



Direct Sales Technology Consulting

Direct Sales 101

A beginner-friendly guide for authors
ready to start selling direct

**Writing a Novel
Wasn't Enough?**

**Now You Want
Me to Run a
Store?!?**



Intro & Goals for today

Who we are...

1. A bit about us - Our experience and journey in direct sales

Goals for today:

1. Better understanding of direct sales for authors in general
2. Debunk direct sales myths
3. Know the minimum pieces needed for direct sales
4. Leave with a general launch roadmap

A quick note...

What this presentation is not, and what we are not

- Not about marketing
- Not about any one specific platform
- Every author is unique and different...as is your business
- ***There is never, ever a “one size fits all” solution***

Starting assumptions (sorta...)

- You're ready to start your direct sales journey (or still learning/thinking about it)
- You've published multiple books
- You have some way to promote your store (newsletter, social media, etc.)



Key Thing to Remember

**Direct Sales is not
for everyone**

It's OK if you decide it isn't for you



Confusion to understanding

What direct sales “actually” means, and being realistic

Top 5 Fears & Myths



Technology — *“I’m not technical enough.”*



Fulfillment — *“How am I going to get orders to readers?”*



Taxes & Legal — *“What about all the rules?”*



Sales — *“Will anyone actually buy?”*



Time — *“I don’t have time for another job!”*

Direct Sales – The benefits

- Flexible pricing – YOU set all your prices
- Platform Ownership
 - Reduce the odds of a random account closure
- Customer Relationship
 - Ability to know your customers and email them directly to build relationships



Direct Sales – The benefits

- **Higher Margins – you make more money**
 - Example #1: \$6.00 ebook
 - Amazon: 70% = \$4.20
 - Direct store: 95% = \$5.70
 - **You keep an extra \$1.50**
 - Example 2: \$25 ebook bundle or box set
 - Amazon: 35% = \$8.75
 - Direct store 95% = \$23.75
 - **You keep an extra: \$15.00**



Key Thing to Remember

Set realistic expectations.

*It's a long-term business asset,
NOT an overnight success*



Direct Sales Models

5 Author Personas and their (potential) Direct Sales Models

Persona 1 – Minimum Effort Author

*“I just want a place
where readers can buy
my books.”*



Model 1 – Minimum Viable Store

- Bare Bones store
- Only digital products
- Minimal time and effort required
- No to very little marketing

Goal: Cost recovery/modest profit



Persona 2 – Digital Only Author



*“I want to sell more books
- but I don’t want to deal
with shipping and don’t
have a lot of time.”*

Model 2 – Digital Only Store



- Digital Products Only (ebook & audio)
- Actively seeking sales
- Willing to spend some time on the store (15-60 minutes/week)
- Some promotion, but not a major marketing undertaking (and doesn't need to cost \$\$)

Goal: Meaningful Revenue Generation with minimal effort/time investment

Persona 3 – Kindle Unlimited Author

“Amazon is my primary store, but I want to sell some “extra” stuff.”



Model 3 – Backlist & Print Store

- Sells print/special edition books & merch
- May sell backlist (not in KU)
- Willing to invest time into the store
 - (mostly paperback fulfillment)
- Have a means to spread the word
 - (signings, newsletters, ads, etc)

Goal: Provide backlist and exclusive products not available on Amazon



Persona 4 – Direct-Sales Focused Author



“If I’m going to build a store, I want it to do everything.”

Model 4 – Comprehensive Store



- Digital and Physical Products
- Current releases & Backlist
- Typically, 10+ books
 - (not required)
- Willing to invest time as needed
- Active promotion
 - (small to medium marketing budget or newsletter & social media)

Goal: Looking to make direct sales a meaningful revenue channel

Persona 5 – The All-in Author

*“Direct Sales isn’t just
another channel.
It’s a major part of my
author business.”*



Model 5 – The All-in Store

- Wide range of digital and physical products. Subscriptions possible.
- Heavy marketing and promotion (ads, newsletter, social media, etc.)
- Significant time invested in promotion & marketing on monthly basis
- Willing to invest money into growth

Goal: Significant monthly revenue, key component of business strategy and seeking long-term growth



Audience participation time...

Which persona are you?

