



# Publishers & Writers Monthly

The Newsletter of Publishers & Writers of San Diego

March 2024

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**Publishers & Writers of San Diego (PWSD)** is a professional association of the San Diego publishing community. PWSD educates business-minded self-publishers and authors through networking, guest experts, open discussions, and field trips.

Meetings are held on the last Saturday of each month (except November and December). If held in person, they take place from 10:00 a.m. to noon, usually at the Carlsbad Dove Library (1775 Dove Lane, Carlsbad, CA 92011). If held virtually, they take place from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. *Always check meeting information in the newsletter for current location and times.*

**Meeting:** Saturday March 30, 2024  
**Time:** 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 Noon  
**Location:** Webinar—Zoom (watch for details)  
**Topic:** Publishing Brainstorm  
**Speaker:** *YOU!*

**Please watch for the link in the meeting notices sent to your email inbox twice during the next few days before this FREE online meeting.**

Writers and publishers, this is your chance to shine—and to help others grow, too.

For this month's meeting, bring your publishing questions and we'll brainstorm them together.

This is a great opportunity to share your publishing tips:

1. What has worked best for you?
2. What do you wish you had learned earlier?
3. What else have you learned?

Please come and let's share our challenges, hurdles, and successes in this collaborative online meeting.



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**By Karla Olson  
President, Publishers & Writers of San Diego**

Wow! Now we know why Terrie Price is a speaking coach. She not only shared her best practices for great presentations but she demonstrated from the big stage in the auditorium. What a terrific in-person meeting, with so many valuable tips, ideas and examples. You can always improve your speaking, and Terrie really inspired us to do so.

This month we are bringing back one of our most popular meetings of the past. Bring your publishing questions and brainstorm them together. Also, this is a great time to share what has worked for you and may be helpful to others, or even what hasn't worked and we can figure out why. This is a great meeting for online, which alleviates me from having to run around with a microphone! Please come and let's share our challenges, hurdles, and successes.

You won't want to miss IBPA's Publishing University, which will be held in the Mile High City (Denver) April 25–27. I'll be there, speaking on distribution as well as participating in Ask the Experts. For those of you who have gone in the past, you know it is an information-packed and fun time. Start planning now. [Here's](#) where you can find more information and register.

The March 2024 meeting will be online, and then we'll be in person again in April 2024. I've already got lots of great ideas for speakers!

**PWSD News**

A couple of notes about meeting etiquette at webinar meetings held next February and at successive even-numbered months. Please be sure you are muted while our speaker is presenting, as background noise is distracting for all other participants. If you have a question during the presentation, put it in the chat, and the host (me!) will monitor the questions.

*Continued on next page*

## *President's Message—continued from previous page*

Please save general questions for the Q&A at the end of the presentation. The host will call on you and ask you to speak if your question needs clarification.

The meetings are not recorded. Instead, most speakers have been sharing their slides, so be sure to go to the [blog](#) to find presentations by many of our past speakers.

## **PWSD Membership**

In-person meetings are \$10 for members and \$20 for nonmembers. We are happy to continue offering virtual meetings free to participants, but we hope you will support PWSD in the following ways:

1. **Make sure your membership is up to date.** Watch your inbox for a notice if your membership has expired. (If you wish, email [Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com](mailto:Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com) and he will check your membership.) *Note: we are likely to raise the membership fee in the next few months (darned inflation!), so renew your membership now.*
2. **If you are not a member, please consider joining.** Right now, membership is only \$47 per year, which helps us to get the best speakers and provide other benefits to our members. Go to [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) to join.
3. **Tell your publishing and author friends and colleagues about PWSD** and invite them to join us!

When you join PWSD, in addition to the reduced meeting fee, you get many other benefits, as listed on page 5. You can easily join by clicking on the link to PayPal on our website, or send a check, made out to PWSD, to P.O. Box 387, Ventura, CA 93002.

