "take five minutes and watch this video, and then let's talk."

And once the funnel is converting affiliates into the program, treat them like the partners they are. Communicate with them. Update them. Pay them on time. Recognize the top performers publicly. Give them resources to win. The program isn't static infrastructure – it's a community of business owners who chose to align their efforts with yours, and your job is to make sure their bet on you keeps paying off for them.

Tools That Make It Work

Two tactical points worth mentioning before we close this chapter.

First, swipe copy. Affiliates with audiences don't want to write your sales copy for you. They want to copy and paste something that already works. Provide swipe copy: pre-written email blasts, social media posts, video scripts, ad creatives. Make it as easy as possible for them to promote. The affiliates who do best with you will be the ones who barely have to think to put your offer in front of their audience.

Second, contests and leaderboards. The single biggest performance lever I've seen in affiliate programs is competition between affiliates. Run promotional windows where the top three affiliates win prizes, recognition, special status. Display a public leaderboard during the promotion. Affiliates with audiences are usually competitive people. Give them a target and a way to keep score, and the same affiliates who would have promoted you once will promote you three times.

Where Affiliates Fit in the Big Picture

Affiliate programs are level one for a reason. They're the lightest-touch form of partnership, the easiest to set up on your side, and the easiest for affiliates to walk away from when they get distracted by another opportunity. Every business should have an affiliate program. Most businesses can't build their entire growth strategy on affiliate programs alone.

Once your affiliate program is up and producing real revenue, the next move up the ladder is integration marketing – where instead of an affiliate occasionally promoting you to their list, your offer becomes a permanent part of how their business operates. You stop being an option. You become infrastructure inside someone else's funnel.

That's the next chapter. And it's where the partnership game starts to get really interesting.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Level 2: Integration Marketing

The second level of partnership is integration marketing. And of all the partnership strategies in this book, this is the one I think most entrepreneurs have heard of in passing but very few actually understand at the level required to use it well.

The reason I think it deserves its own dedicated chapter is that integration marketing, when it works, produces some of the most extraordinary results in all of direct response. We're going to walk through specific stories of companies that did hundreds of millions of dollars almost entirely through integration deals. Companies that built their entire business model on top of someone else's customer flow. The shape of these deals is unfamiliar to most marketers, but once you see them, you can't un-see them.

The framework comes from a man named Mark Joyner. Mark wrote a book called *Integration Marketing* back in 2009 – it's short, it's pure signal, and if anything you read in this chapter resonates, you should buy it and read it. Mark is one of those rare marketing thinkers who looks at the same landscape everybody else looks at and notices structural patterns that nobody else has noticed. The integration concept is the best example of his work.

What Integration Actually Means

With an affiliate program, somebody promotes your product to their list every once in a while. They send an email. Maybe they make a video. They get paid commission on whatever sales they generate, then they move on to whatever they're promoting next.

Integration marketing is different. Integration means your offer becomes a permanent part of how somebody else's business operates. Your product or your funnel is built into their customer flow in a way that doesn't require them to do anything once it's set up. You're not waiting for them to remember you. You're sitting inside their machine, getting traffic every time their machine runs.

The classic example is the post-purchase thank-you page. When somebody buys something on the internet, they get redirected to a thank-you page. The vast majority of thank-you pages on the internet just say "thanks for your order, here's your receipt."

They're wasted real estate. The customer just made the hardest decision they're ever going to make with this seller – they pulled out their wallet and bought – and the seller's response is to do nothing with that mental state.

Now imagine instead that thank-you page features *your* offer. The customer who just bought a related product is exactly the customer you want. The seller of that related product is willing to put your offer there in exchange for a cut of whatever sales come through. From the customer's perspective, they're seeing a complementary recommendation right when they're in buying mode. From the seller's perspective, they're monetizing a thank-you page that previously did nothing. From your perspective, you're acquiring qualified buyers without spending anything to find them. That's integration. Three winners, no losers.

THE INTEGRATION DEAL

An affiliate promotes you when they remember to. An integration partner sends you traffic every time their machine runs – because your offer is permanently built into their flow.

The BioTrust Thank-You Page Play

Let me tell you a story that puts numbers to this.

My friend Josh Bezoni built a supplement company called BioTrust – a weight-loss and nutrition company aimed at the body-building market. They sold the company a couple of years ago for somewhere in the range of \$300 to \$400 million dollars. And here's the thing that made that exit possible: BioTrust didn't build their initial customer base on Facebook ads. They didn't buy traffic. They built it on integration marketing through ClickBank thank-you pages.

ClickBank, for the uninitiated, is a giant marketplace of digital info products – ebooks, courses, programs. A huge percentage of the early information-marketing economy ran through ClickBank. Tens of thousands of products. Millions of transactions a year. Every single transaction ends with a thank-you page.

Josh's team went to every single offer on ClickBank in the body-building, weight-loss, and fitness niches – the six-pack-abs offers, the every-other-day-diet offers, all of them. They proposed a deal: "Let us put our opt-in box on your thank-you page. Customers who just

bought your product will see our offer for a free supplement guide. We'll handle everything from there."

And here's the part that's really clever. They didn't just put an opt-in box there and walk away. They prebuilt an entire follow-up email sequence - something like five hundred emails, deeply nurturing, with the publisher's affiliate code baked into every single email. So every time someone opted in from a publisher's thank-you page, that publisher continued to earn affiliate commission on every product BioTrust ever sold to that lead, for the lifetime of the relationship.

Most ClickBank publishers said yes immediately. The thank-you page was sitting there doing nothing for them anyway. A pre-built email sequence with their affiliate code in it, generating commission forever, was found money.

Now scale that up. Hundreds of ClickBank thank-you pages, all funneling buyers of weight-loss and fitness products to this single supplement offer. Every transaction that happened anywhere in their network sent a qualified buyer into BioTrust's funnel. They didn't have to do customer acquisition. The customer acquisition was happening on every other publisher's thank-you page, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

They built that company from zero, without Facebook ads, almost entirely through that integration play. And then they sold it for a few hundred million dollars. That's integration marketing at its peak. You don't need a hundred million dollars in advertising spend if you can find the right hundred thank-you pages.

