

# THE 5-STEP FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING A MASSIVE AUDIENCE

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Hello, my name is Jacob Jans. I've been quietly making my living online for over 15 years. In that time, I've built huge audiences for my writing -- with sites such as Freedom With Writing, which has over 350,000 fans on Facebook.

I'm passionate about marketing, writing, and connecting with audiences and writers around the world. I write in a wide variety of genres -- non-fiction, poetry, and even the occasional short story.

This year, I've resolved to help my peers in the writing community, by sharing my knowledge and expertise with audience building.

Below is the 5-Step Framework I've developed and used to build large audiences for my writing. I'm hoping you'll find it valuable.

Let me know what you think!

*Jacob Jans*

## STEP ONE: UNDERSTAND YOUR IDENTITY AS A WRITER

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This is vitally important, and something I failed at for many years. If you want people to connect with your writing, it's important to have a clear idea of who they'll be connecting with.

Don't worry, you don't have to have a deep understanding of yourself, or even a lifelong commitment to one style of writing. This step simply sets the stage for how you'll present your writing to your audience.

It also sets the stage for your future enjoyment of writing. Once you've built your audience, you want to make sure that you're engaged in a topic you care about and that you're able to be genuine with your audience. This will make everything easier, more fulfilling. Plus, your efforts at audience building will have much more powerful results.

So, be sure to spend some time reflecting on who you are as a writer.

## STEP TWO: IDENTIFY YOUR POTENTIAL AUDIENCE

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I could actually write an entire book on this step. However, I'll do my best to sum this up in a few paragraphs.

Also, be sure you don't skip step one, because, ideally your interests and/or identity have strong overlap with your potential audience.

There are two basic ways to identify a potential audience.

Method One: This is an "identity" based audience. Perhaps you are hoping to write for Christian teenagers struggling with sexual identity in Alabama.

By thinking about how your audience identifies with themselves, how they perceive who they are, and how they think about themselves, you'll be able to communicate directly to their unique perspectives.

Method Two: Pre-Existing Groups. This is where you identify groups of people that you're able to communicate with, and invite to be part of your audience. This could be people who regularly attend a poetry reading, or people on Facebook who you're able to target via advertising, or people who attend the conference.

It's vitally important to start thinking about how the world is organized into groups you can connect with, because this is where you'll be able to scale your efforts in step five.

Also -- don't limit yourself to just one of the methods above. Combine both methods, and you'll have a potent combination.

## STEP THREE: START A CONVERSATION

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Once you've identified a potential audience, the next step is to start a conversation with them.

The goal with this step is to learn about what your audience cares about, what motivates them, what they think about, and what, ultimately, you can give to them.

It doesn't usually help to ask people directly what they want from you. Part of your job, as the author, is to do the work of figuring out what they actually want. (Twenty years ago, nobody would have said "I want an iPhone", and yet, that product has turned Apple into the world's most valuable company.)

The conversation starts by offering something of value to your potential audience, and simply observing how they respond. And then, engaging with their responses. And then, based on their responses, offering something else of value.

## STEP FOUR: INVITE THEM INTO YOUR AUDIENCE

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Once you've started to get to know people who may be interested in your writing, the next step is to give them a chance to become a loyal reader. And that means asking them to make some sort of commitment to reading your work in the future.

That could be as simple as asking them for your email address. In fact, this is my favorite method, because it is low-risk for the potential audience member, but also gives you a direct line of communication.

Why would someone be willing to give you their email address? Because you're offering something of value that you discovered during step three.

Usually you'll need to go back and forth several times between step three and step four, before figuring out exactly the right thing to offer.

## STEP FIVE: SCALE

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Once you've found a potential audience, learned what they care about, and figured out how to get people to commit to being part of your audience, you're ready to scale your efforts. You've learned a lot, so congratulate yourself!

Now, you can start to focus on scaling what you already know is effective. That means starting to think about building your audience in terms of running a business.

You'll need to develop a system for funding your audience building efforts. This could mean selling books to your audience, or subscriptions, or consulting, or creating a paid membership, or selling a course, or creating a Patreon offer, or something else altogether.

Once you have money coming in, you'll be able to re-invest that money into growing your audience even more. The goal here to create a self-funding marketing system.

The basic question to answer is this: How much revenue can I expect from a member of my audience?

The answer to that question will tell you how much you can afford to spend on acquiring a new audience member.

## YOUR PATH FORWARD FOR BUILDING A MASSIVE AUDIENCE FOR YOUR WRITING

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There's a lot that goes into the five steps outlined above. Even as someone who has done this many times, I still get stuck on occasion. It's part of the process!

The other thing to keep in mind, is that this is just a framework. Don't expect perfection. In fact, I recommend pushing forward with your efforts well before you reach perfection. You can always change what you're doing. Once you start engaging with your audience, you'll likely start to make big changes anyways. Audience building is very much a conversation -- you have to start somewhere, but the best conversations often lead to surprising places.