1. **Make sure your membership is up to date.** Watch your inbox for a notice if your membership has expired. (If you wish, email [Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com](mailto:Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com) and he will check your membership status.)
2. **If your membership is up to date, please consider paying the meeting fee even at virtual meetings.** You can do this at [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) and clicking on RSVP.
3. **If you are not a member, please consider joining.** Membership is only \$47 per year, which helps us to get the best speakers and provide other benefits to our members. Go to [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) to join.
4. **Tell your publishing and author friends and colleagues about PWSD** and have them join us!

## IBPA Membership

If you have launched on your publishing journey and you don't yet know about IBPA, which can be a great support for you, I encourage you to explore the benefits of joining. This is the national association that includes such regional affiliates as PWSD. You can find information on their very robust and informative website at [IBPA-online.org/](http://IBPA-online.org/). IBPA membership is very affordable, and to make it even better, PWSD members get a \$30 discount. Just enter PWSD30 in the coupon code.

IBPA has a monthly Roundtable that I highly recommend. It allows publishers of all shapes and sizes to share success strategies and brainstorm publishing challenges. I often attend and find them very valuable. Also, IBPA has recently created an education hub called [PubSpot](#), which assembles, in one easy-to-navigate site, all the invaluable information IBPA offers about how to succeed in publishing. From editorial to distribution and more, check out all the great articles and webinars that will help you succeed on your publishing journey.



**“PWSD likes Facebook!”**  
**[Visit us on Facebook today](#)**  
**to let us know you like us  
and join the conversation!**



## Care to Join Us?

**Save more and learn more:** Attend PWSD meetings at reduced member rates! Yearly dues are only \$47—one of the most economical memberships available. As a member, you save \$10 at every PWSD meeting you attend, versus the \$20 nonmember meeting fee. (Get meeting details for PWSD in each newsletter issue.) And take a look in the next section below at all the other extras you get as a member!

## Member Welcome and Reminders

**If you're a new or returning member, welcome to the PWSD family!** Congratulations on joining Publishers & Writers of San Diego, the only publishing group in San Diego County focused on the business of publishing and writing! You have made a wise investment, as you'll see later on this page.

### **Subscribe to PWSD in order to optimize your membership:**

Receiving the email that accompanied this newsletter does not mean your name has been added to the regular notice distribution list. Go to [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) and click on the button that looks like what you see at right. This is necessary for you to receive any and all notices from PWSD.

### Free PWSD Newsletter

✉ **Subscribe to the PWSD Newsletter**  
Subscription is free: get monthly articles from our speakers, writing tips, announcements, upcoming events, and more.

**Get found in the PWSD online member directory:** Email your new or revised bio & headshot to [Webmaster@publisherswriters.org](mailto:Webmaster@publisherswriters.org) as soon as you can, for valuable publicity! Our website is very highly ranked on Google, which means you will get broader exposure by being part of the member directory at [PublishersWriters.org/member-directory](http://PublishersWriters.org/member-directory). You must be an up-to-date member to be in the directory. Unsure when you should renew? Email [Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com](mailto:Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com) and he will let you know.

**Get a snazzy permanent name badge to wear at on-site meetings:** Your badge will be available at in-person meetings. (Please remember to turn it in as you leave.)

**Participate in occasional regional collaborative marketing efforts:** If you're subscribed (see above), you'll be notified of these events whenever they occur.

**Get a 30% discount on IBPA membership and optionally apply for a scholarship to IBPA's annual Publishing University:** If you've launched your publishing journey, join the Independent Book Publishers Association at [IBPA-online.org/](http://IBPA-online.org/) and use PWSD30 as the code to get your discount.

**Want to be profiled in PWSD's newsletter?** Contact Andrea Glass at [Andrea@writersway.com](mailto:Andrea@writersway.com). If your membership is current, she will provide you with nine simple questions to answer. Then, along with your answers, send her your full contact information, a head shot, and one or two other images, such as book covers or action shots, and she will publish your finished profile in *Publishers & Writers Monthly*.

**Do you have newsletter feature articles or ideas?** Send them to Managing Editor Glenna Bloemen at [gabl1853@aol.com](mailto:gabl1853@aol.com). We are currently seeking feature articles for the upcoming issues of the newsletter. If you've read something great or have an idea or an article that you believe would be of interest to your fellow members, please submit it to Glenna. Thank you for your continued support.