Frank Kern's DVDs

Here's another integration story, from a different scale, that's instructive because of the structural creativity it shows.

Years ago, the marketer Frank Kern wanted to grow his email list. Email lists were the most valuable asset in direct-response marketing at the time - every name on a list was worth real revenue over the lifetime of the relationship. Frank could have done what everybody else was doing: run ads, optimize landing pages, grind out new subscribers one by one.

Instead, he used integration. Frank had recorded two DVD products called *Mass Control* and *Mass Persuasion* - deep training on direct-response marketing principles. He took those DVDs and went to every other marketer running a product launch and made them an offer: "When somebody buys your product, I want to send them a gift. I'll ship them my two DVDs for free. You don't have to charge shipping. You don't have to charge handling.

I'll cover everything. All I need is for your thank-you page to capture their shipping address, and I'll send the DVDs out myself."

Most of the other marketers said yes immediately. They got a high-quality bonus to add to their offers, free, with no fulfillment work and no shipping cost on their side. It made their offers more valuable. Conversion rates went up. Refund rates went down. Free upside, no real downside.

Dan Kennedy himself sent the DVDs to every single one of his members at the height of his influence. Other major direct-response marketers did the same. Frank built a massive list of buyers, with both physical and email addresses, and the buyers were already qualified - they'd just made a marketing-related purchase from somebody Frank trusted, which meant they were exactly the right kind of lead.

The structure is what made it work. He didn't ask other marketers to promote him. He gave them something that made *their* offers more valuable, and his lead-generation funnel rode along inside it. That's the shape of a great integration deal: a structure where everyone wins, and the integration partner's self-interest is doing the distribution work for you.

Anthony Morrison and Click Funnels

One more story, because this one's personal.

Years ago a marketer named Anthony Morrison reached out to me about an integration deal. Anthony has a sizable audience of aspiring entrepreneurs. He proposed something specific: he would build his entire training program around teaching people to build sales funnels, and the implementation tool he'd teach them to use would be Click Funnels.

From his perspective, recommending a tool gave his training real teeth. His students could leave his training and immediately implement what they'd learned. From our perspective, every student who finished his training became a Click Funnels customer for at least the trial period - and many of them stayed for years.

That deal has driven an enormous amount of revenue for both of us over the years. Tens of millions of dollars. From a single integration where his training program and our tool are structurally locked together.

Notice the shape. Anthony isn't promoting Click Funnels in the affiliate sense - he's not sending occasional emails. Click Funnels is integrated into the substance of what he teaches. His curriculum can't function without us. Our tool gets recommended every time

he runs his training. The integration is structural. He benefits because his training works better when his students implement on a real tool. We benefit because his students naturally become our customers. The integration runs without anyone having to remember to do anything.

THE QUESTION TO ASK

When you're looking at someone on your Dream 100, ask: where in their existing customer flow could my offer fit naturally? Thank-you pages. Onboarding sequences. Curriculum. Bonuses. Wherever there's real estate that's either empty or under-monetized, there's a potential integration.

How to Set Up an Integration Deal

The mechanics of a good integration deal come down to three things. Get them right and the deals tend to fall into place. Get them wrong and the integration falls apart no matter how good the underlying idea was.

First, the deal has to be a clear win for the partner. Not theoretically a win. Not eventually a win. A clear, easy-to-describe win that they can see immediately. That usually means money – a generous revenue share. Sometimes it means strategic value – your product makes their offer more valuable, the way Frank Kern's DVD did. Either way, the partner has to be able to say, in one sentence, why this deal is good for them.

Second, the integration has to be low-effort once it's set up. The whole magic of integration is that it runs without your partner having to remember anything. If your integration requires them to write copy every month, or update a sales page each quarter, or remember to mention you in their next email – it's not really an integration. It's an affiliate deal with extra steps. Real integrations are set-it-and-forget-it on the partner's side.

Third, the tracking has to be clean and the payments have to be on time. Always. Without exception. The integration partner needs to trust that they'll get paid accurately for whatever traffic or sales come through their integration. The first time a payment is late, or a tracking number doesn't match what they expected, the relationship gets fragile. Treat your integration partners better than you treat your customers, because integration partners feed you customers.

ANATOMY OF A GOOD INTEGRATION DEAL

1. Clear win for the partner - stated in one sentence. 2. Set-and-forget on the partner's side - no ongoing work required. 3. Clean tracking, accurate reporting, on-time payments - every time. 4. Long-term framing - you're building a permanent piece of their flow, not running a quick promo. 5. Mutual escalation path - successful integrations often grow into co-branded products or deeper partnerships.

Where Integration Leads

Integration marketing is a major step up from affiliate programs. The relationships are deeper, the revenue is more durable, and the partner's incentives stay aligned with yours over time. Once a thank-you page is integrated, it stays integrated. Once a curriculum is built around your tool, it stays built around your tool. The traffic compounds rather than evaporating the moment your partner gets distracted by a new opportunity.

But there's a level beyond integration that takes the partnership even further. What happens when, instead of fitting your offer inside somebody else's flow, you and your partner build a brand new product together? Two names on it. Two audiences behind it. Both businesses benefit from every sale, not because of a revenue share, but because the product is structurally a joint venture from day one.

That's co-branding. Level three. And it's where the partnership game starts to look less like marketing and more like a small joint business inside the larger one.

Let's look at it next.

CHAPTER NINE

Level 3: Co-Branding

With affiliate programs, somebody promotes your product to their list. With integration marketing, your offer becomes part of how their business operates. Both are partnerships, but in both cases, the product is still your product. You own it. Your name is on it. The partner is a distribution channel.

Co-branding is structurally different. With co-branding, you don't have a product yet. You and your partner build one together, from scratch, designed jointly to serve both of your audiences. Both names are on the cover. Both businesses are bound to its success. The product itself is a partnership.