Sales Platform

Where you'll sell your products – your ecommerce “front door”

Sales Platforms – 4 great options



Shopify



Great for authors seeking a professional, scalable store and expect direct sales to become an important part of their business model

- Cost
 - \$39/mo, (\$29/mo annually)
- Key Features
 - Full ecommerce platform
 - Integrated payment system
 - Extensive inventory, analytic & marketing tools
- Sales Tax:

Shopify automatically calculates and collects sales taxes and tracks nexus. You are responsible for remittance.

Criteria		 Shopify
	Ease of Setup How easy is it to get started?	3 Very Difficult (0)Very Easy (5)
	Day-to-Day Time How much time is required to operate and maintain?	3 Prohibitive (0)ModerateAlmost None (5)
	Fraud & Chargeback Protection Level of built-in or platform-provided protection.	4 None (0)StrongOutstanding (5)
	Platform Support How much support does the company provide?	4 None (0)StrongOutstanding (5)
	App Extensibility Ability to extend the platform via apps and integrations.	5 None (0)ExcellentExcellent (5)
	Required Technical Knowledge How much technical skill is needed to set up and run the platform?	3 A Lot (0)ModerateVery Little (5)

WooCommerce



Great for authors who already have a WordPress site and don't want a "new" platform

- **Cost**

- Free platform, but requires paid WordPress platform

- **Key Features**

- Full ecommerce platform
- Integrates with existing site
- Extensive app/plugin ecosystem for expansion
- Complete control

- **Sales Tax:**

You are 100% responsible. Must add tools to track, and won't track nexus.

Criteria		WooCommerce
	Ease of Setup How easy is it to get started?	2 Very Difficult (0) Very Easy (5)
	Day-to-Day Time How much time is required to operate and maintain?	2 Prohibitive (0) Challenging Almost None (5)
	Fraud & Chargeback Protection Level of built-in or platform-provided protection.	2 None (0) Some Outstanding (5)
	Platform Support How much support does the company provide?	2 None (0) Limited community support unless using paid tools Outstanding (5)
	App Extensibility Ability to extend the platform via apps and integrations.	5 None (0) Excellent Excellent (5)
	Required Technical Knowledge How much technical skill is needed to set up and run the platform?	1 A Lot (0) Significant Very Little (5)

Payhip



Great for authors who want to get started quickly & inexpensively, particularly with digital products

- **Cost**

- Basic Plan: \$0/mo
- Plus Plan: \$29/mo

- **Key Features**

- Can do digital and physical products relatively easily
- Unlimited products
- Many common ecommerce features (coupons, etc)
- Some marketing tools

- **Sales Tax:**

They handle most of it. Collect and remit for US, UK, EU & Canada (7/26)

Criteria		 Payhip
	Ease of Setup How easy is it to get started?	Very Difficult (0)Very Easy (5) 5
	Day-to-Day Time How much time is required to operate and maintain?	Prohibitive (0)LowAlmost None (5) 4
	Fraud & Chargeback Protection Level of built-in or platform-provided protection.	None (0)StrongOutstanding (5) 4
	Platform Support How much support does the company provide?	None (0)StrongOutstanding (5) 4
	App Extensibility Ability to extend the platform via apps and integrations.	None (0)SomeExcellent (5) 2
	Required Technical Knowledge How much technical skill is needed to set up and run the platform?	A Lot (0)SomeVery Little (5) 4

FourthWall



Great for authors who want the simplest possible store while still wanting some POD capabilities

- Cost
 - \$0/mo
 - 5% transaction cost/order
 - Additional processing costs

• Key Features

- Most of the common ecommerce functions
- Digital & physical products
- A “bundled” ecommerce experience.

● Sales Tax:

Merchant of Record. They collect and remit ALL taxes and VAT.

Criteria		fw Fourthwall
	Ease of Setup How easy is it to get started?	4 Very Difficult (0) Very Easy (5)
	Day-to-Day Time How much time is required to operate and maintain?	4 Prohibitive (0) Low Almost None (5)
	Fraud & Chargeback Protection Level of built-in or platform-provided protection.	4 None (0) Strong Outstanding (5)
	Platform Support How much support does the company provide?	4 None (0) Strong Outstanding (5)
	App Extensibility Ability to extend the platform via apps and integrations.	3 None (0) Moderate Excellent (5)
	Required Technical Knowledge How much technical skill is needed to set up and run the platform?	4 A Lot (0) Some Very Little (5)



Delivery & Fulfillment Tools

How your customers will get their purchases

Fulfillment platforms





Communication Tools

How you'll tell your readers/customers "Hey! I'm over here!!!"