# How to Successfully Set Up and Run Amazon Ads that Sell

## Juliet Wills

*Reprinted with permission. This article was first published in October 2023 by the Independent Book Publishers Association, [IBPA-Online.org](http://IBPA-Online.org)*

Amazon is the leading book retailer in the United States and continues to grow in several international markets. Because they are an essential channel for independent publishers, I wanted to share some of the successful actions we have found at Galaxy Press to sell books.

According to WordsRated, a research and data analytic group, Amazon makes up 50% of the Big Five publisher sales, selling over 300 million print books and 487 million e-books each year.

Here is how you can benefit from this massive channel.



*Juliet Wills*

### *What Are Amazon Ads?*

In 2012, Amazon launched Amazon Marketing Services to allow retailers on the site to reach shoppers already there. Below is a description of various Amazon ads:

- **Sponsored Products Ad:** This is the longest-running ad type and the one Amazon considers it has perfected. Therefore, it usually performs best. They are used to increase sales and send traffic to product pages. The ads appear in relevant search results and on product detail pages. While the listing is marked “sponsored,” it looks like the organic results, and often customers give it the same consideration when scrolling through the list of titles.
- **Sponsored Brands Ad (formerly known as the Headline Search Ad):** These ads boost brand awareness and increase sales across your entire catalog. They are placed at the top and bottom of the search results, along with a custom headline. While these ads will convert to sales, they perform better when run with a sponsored products ad.
- **Sponsored Display Ad:** These ads reach customers on and off Amazon across their partnered websites. They have the broadest reach—the top of the sales funnel—introducing your books to potential new customers that have expressed interest in your category.
- **Lockscreen Ad:** These ads are for Kindle readers and show up on Kindle devices. The ads target shoppers’ interests, and readers see the ad when they unlock their Kindle to read or shop for books.

## *Why Should You Use Amazon Ads?*

With millions of shoppers actively searching for books on Amazon every day, advertising on this platform will help you reach readers who are already in a buying mindset. When someone searches for a product on Amazon, they are actively looking to make a purchase.

The various ads are easy to create and allow you to target specific keywords or customer interests based on their browsing history and purchase behavior. You can control ads to reach the readers most likely to buy your books.

Amazon provides advanced analytics tools and valuable insights into your ads' performance. You can track click-through rates (CTRs), conversion rates, and return on ad spend (ROAS) to measure the success of your campaigns, which you can use to improve your results over time.

## *How to Set up Amazon Ads*

Here are some simple steps to help you set up Amazon ads successfully.

First, you need to set up an advertising account. The main site is **advertising.amazon.com**. If you have an Amazon Seller account or Kindle Direct Publishing account, you will find access to the ad dashboard on the home page navigation bar.

I suggest you start with a sponsored product ad. As I mentioned earlier, this is the ad product Amazon has had the longest and is known to get the best conversions.

I will walk you through the steps to set up an ad. However, I recommend that you familiarize yourself with the dashboard and tools before starting. There is a great free course on setting up Amazon ads created by Dave Chesson of the Kindlepreneur with detailed steps on how to research keywords for your ads. The Amazon advertising site itself also offers guidance for each ad type and answers to common questions. The URLs for these resources are at the end.

## *Take these steps to set up your first ad:*

1. Click the “Create campaign” button.
2. Select the “Sponsored Products” ad type from the available campaign types:
3. Choose your ad format. If this is your first ad or you are not yet comfortable using the ad dashboard, I suggest using the “Standard Ad” option, which will pull the sales copy from your detail page.
4. Enter the name for your Ad Group. Use a naming convention to help quickly identify your ads from the dashboard. As you run multiple ads, you will want to see at a glance which is which. For instance, we use the name of the book (or ASIN – the Amazon Standard Identification Number), the target category, and the ad type as the ad name (e.g., Battlefield Earth Classic Sci-Fi Auto – for automated targeting).