This is a much deeper level of commitment than the previous two. It's also where some of the most lopsided wins in marketing happen – because when both partners contribute their best assets to the same product, the result can be something neither of you could have built alone.

How Co-Branding Is Different

Let me make the distinction crisp.

In an affiliate deal, you have a sales page, the affiliate sends traffic, you split the revenue. The product is yours. The relationship can end any time.

In an integration deal, your product slots into their existing flow. The product is still yours. The integration runs as long as both parties keep the structure in place, but if you ever want to walk, the product is still yours and you can walk with it.

In a co-branding deal, the product is a joint venture. Built together. Sold together. The two businesses are intertwined at the product level, not just at the marketing level. Walking away gets complicated. Both names are on the cover. Both audiences expect both partners to be involved. The deal isn't a marketing arrangement – it's a small business inside the larger one.

That's the trade-off. More commitment, more upside. Less flexibility, more durability. The partnerships that survive at this level tend to last for years and produce revenue

numbers that look completely different from anything you'd see in a normal affiliate deal.

THE STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCE

Affiliates and integrations are marketing arrangements built around your product. Co-branding is a joint product built around the partnership. The product itself is the deal.

Funnel Scripts

Let me tell you the story that's shaped how I think about co-branding more than any other.

Before Click Funnels, my friend Jim Edwards had a small business creating fill-in-the-blank copywriting scripts – software that asked you a few questions about your offer and spit out polished copy at the end. He sold it to a small audience he'd built over the years. It worked, but it was capped by the size of his list.

Jim came to our very first Funnel Hacking Live and had a lightbulb moment. He looked around at the room full of Click Funnels customers and realized every single one of them needed exactly the kind of copywriting help his scripts provided. So he came to me afterward and said, "Russell, would you sell my scripts to your audience?"

I said no. I didn't want to sell somebody else's products to my customers. I was trying to keep that relationship clean – these were my people, and I wanted everything they bought from us to be ours.

Jim came back with a different pitch. "Okay, what if we create a product together? Call it Funnel Scripts. I'll do all the work – I'll build all the scripts, put my frameworks in there, plug in the Dot Com Secrets scripts so it's integrated with your book. Both our names on it. Co-branded. We'll both own it together. You just promote it to your audience."

That conversation changed everything. Because the move Jim made wasn't to ask me to sell his stuff. The move was to propose a joint product where both names were on the cover and both businesses were bound to its success. Same audience. Different structure. Completely different deal.

So we did it. We co-branded Funnel Scripts. Jim brought his copywriting frameworks and built the entire software. I brought the Click Funnels audience and the marketing engine.

We split profits fifty-fifty. We covered the ad costs on our side.

Funnel Scripts has gone on to qualify for the Two Comma Club X award – our internal recognition for funnels that have generated over ten million dollars in sales. And Jim, on his side of that partnership, has never spent a single penny on ads to drive that revenue. Not one. He didn't buy Facebook ads. He didn't pay for traffic. He didn't fund a separate launch campaign. The entire flow of customers came through the Click Funnels audience and Click Funnels marketing. Jim contributed the copywriting frameworks and the brand association. I contributed the audience and the marketing engine.

That is what a great co-branding deal looks like. Each partner contributes what they're best at. Neither has to compensate for what they're bad at. The product reaches an audience that wanted it, framed by trust from both names on the cover. And the revenue lands in a way that the financial structure of an affiliate or integration deal simply could not produce.

WHEN CO-BRANDING WINS

When each partner contributes a different essential ingredient – product, audience, expertise, brand – and neither could have built the same thing alone.

The Anatomy of a Co-Branding Deal

Not every co-branding deal works the way Funnel Scripts worked. The ones that do tend to share a few characteristics.

First, complementary contributions. The two partners need to be bringing meaningfully different assets to the table. Jim brought copywriting expertise; I brought a marketing engine and an audience. We weren't competing. We weren't doing similar work in slightly different ways. We were filling in each other's gaps. The product needed both of us to exist, and that's what made the deal sticky.

If you and your potential partner are both audience-side, both product-side, or both expertise-side, co-branding usually doesn't work. Both of you are missing the same thing. The deal stalls because neither of you can fill in what the other is also missing.

Second, audience overlap. Your audience and your partner's audience need to want the same kind of product. They don't have to be the exact same people. But the markets

need to be adjacent. Click Funnels customers and Jim Edwards copywriting students were highly overlapping, and even where they weren't, they wanted the same kind of product – a tool that helped them write better copy for their funnels.

Co-branding deals where the two audiences want fundamentally different things produce products that nobody knows how to position. The marketing collapses because the message has to be two different messages.

Third, clear ownership of the build. Somebody has to own the product. Somebody has to own the marketing. Somebody has to own the support. Co-branding deals fall apart when both partners think the other is handling it. Lock in who does what before the product launches.

Fourth, fair revenue split. The split should reflect the relative weight of what each partner brought. Don't force a 50/50 just because it feels fair. If one partner is contributing the audience and the marketing engine and the support team, and the other is contributing expertise alone, the split should reflect that. Bend the structure to the contributions, not to a default ratio.

ANATOMY OF A CO-BRANDED DEAL

1. Complementary contributions – each partner brings something different and essential. 2. Adjacent audiences – same kind of customer, even if not the exact same people. 3. Clear ownership – product, marketing, support all assigned, in writing. 4. Revenue split based on contribution weight – not a default 50/50. 5. A clear out-clause – what happens if one partner wants to exit, in advance.

When Co-Branding Doesn't Make Sense

I want to be honest about something. Co-branding is the partnership level where I've seen the most expensive failures, and I want you to go in with your eyes open.

Co-branding fails when the two partners are too similar. Two audience-side people trying to co-brand a product without anybody actually building it. Two expertise-side people trying to co-brand a product without anybody driving the marketing. The deal sounds great over coffee. Six months in, nothing has happened. Nine months in, both partners blame each other. Twelve months in, the relationship is damaged and there's nothing to show for it.