Newsletter tools – 5 good options



Overwhelm to confidence

Dealing with the fear and loathing of Sales Tax

Lets talk Sales Tax...

3 Ways to Overcome the Fear of Taxes & Rules

1. Pick the right platform
2. Understand the requirements
 - Get/ask for help
 - Setup is the biggest hurdle
3. Start small



Your 30-day starter roadmap

Launching your MVP store in 4 weeks

30-day Starter Roadmap



WEEK 1 GOALS & PLANNING

What am I trying to accomplish?

Define your goals

Chose what to sell

Plan fulfillment & delivery

Decide “DIY” or “Hire”



WEEK 2 PLATFORM SELECTION

What's the simplest tool for the job?

Choose platform(s)

Create account(s)

Find resources (training or partner)



WEEK 3 BUILDOUT & TESTING

Does everything work?

Build your store

Add products

Configure checkout, payments & delivery

Test process & fix any errors



WEEK 4 SOFT LAUNCH & FEEDBACK

What do my readers think?

Invite readers

Launch & promote

Gather feedback

Make improvements

Rinse and repeat

30-day Starter Roadmap

30-day Direct Sales Checklist

- A four-week launch roadmap
- Daily tasks and milestones
- Platform, product, payment, and fulfillment preparation
- Store buildout and testing
- Soft-launch and post-launch steps

!! [Link at the end of presentation](#)



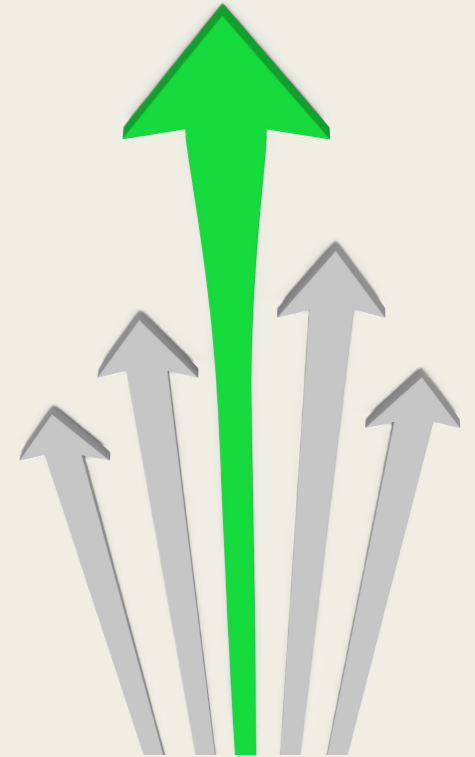
Looking to the future

OK smarty....I've got a store, now where do I go from here?

Where Can Direct Sales Go?

Think beyond “selling books”

- **Increase the value of each order**
 - Bundles, Upsells, Special editions, digital pairings, add-ons
- **Give readers more reasons to come back**
 - New releases, Early Releases, Exclusives, Seasonal offers
- **Build the Relationship**
 - Use emails, reader communities, memberships
- **Expand Your Reach**
 - Events and appearances, collaborations, international sales



Final Thoughts

Before we go...

Final Thoughts

- Take things one step at a time.
 - It doesn't all have to be done at once
- Ask for help!
 - If you need it, ask for help/find a partner
- It doesn't have to be scary!
 - See point #1...taking things one step at a time can alleviate fear

Final Thoughts

- Start small.
 - You don't need 20 (or more) books to get started.
- As your sales grow, add complexity **when you actually need it.**
 - Don't get caught up in all the “bells and whistles”.
- Do what's right for YOUR business, not what someone else tells you works for “everyone else”.

Trust yourself.

Take the first step.

**Figure out the rest as
you go.**

**YOU GOT
THIS**

Questions

Ask 'em if ya got 'em

How to contact us



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