5. Search for and select the book(s) you want the ad to promote. You can also choose multiple formats of the same book.
6. Select the targeting type. If you choose “Automatic Targeting,” Amazon will target readers using their advanced algorithms. Auto targeting is a great way to find keywords that convert to sales that you can use in highly targeted ads in the future. It is a great place to start.
7. Enter the amount you are willing to spend for each click.
8. Enter the negative keywords. Negative keywords prevent your book from being promoted in searches that are not relevant. Include words like “free,” so you don’t show your ad to readers looking for free books.
9. You can also add specific negative products, so your ads won’t show on the product pages of unrelated books.
10. Campaign level bid setting. Select how you want your bids to work: Dynamic bids - up and down: your bids (by a maximum of 100%) will go up when more likely to convert to a sale and lower your bids when less likely to convert. Dynamic bids - down only: your bids will be automatically lowered when your ad may be less likely to convert to a sale. Fixed bids: your exact bid and any manual adjustments you set won’t be changed. For a new campaign on a small budget, I recommend that you select “Dynamic bids - down.” It will take a little while for Amazon’s algorithm to learn what works best for your ads.
11. Create the campaign level settings. Name your campaign using a naming convention that will make it easy to see which books (or series) you are promoting at a glance.
12. Portfolio. As you create many campaigns and ads, you can file these into portfolios (folders to help organize the ad dashboard into authors, categories, and imprints).
13. Set the start and end dates. You can start the ad immediately or schedule it for a future date. You can also leave it open-ended or put an end date.
14. Set your daily budget. Amazon recommends at least \$10 a day. Amazon is authorized to spend whatever amount you enter each day. For instance, if your budget is \$500, at \$10 a day, it will run for 50 days. Either set the end date or keep an eye on it to stay within your budget.

To maximize the effectiveness of your ads, monitor their performance regularly. Specifically keep an eye on impressions, clicks, conversions, and your return on investment. This data will help you optimize future campaigns for better results. Don’t “set it and forget it.” The ads will continue to run and charge you whether they convert to sales or not. Running successful Amazon ads requires ongoing optimization and tweaking based on data analysis.

**Insider Tip:** After placing the automatic targeting ad, the second ad should use keywords that include the book title and various versions of the title with typos that readers might accidentally type when searching for your book. You want to reach the readers looking for your book; otherwise, they may buy someone else’s book.



## *How to Measure the Success of Your Amazon Ad*

Measure the success of your Amazon ads by tracking key metrics so that you can make data-driven decisions for future campaigns.

Track these as a priority:

- **Click-Through Rate (CTR):** Measures the percentage of people who clicked on your ad. A high CTR indicates that your ad is engaging and creating interest with your readers, while a low CTR means that the ad is targeting the wrong readers or it needs to be more compelling.
- **Conversion Rate:** Shows the percentage of users who clicked on your ad and made a purchase. It shows how effective your ad is at driving sales.
- **Cost Per Click (CPC):** This allows you to monitor whether your ad is within budget while maximizing clicks. If your CPC starts to rise significantly without an increase in conversions, it may be necessary to refine targeting or adjust bid strategies.
- **Return on Advertising Spend (ROAS):** Compares revenue generated from ads against the cost spent on them.
- **Sales:** This shows the value of the sales generated attributable to customers who clicked on your ad within the previous two weeks.

By regularly assessing these metrics and making informed optimizations based on results, you can fine-tune your Amazon ads for success.

**Warning:** In analyzing your ads, one common mistake is not to consider that readers of your books will go on to read more books by your authors, not just the book they bought after seeing your ad.

In addition to your dashboard sales, you must include their other book sales through Amazon (in the series or as a natural follow-up when readers discover a new author they love), which is called “read-through.”

## *Why Your Ads Don't Work*

When reviewing your ads, you may find some that don't convert to sales. While this is not a complete list of potential problems, these are the two most common to check first:

1. Your ad is reaching the wrong reader. Possibly you are promoting a book on gardening to fantasy readers. Review your ad's targeting and adjust it to reach the reader you know will love your book.
2. Your book detail page is not converting. Your ad is driving traffic, but readers are not buying. If this is the case, I suggest you update your copy. Author Brian Meeks wrote the book *Mastering Amazon Descriptions*. In addition to providing many book description examples before and after, he always uses the acid test: Does the description convert to sales.