Co-branding fails when the audiences don't actually overlap. You can convince yourself that two markets are similar enough when you really want a deal to work. Test that assumption hard before you commit. If your audience and theirs only share a tiny intersection, the joint product will land in a market that's smaller than either of your individual audiences – the worst of both worlds.

Co-branding fails when the revenue split is forced to be even when the contributions aren't. The partner contributing more eventually feels resentment. The partner contributing less eventually disengages. The deal limps along producing mediocre results until somebody pulls the plug.

And co-branding fails when neither partner truly owns the product. Both partners have day jobs. Both partners think the other is handling the build. Six months go by. The product never gets shipped, or it gets shipped half-finished and nobody is willing to take responsibility for fixing what's broken.

If any of these conditions exist with a potential partner, do an integration deal instead. Or an affiliate deal. Don't force a co-branding when the structure doesn't support it. The partnership ladder isn't about climbing every rung. It's about finding the right level for each specific relationship on your Dream 100.

How to Spot a Co-Branding Opportunity

When you're looking through your Dream 100 board, the people most likely to make great co-branding partners are the ones whose strengths are precisely what your business is missing.

Your business is strong on audience. Look for partners with strong product or expertise.

Your business is strong on product. Look for partners with strong audience or platform.

Your business is strong on operations and marketing. Look for partners who have unique IP – frameworks, methodologies, brand authority – but no infrastructure to commercialize it.

In every case, the prompt is: where am I weak, and who on my Dream 100 is strong in exactly that place? When you find a real complement – someone whose strengths fit into your gaps the way two puzzle pieces snap together – that's the moment to start a conversation about a co-branded product.

And the conversation can take time. Most great co-branded products come out of relationships that have been building for years through earlier levels of partnership. You did an affiliate deal first. Then an integration. Then, once both businesses had data showing the audiences responded well to each other, somebody floated the idea of a joint product. The ladder works when you climb it patiently.

Speaking of the ladder, there's a level above co-branding that takes the joint-product concept even further. Instead of building a software tool or a course together, you and your partner author a book. A book that's targeted at a specific niche, with specific authority, with both your names on the cover. The book becomes the perfect lead generator for a niche neither of you could have entered alone.

That's level four. Co-authoring books. Let's look at it next.

CHAPTER TEN

Level 4: Co-Authoring Books

Co-branding takes you partway. You and your partner build a product together, both names on the cover, both businesses bound to its success. The level above co-branding is the same idea applied to one of the most powerful authority-building tools in business: the book.

When you co-author a book with somebody on your Dream 100, you're not just building a product together. You're building a credentialing instrument. A book grants its authors a kind of authority no other format does. The phrase "author of" opens doors that "co-creator of" never opens. People take a book seriously in ways they don't take a webinar or a course or a software tool seriously, even when the actual content is identical.

And when there are two names on the cover, both authors get the credentialing benefit. Both names get associated with the topic. Both authors get the speaking gigs, the podcast appearances, the credibility transfer that follows a book launch. It's co-branding plus authority – and authority is what eventually unlocks the deepest partnerships in any market.

Why a Book Is the Right Vehicle

There's a reason books outperform almost every other co-creation format when the goal is partnership at this level.

First, books carry permanent authority. A course you co-create might do well for a year and then fade. A software tool you co-create has to be supported and maintained forever. A book is a one-time build that produces a permanent asset. Twenty years from now, both your names will still be on the cover. The credentialing doesn't expire.

Second, books are inexpensive to give away. A digital book costs nothing to distribute. A physical book costs a few dollars. That economics matters when you're using the book as a lead generator – which is what most modern marketers actually use books for. "Free book, just pay shipping" is one of the most reliable lead-generation funnels in direct response, and a co-authored book gives both partners a piece of every lead it generates.

Third, books open doors no other format opens. Bookstores, libraries, podcasts that only interview “authors,” speaking engagements, media coverage. Co-authoring puts both partners in front of audiences and gatekeepers neither of them could have reached with a course or software tool, no matter how good.

Fourth, the writing process itself deepens the relationship. Co-authoring a book means months of collaboration on substance. You learn how the other person thinks. They learn how you think. By the time the book ships, you’ve worked through more substantive disagreements together than most business partners ever do, and the relationship is far more trust-loaded than it was when you started.

WHY BOOKS WIN AT LEVEL 4

Books grant authority that doesn’t expire, cost almost nothing to distribute, and open doors no other format opens. Two names on the cover means both authors get all of that – forever.

The Dan Kennedy Template

The book co-authoring strategy I’m about to describe isn’t my invention. I learned it from Dan Kennedy, who’s arguably the most influential direct-response marketer of the last forty years. I have a chance to talk to Dan for two hours every month, and one of the patterns he keeps coming back to is the power of co-authored books.

Dan told me that of all the customers he’s ever had – his hundred-thousand-dollar buyers, the people who pay him serious money – the best ones did not come from Facebook ads, did not come from Google, did not come from direct mail. They came in one of two ways. Either they walked into a Barnes and Noble, picked up one of his books off the shelf, took it home, read it, and then went online and found him. Or somebody Dan had co-authored a book with sold that book into their own audience, and a reader from that audience came in through Dan’s book.

So Dan figured out something subtle and powerful. Most authors write a book about their topic, then try to sell it to people interested in that topic. Dan flipped the script. He wrote books specifically designed to be co-authored with people who had niche audiences – and then designed for those co-authors to bundle the book into the back-end of their own businesses.

Dan told me about one of his books, a kind of generic success book, that he wrote with exactly that goal in mind. He wrote most of the book himself, and his co-authors each contributed a single chapter. Then those co-authors took the finished book and bundled it as a free bonus into the back-end of their own businesses. Every customer those partners acquired received the co-authored book – with Dan’s name on the cover – in their welcome package.

Dan told me that one book got him into the hands of tens of thousands of his dream customers. All of them buyers. All of them already qualified by the partner who shipped them the book. From a single book project, written once, distributed forever through the partners’ own back-end systems.

That’s the core insight of the Dan Kennedy template. The book is structured so that both authors get something they couldn’t have gotten alone. The bigger-name author (Dan) gets niche audience access – specifically, audiences of buyers, distributed by partners with skin in the game. The niche-expert co-author (the dentist or the chiropractor or the financial advisor) gets credentialed authority and a high-quality bonus they can attach to their own business.

The Marketing Secrets for X Plan

I want to tell you what I’m doing personally with this template right now, because I think it’s the cleanest illustration of how to apply Dan’s structure to a specific business.

My business is built around marketing. I’ve written a few books – Dot Com Secrets, Expert Secrets, Traffic Secrets – that go deep on how marketing actually works. Those books are heavy. They’re for the entrepreneurs and marketers who are willing to do the work to really learn the frameworks. But there are entire industries I’d like to be in front of where the people who need my frameworks the most don’t read marketing books. Local service businesses. Professional service practices. Dentists, chiropractors, financial advisors, restaurant owners. They want the principles, but they want them framed for their world specifically.

So I’m writing a lighter book called Marketing Secrets that pulls the core foundational principles from across all three of my major books – the universal stuff that applies to every business. And I’m structuring it so that I can co-author versions of it with niche-expert partners across many different industries.

The plan is a series of co-authored books titled along the lines of *Marketing Secrets for Dentists*, *Marketing Secrets for Chiropractors*, *Marketing Secrets for Book Authors*, and on

and on – essentially one for every niche where there’s an operator with a real audience. The structure of each book is unusual. I write the first half of every chapter, teaching the core principle. Then my co-author from that specific niche writes the second half of the chapter, showing exactly how that principle plays out in their world. Russell teaches the principle. The dentist shows you how it works in a dental practice. Russell teaches the next principle. The dentist shows you how it works for that. Chapter after chapter.

From the niche partner’s side, having a co-authored book with my name on it gives them a credential they’d struggle to build alone, plus a complete book they can use as a lead magnet, bundle into their existing offers, or sell to their audience. From my side, every book that gets published puts my frameworks in front of an entirely new niche audience that my own books would never have reached. Each book is a new doorway into a market I couldn’t have penetrated otherwise.

The publishing partner I’m working with on this is a man named Rob Kosberg. Rob runs a publishing company that specializes in helping business leaders write and launch authority-building books. He’s built the infrastructure to do this kind of project at scale – ghostwriters, editors, launch sequences, the whole machine. Without an infrastructure partner like Rob, the Dan Kennedy template stays a great idea that takes too long to execute. With one, you can publish multiple co-authored books a year, each one opening up a new niche.

If you’re thinking about applying this template to your business, the infrastructure question is one of the most important. You either need to be a great writer with the discipline to ship books on schedule, or you need a partner who can run the production side. Most people who try the Dan Kennedy template solo run out of energy after the first book. The infrastructure piece is what makes it work as a repeatable strategy.

How to Find the Right Co-Author

The selection of who to co-author with is where most book partnerships succeed or fail.

The right co-author for a Dan-Kennedy-style book has three characteristics.

First, they have an audience your audience doesn’t reach. The whole point of the partnership is to access an audience neither of you could reach alone. A co-author whose audience overlaps mostly with yours doesn’t add reach – they just dilute the deal. Look for people with deep niche audiences in industries adjacent to yours but not overlapping.

Second, they have credibility in their specific niche. The book is going to be sold partly on their authority within their industry. If their authority is shaky, the book lands as just another self-help book without distinctive standing. Look for co-authors who are already known in their niche – a dentist with a podcast, a chiropractor with a clinic chain, a financial advisor with a serious practice.

Third, they're willing to actually do the work. Co-authoring a book is real labor. Writing chapters, reviewing drafts, doing publicity, running launches. A co-author who treats it as a passive credential play is going to leave you to do everything yourself, which kills the dynamic that makes these books worth doing. Look for someone who treats the project as their book too – not a co-branding gift you're bestowing on them.

THE RIGHT CO-AUTHOR PROFILE

1. They have an audience yours doesn't reach. 2. They're already credible in their specific niche. 3. They're willing to do real work – not just sign the cover. 4. Their reputation in their niche is one you'd be proud to be associated with. 5. Their schedule allows them to ship inside a reasonable timeline.

How the Deal Gets Structured

Most co-authored book deals fall into one of two patterns.

The first pattern is the equal split. Both authors share writing duties roughly evenly, both get equal billing on the cover, and revenue splits 50/50. This works when both authors have meaningful audiences and the book is genuinely a joint product where both partners contribute equally.

The second pattern, which I think is more common in the Dan Kennedy template, is the lead-author structure. One author is the lead – their name is bigger on the cover, they handle most of the strategic frameworks, they own the publishing infrastructure. The other author contributes the niche expertise and is a credit on the cover. Revenue splits accordingly – typically 70/30 or 80/20 in favor of the lead author.

The lead-author structure works because it's honest about what each partner is contributing. The lead author is providing the marketing engine, the audience, the publishing apparatus. The contributing author is providing niche access and a credibility hook into a specific industry. Trying to force these into a 50/50 deal usually means

somebody walks away resentful. Match the split to the contribution.

STRUCTURE THE DEAL TO MATCH THE CONTRIBUTION

Don't default to 50/50. The lead author and the niche author are doing different work, with different leverage. A clean 70/30 or 80/20 split, with the lead author handling production and the niche author handling promotion in their niche, usually works better than forced parity.

Where Co-Authoring Leads

Co-authoring a book with somebody on your Dream 100 is a deep commitment. It takes months. It involves real creative collaboration. It puts both your reputations on a single artifact that will outlast almost everything else either of you make. Done right, it produces a partnership and a credential that compound for both of you for years.