## *Amazon Branded Stores*

You can create your own branded store on Amazon to maximize engagement through a tailor-made brand experience and build customer loyalty. The URL for the Amazon Educational Guide below includes a section to help you set this up.

## *Conclusion*

Mastering successful Amazon ads will benefit your publishing business by increasing visibility and boosting sales through the leading book retailer.

Take advantage of the different types of Amazon Ads, including Sponsored Products, Sponsored Brands, and Sponsored Display to reach a wider audience. With all three running simultaneously, you will make the most of your promotional campaign on Amazon.

Once your ads are live, closely monitor their performance and adjust as needed to optimize your campaigns continuously.

Take the Kindlepreneur free Amazon Ad Course and use their Publisher Rocket keyword tool as you start to create and test more ads. I also recommend using a website like Samurai Seller to help you monitor your ads, find profitable keywords for highly targeted ads of their own, and uncover costly words that don't convert (and make them negative keywords).

Use Amazon ads to reach many new readers who will be just as happy as you that they found your books.

## *Resources*

- Amazon educational guides: [advertising.amazon.com/library/guides/basics-of-success-sponsored-ads](https://advertising.amazon.com/library/guides/basics-of-success-sponsored-ads)
- Free Amazon Ads Course: [kindlepreneur.com/free-amazon-ads-course](https://kindlepreneur.com/free-amazon-ads-course)
- A website with an automated platform using advanced techniques to manage Amazon ads: [samuraiseller.com](https://samuraiseller.com)

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**Juliet Wills** is the vice president of sales and rights at Galaxy Press. She is a certified Amazon Ads Specialist.



PWSD member **Andrea Susan Glass** is excited to announce the launch of her and her partner's membership site for nonfiction authors, both aspiring and accomplished. Andrea, a bestselling author and nonfiction book coach, started Writing That Book with Wilene Dunn as a place for nonfiction writers to get guidance and support as they write their first book.

In addition, published authors can connect with other nonfiction authors for accountability, collaboration, networking, and more. Benefits include weekly writing sessions, and monthly meetings for reading and critiques, collaborative conversations, and ask the coaches. Find out more at <https://WritingThatBook.com>.

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Join PWSD member **Laura Akers**, author of the mystery-action Davia Glenn series, *Dior or Die*, *Killing with Kindness*, and *Posh and Perilous*, for her upcoming talk, “The Basics of Writing Mysteries & Thrillers.”

At age twenty-four, Laura became a prosecuting attorney and handled rape, domestic violence, gang, and high-profile homicide cases. She’s an award-winning public speaker who presents workshops on jury selection, and self-confidence. She’s co-moderator of the Clubhouse rooms “Story Sorcerers” and the “Thriller/Crime Mystery Space.”

**Meeting info:**

“The Basics of Writing Mysteries & Thrillers”

March 24, 2024, 10:00 a.m. – Noon

San Diego Writers Ink  
2730 Historic Decatur Road #204 San Diego CA 92106

Cost: Members \$36.00, Non-Members \$42.00.

Some conferences and workshops could go online or be cancelled, due to pandemic or other considerations, so check the newsletter or event websites for updates.

## **San Diego Writer’s Festival**

**April 6, 2024, San Diego, CA**

The San Diego Writers Festival is a free, community-based event designed to celebrate the power of writing and storytelling. The festival invites you to hear one another, be educated and illuminated by one another, and inspired by one another—one story at a time. Now in its fifth year, the 2024 festival will be held at the Coronado Public Library. For details go to <https://sandiegowritersfestival.com/events/>.

## **IBPA Publishing University**

**April 25–27, 2024, Denver, CO**

IBPA Publishing University (#PubU2024) is where hundreds of independent publishers and industry partners will gather to exchange knowledge, resources, strategies, solutions, and more. PubU is for independent publishers, hybrid publishers, author publishers (aka self-published authors), university presses, and association presses interested in advancing their book publishing know-how. For details go to: <https://www.publishinguniversity.org/>.



**Have more resources to share? Please email them to Newsletter Editor Glenna Bloemen at [gab11853@aol.com](mailto:gab11853@aol.com), and we will be happy to include them in this list.**

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