There's exactly one level above co-authoring. It's where you stop trying to reach the audience yourself, and instead train other people to deliver your method to their audiences. Where the partnership becomes the multiplier - where instead of co-authoring with one person at a time, you certify dozens or hundreds of practitioners who go out and teach your framework under your name.

That's level five. Certification programs. The deepest, most defensible, longest-compounding partnership level there is. And it's the chapter we go to next.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Level 5: Certification Programs

This is the chapter I've been building toward for the entire second half of this book. Level five is the deepest, most defensible, longest-compounding partnership strategy I know of. And it's the one I'm personally betting more of my own time and energy on than any other right now.

Here's what level five looks like. Instead of you reaching audiences directly, you train a group of practitioners - dozens, hundreds, sometimes thousands of them - in your specific framework. They go out into their own niches, their own communities, their own client bases. They use your name. They teach your method. They credential under your certification.

Each one of them becomes their own version of you. They go into communities you couldn't have reached. They serve client bases you couldn't have served. They build local credibility that no centralized brand could ever build. And every one of them is doing it in a way that strengthens your framework, not weakens it.

That's the multiplier effect. One framework. Hundreds of practitioners. Each practitioner reaching audiences and clients you would never have personally touched. The math compounds in a way no other partnership level can match.

THE LEVEL FIVE INSIGHT

At every other partnership level, you're still doing the work yourself - directly or through one partner. At level five, you train other people to do the work in your name. The partnership becomes a multiplier.

Operation Create Minions

I want to be honest about the language I use internally for this strategy, because it's a little tongue-in-cheek but it captures the real idea.

I call it Operation Create Minions.

Not minions in a bad sense. Minions in the sense that the goal of this entire strategy is to build an army of practitioners who deliver your method, in your name, into communities you couldn't personally reach. Minions are how the founders of every truly durable framework in history built businesses that outlasted them. Doctors aren't the inventors of medicine. They're practitioners trained in a system somebody else established. Lawyers aren't the inventors of law. They're practitioners. The system is the product. The practitioners are the distribution.

If you can train a hundred or a thousand people to teach your framework in their own niches, you've built something that scales beyond what your personal time will ever allow. And you've built something that, if you set up the legal and operational structure right, keeps producing value long after you've stopped paying personal attention to it.

Brooke Castillo and the Model

Let me tell you about somebody whose business model has shaped how I think about level five more than almost any other example. Her name is Brooke Castillo, and she runs a company called The Life Coach School.

I know Brooke really well. I've studied her business closely. I'm actually an active member inside her ecosystem because I want to watch what she's doing and how she's doing it. And I'll tell you why - of all the info-product brands I'm aware of, hers is probably the most successful one I've ever seen, and her business runs on essentially two offers.

Brooke's entire company teaches one framework. She calls it the model. The basic idea is that thoughts create feelings, feelings create actions, and actions create results - so if you change the thought at the top, everything downstream of it changes. That's the system. Not a hundred frameworks. Not a curriculum that takes years to learn. One core framework, taught and re-taught and reinforced through every piece of her material.

Around that single framework, she's built two offers. The first is a membership site at three hundred dollars a month, where members learn to apply the model to whatever they're working on - losing weight, quitting drinking, building a business, anything. The second is a certification program at eighteen thousand dollars a year, where she trains aspiring life coaches to deliver the model to their own clients. That's it. Two offers. One framework.

Here's how the structure of those two offers feeds itself, which is the part you really want to study. The three-hundred-dollar membership is essentially a break-even funnel. All the

revenue from it gets dumped right back into ads to acquire more members. Brooke isn't trying to make money on the membership directly – she's using it to grow the audience and qualify buyers. Then once a quarter, she launches the eighteen-thousand-dollar certification program, and the upgrade path from membership to certification produces enormous revenue in concentrated bursts.

The other piece is what happens to the certified coaches. Once they're certified, they're the ones doing live coaching sessions inside the three-hundred-dollar membership. So her certified practitioners aren't just out in the world delivering the framework to their own clients – they're also doing the day-to-day delivery work inside her membership site. The certification grads become the labor that delivers the membership product, which generates the audience that eventually becomes the next certification cohort. The whole thing feeds itself.

Brooke's company is doing tens of millions of dollars a year off that two-offer structure. From one framework. Multiplied through a network of certified practitioners who each have their own audiences and clients she's never personally touched. It's probably the cleanest illustration of level five economics I've ever seen.

That's when level five really clicked for me. Not a marketing arrangement. A multiplier on a framework you've already built. If you have the framework right, the certification structure is what turns it into a business that scales beyond your personal time.

Annie Grace and the Drinking Coaching Business

Brooke is a big example. Let me give you another one that's smaller in scale and in a completely different niche, because it shows the same pattern playing out in a category nobody would call traditional info marketing.

My friend Annie Grace runs a business that helps people get mindfully back in control of drinking. She's not in the business opportunity space. She's not teaching marketing. She's not in any of the categories you usually associate with high-ticket certification programs. She's helping real people work through their relationship with alcohol. And the certification model has transformed her business completely.

Annie's certification is a six-month program that costs fifteen thousand dollars. Inside that, certified students get access to her mastermind for an entire year, and there's ongoing community access after that. To date, she's put a hundred and seventy-five people through it. Each one of those certified coaches is now out in the world delivering Annie's methodology to their own clients.

Here's what that did to her business. Annie used to be the bottleneck. Every program she ran, she taught personally. There was a hard ceiling on how many clients she could help, because she only had so many hours in a week. Now her programs are taught by her certified coaches, not by her. She launches a year-long program every single month at two thousand dollars per seat, with somewhere between two hundred and four hundred people enrolling each month. That entire delivery side of the business runs on her certified coaches - she's no longer the bottleneck.

Last year, the certification program itself did about two million dollars in direct revenue. But the bigger number is what the certification did to the rest of her business. Annie estimates the certification is responsible for somewhere between eighty and ninety percent of her total business, because the coaches she's certified are the ones who make the rest of her programs scalable. Without them, she's back to being the bottleneck, capped at her own personal time. With them, the business runs at a scale a single person could never personally deliver.

That's the pattern at level five. Build the framework once. Train practitioners to deliver it. Suddenly the math of your business changes from "how many hours can I personally bill?" to "how many practitioners can I credential, and what can each of them deliver in their own niche?"

And here's the part nobody talks about. Annie's direct work with clients got better, not worse, after she launched the certification. Once she had to teach her framework to other coaches, she had to articulate it more cleanly than she ever had. The act of training certified practitioners forced her to refine and codify the framework in a way her solo coaching never had. Her own work got sharper. Her materials got cleaner. Her brand got stronger.

That's a recurring pattern at level five. The act of building a certification doesn't just multiply your reach - it improves the quality of everything else you do, because it forces a level of clarity in the framework that solo work doesn't demand.

How a Certification Program Actually Works

Let me walk you through the structural pieces of a certification program. The mechanics are pretty consistent across niches and price points.

First, the framework. You need a method. A specific, branded, teachable system that produces a specific result. Not just a topic. A system. "Marketing" is a topic. "The Click Funnels Two-Comma-Club Method" is a system. The framework needs a name, a

structure, a step-by-step way to apply it. Without that, you don't have something to certify people in.

Second, the training. You need a way to teach practitioners the framework. Usually some combination of recorded curriculum, live training calls, supervised practice, and a final certification exam or project. The training takes practitioners from "interested in the framework" to "competent at delivering the framework to a client."

Third, the certification itself. A formal credential. A logo or seal practitioners can use. Listing on your directory. Permission to use your branded language with attribution. The certification is the credential the practitioner buys access to. It needs to be meaningful enough that buyers in their niche actually trust it.

Fourth, the ongoing relationship. Certified practitioners pay ongoing fees – sometimes annual maintenance fees, sometimes royalty splits on what they earn, sometimes both. In exchange, they get continued access to updated training, the right to keep using the certification, and ongoing community access. The annuity stream from certifications is what makes the economics work over the long term.

Fifth, quality control. You need a way to revoke certifications when practitioners misuse the framework or damage your brand. Without quality control, your certified practitioners can erode the value of the certification for everyone, including you. Don't skip this part.

THE FIVE PIECES OF A CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

1. The framework – a branded, named, teachable system that produces a specific result. 2. The training – curriculum that takes a practitioner from interested to competent. 3. The certification – the credential, logo, directory listing, branded language rights. 4. The ongoing relationship – annual fees or royalty splits in exchange for continued access. 5. Quality control – the ability to revoke certifications when standards aren't met.

The Public-Domain Legacy Angle

There's one more piece of certification programs I want to talk about, because it's the part that makes this strategy genuinely durable in a way no other partnership level achieves.

If you build a certification program correctly, the framework you've built outlives you.

Right now I'm kind of obsessed with collecting the first editions of every personal development author from about 1850 to 1950. I've been ordering all of them. And here's what's fascinating when you start looking at that whole library: the only authors from that era you've ever heard of are the ones whose work fell into the public domain.

Think about Napoleon Hill. Everybody knows Napoleon Hill. Why? Because he never refilled his copyright when the laws changed, so most of his work fell into the public domain. Other people picked up his books, republished them, taught them, built courses around them, kept his message alive. After he died, his book *Outwitting the Devil* sold five hundred thousand copies. Five hundred thousand copies of a book by a man who had been gone for decades. The reason that's possible isn't that the world rediscovered Napoleon Hill on its own. It's that other people kept his message going. The framework outlived its originator because the rights to it were free for the world to carry forward.

Now look at most of the authors from that same era who didn't fall into the public domain. They're forgotten. The ideas might have been just as good. The frameworks might have been just as deep. But without a community of people empowered to keep teaching the work, the work disappeared with the author.

I'll tell you something I don't talk about much. One of my biggest fears is that everything I've been working on for the last twenty years just disappears when I do. So I'm actually working with my publishers right now on a structure where, when I die, my inheritance goes to the publisher to buy back the rights to all of my books and courses, and then everything falls into the public domain. So that anyone who wants to can take the work, republish it, teach it, build certifications around it, and keep the message going for the next hundred years. That's the version of legacy I care about. Not the royalties. The continuation.

Certification programs are the same idea, but in a different shape. A great certification program builds a community of practitioners who carry your framework forward whether you're still personally involved or not. Doctors don't reinvent medicine every generation. Lawyers don't reinvent law every generation. They're practitioners trained in systems somebody else established, and the system continues because the practitioners exist.

Your framework can have the same property. If you set the legal and operational structure up right, your certification program continues producing value – to your estate, to a successor, to your community – for decades after you've stopped personally running it. The practitioners are the continuation.

This is why level five is the deepest partnership strategy. It's the only one of the five that builds a system that survives independent of your direct involvement. Affiliate programs die when you stop running them. Integrations break when you stop maintaining them. Co-branded products fade when you stop marketing them. Even co-authored books eventually go out of print. But a certification program with a real practitioner community keeps running on its own momentum, generation after generation.

That's the legacy angle. And it's why I think every entrepreneur who has built a real framework should eventually be thinking about this level. Not as a get-rich-quick scheme. As the way you make sure the work you've done in your career outlasts your career.

THE LEGACY EFFECT

Done right, a certification program is the only partnership level that produces revenue and impact independent of your direct involvement. The framework outlives you. The practitioners carry it forward. That's how marketing concepts become permanent.

Where to Start

If you're thinking about building a certification program, the work starts with the framework itself. Before you can train practitioners in your method, you have to actually have a method that's clean enough to teach.

Spend real time codifying what you do. Write down your client process. Identify the steps. Name them. Refine them until somebody who's never worked with you could read your materials and understand the system. Most coaches and consultants have implicit frameworks they use intuitively but have never written down. The act of writing it down is the first step toward being able to certify other people in it.

Once the framework is clean, run a small pilot. Train a handful of practitioners – ideally people you already know and trust – and watch them try to deliver the framework to their own clients. You'll discover gaps in your training, places where the framework needs more specificity, places where practitioners get stuck. Refine the curriculum based on what the pilot reveals.

Then, once you've seen practitioners successfully deliver the framework, you have something certifiable. That's when you formalize the certification, set up the directory,

build the maintenance fees and the renewal cadence, and start opening it up to a broader pool of practitioners.

From there, the strategy compounds. Certified practitioners refer aspiring certificates. The directory becomes a referral engine. The community becomes its own marketing engine. The framework propagates.

The End of Part Two

That's the five levels of partnership. Affiliate programs at the bottom. Integration marketing. Co-branding. Co-authoring books. Certification programs at the top.

Each level uses the same Dream 100 board you built in Part One. Each level fits a different stage of relationship with the people on that board. And each level produces a different shape of return. Most successful businesses use multiple levels at the same time, with different people on the list, depending on what fits each specific relationship.

Now we have one chapter left. The conclusion. And it's about the part that always trips entrepreneurs up at the end of a book like this - actually doing the work, instead of just understanding it.

Let's go.

CONCLUSION

Now Go Build It

Here's the truth about everything you've just read.

The framework is simple. The Dream 100. The two paths. The five levels of partnership. You could explain the entire framework to somebody at a coffee shop in twenty minutes and they'd nod and say, yeah, that makes sense.

Knowing the framework isn't the hard part. The hard part is doing the work.

And here's what twenty years of teaching this principle has shown me. The people who get the result are the people who do the work. The people who don't do the work don't get the result. There is no third option. No clever shortcut. No way to skip the part where you sit down for three to five hours and actually build the board, then make the calls, send the emails, ship the deals.

Most of you reading this won't do it. I'm not being cynical - I'm being honest. Most readers of any business book don't apply what they read. They put the book down feeling motivated and inspired, and then nothing changes. The framework stays in their head as something they understand intellectually but never operationalize.

If that's you, that's fine. Some books are entertainment. Some books are learning. Both are valid uses of a book.

But if you're in the small percentage of readers who are going to actually do the work, here's what I want to leave you with.

The Compounding Window

Every relationship on your Dream 100 is a long-term asset that compounds over time. The first month you reach out to somebody, nothing happens. The third month, you're still building the relationship. The first year, maybe a small deal. By year three, the relationship has matured into something real. By year five or ten, that single relationship is producing more value for your business than all your paid ads combined.

That's why the cost of waiting is so high. Every month you don't have a Dream 100 is a month of compounding you're not earning. Tony Robbins took me ten years. The relationships on the list I built in 2014 are still producing for Click Funnels in 2026. The longer the runway, the bigger the eventual return.

Don't wait until you're ready. Don't wait until your business is bigger. Don't wait until you have something more impressive to offer them. The right time to start your Dream 100 was years ago. The second-best time is right now, today, before you put this book down.

The Storm Reminder

And let me say this one more time, because I want you to feel it.

The storm is here. Ad costs keep climbing. Platforms keep tightening. Every business that depends on a single traffic source is one algorithm change away from a crisis. The businesses that survive the next decade are the ones who own their relationships with the people who hold attention in their market.

The Dream 100 isn't a marketing tactic. It's a posture. A way of running a business where you don't depend on any single platform to send you customers. A way of building real relationships with the people who matter most in your industry. A way of becoming somebody whose business gets stronger when platforms get harder, instead of weaker.

That posture is the difference between being a tenant and being an owner. Between renting attention and owning it. Between the half of the room that won't survive the next five years and the half that will.

Pick which half you want to be in. Then go build the board.

One Final Story

I want to leave you with one last image.

Twelve years ago, when I was building out the original Click Funnels Dream 100, I sat at my kitchen table on a Saturday afternoon with a yellow legal pad. I wrote down names. Authors I respected. Bloggers I read. Podcasters I listened to. Influencers I admired. People I'd never met. People I had no in with. People whose audiences I wanted access to. I wrote down four hundred names that afternoon.

Most of them never amounted to anything for our business. Most relationships on a Dream 100 don't. That's the rejection math we covered in Chapter 1.

But some of them – the relationships that did mature into deals – ended up producing the bulk of a billion dollars in lifetime sales for the company we built. Every customer Click Funnels has ever served traces back, in some chain of relationships, to one of those four hundred names on a yellow legal pad.

Right now, somewhere in your future, there's a list like that waiting to be built. Names that don't yet exist on paper. Relationships that are years from compounding into anything meaningful. A board that, ten years from now, will be the foundation of whatever your business becomes.

It doesn't exist yet because you haven't built it.

So go build it.

BUILD IT INSIDE MARKETINGSECRETS.AI

Building your Dream 100 board by hand is real work. Three to five focused hours of searching across eight platforms, capturing names, dropping links, saving follower counts. And then once the board exists, the harder work begins – actually managing the relationships, tracking your outreach, remembering what you said to whom, and following up at the right time so the people on your list don't go cold.

Most entrepreneurs build a Dream 100 once and then watch it slowly decay because they don't have the infrastructure to maintain it. Names get out of date. Notes get lost. Outreach falls through the cracks. Six months later the board is more historical artifact than living tool.

That's exactly the problem the Influencer Secrets software inside [MarketingSecrets.ai](#) was built to solve. It's your Dream 100 CRM.

Influencer Secrets helps you find the right partners across every platform we covered in Chapter 5 – authors, podcasters, Facebook groups, Instagram and YouTube influencers, newsletter operators, bloggers – and pulls the relevant data into your board automatically. Follower counts. Links. Profile photos. Engagement signals. The hours of manual searching get cut down to minutes.

And then – the part that matters more than the building – it manages the relationships for you over time. Outreach status on every card. Notes from every interaction. Follow-up reminders so nobody on your list goes cold. The board stays alive instead of decaying. The relationships compound instead of fading.

If you're going to actually do the work this book describes, do it inside the tool that's built for it.

Get started with Influencer Secrets:

MarketingSecrets.ai