

Grow Your Audience with Reader Magnets

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What is a Reader Magnet?

A Reader Magnet is a polished piece of writing—a short story, novella, or novel—that introduces readers to what you have (or will have) to offer.

Who should have a Reader Magnet?

All authors can benefit from a Reader Magnet.

- Doesn't matter if you are published yet or not.
- Doesn't matter what genre you write in (all fiction genres, non-fiction, memoir, children's books, YA books, poetry... it doesn't matter!).
- Doesn't matter if you want to *indie publish* or *traditionally publish* (all authors need readers, and all authors need to market their books).

Why does every author need a Reader Magnet?

A Reader Magnet is the most effective way to start (or continue) building an audience of readers.

- Participate in multi-author giveaways to build your email list (adding several thousand new readers in the first few months is very possible).
- Get readers to read your next/future releases.
- Put your Reader Magnet on Amazon and start building credibility as an author (get reviews, reader quotes, rankings, etc.). Start building your presence.
- Participate in newsletter swaps.
- Enter contests (a reader magnet is perfect for literary contests).
- Amazon has SIX categories of short reads (it's easy to rank high in these categories).
- Get a jump on learning the process of getting your work out there (learn to use Amazon KDP, Author Central, create your Amazon Author Page, etc.).

Let's Get Started!

Step 1: What can you produce that would serve as a Reader Magnet?

- It should be *relevant* to a work you sell (or plan to sell).
- Two approaches:
 - 1) *Something you give readers **before** they read something else of yours.*
You offer the Reader Magnet to *new* readers in return for their email address. In other words, they get your Reader Magnet in return for subscribing to your email newsletter (every author should have an email newsletter... it is your main marketing strategy). One terrific way to trade your Reader Magnet for email addresses is to participate in multi-author giveaways. Some of those readers will like your Reader Magnet enough to go ahead and buy your published book(s), or read the pages in Kindle Unlimited (KU).
 - 2) *Something readers want to read **after** they have read something of yours.*
You offer your Reader Magnet in the *back matter* of your published book(s). After readers finish reading your published book, they see a page that says something like, "Subscribe to my email newsletter and receive a FREE novella!" The subscribers you get this way are *high quality* subscribers because they have already finished your book and like it enough to want more.

- *It's best if your reader magnet can accomplish **both** 1 and 2.*
- Ideas: novel (first in series), novella, short story, prequel, first chapter(s), short memoir, minor character story, short poetry collection, and more.
- It could also be something else: character profile (or case file), a related board game, access to videos, access to a private Facebook group, maps (or other artwork). However, I have found that *relevant, high quality stories work best!*
- In my experience, complete stories (novellas of at least 15,000 words or novels) are best.

How long does it need to be?

- Fiction or non-fiction: minimum 5,000 to 20,000 words (or a full-length novella or novel)
- Other types of writing: length depends on what it is
- Keep in mind, the goal is to produce something that will *make readers want more* (first chapters can work, but a complete story is more satisfying).

Step 2: Create your Reader Magnet

- How many hours will be needed to produce your Reader Magnet?
- How much time can you set aside each day or week? (watch one less Netflix show? Can you get up 30 minutes earlier each day? Can you write for 10 minutes on your lunch break?)
- *The 10-Minute Writer* (Kevin Partner's book about starting micro-habits as an author).
- Make your daily/weekly schedule to complete your Reader Magnet.

Write your Reader Magnet

- Outline
- First draft, second draft, etc.
- Get help with editing (writer group, friends, then a professional editor)
- Create the *front matter* and *back matter*
- IMPORTANT: The back matter includes a *Call to Action*... what can readers do to read more of your work?

Tips for writing your Reader Magnet

1. The goal is to produce something that will *make readers want more*. A **prequel** will work well for both purposes described above. A **side story** (from the POV of one of your characters) can work well also, as long as it makes people want to read your larger, published book. A side story may work better for purpose #2 above (because people will already be interested in the character because they have already read your book). An **alternate ending** could work too, but only for purpose #2 above (because an alternate ending is meaningless to someone who hasn't read the book). And there are plenty of other ideas.
2. Be sure your Reader Magnet *supports your book(s)*. It should be closely related to the book(s) you are trying to (or planning to) sell. For example, *Infinity* is a prequel to the *Bridgers* series, so it makes a good Reader Magnet for that series. I have other, unrelated, short stories, but they would *not* make good Reader Magnets for the *Bridgers* series (because they are not related to the series). When people read a good story, they want more of *that* story and *those* characters.
3. Your Reader Magnet should be *written in the same overall voice and tone of the book(s) you are selling*. If readers like the style of your Reader Magnet, you do not want them to be disappointed when they start reading your book(s) for sale. You can learn from these two mistakes I have made: First, I wrote *Savage* as a Reader Magnet for the *Diffusion* series. I'm

proud of the book (it may be my best book), but it is written in a completely different style from the Diffusion books. It is more thoughtful and literary, and it appeals to a different audience—bad idea for a Reader Magnet. Then I wrote *Blue Arrow* as another Reader Magnet for the *Diffusion* series. This one is also a good story (in my opinion), but it is a love story, told from the perspective of a woman who isn't even a character in the Diffusion books (although she is mentioned a few times)—another bad idea for a Reader Magnet. Please don't make the mistakes I've made. Still needing a good Reader Magnet for the Diffusion series, I wrote a dual-purpose novella that can be used as a follow-up book for readers who have finished the series, and can also be used as a prequel to a new series that is an offshoot of the Diffusion series.

4. *Your Reader Magnet should represent your best work.* You might think, but my best work should be something I sell, shouldn't it? Not necessarily, particularly if you are using your Reader Magnet to gain new readers (*Purpose #1* above). Think about it... if you're using your reader magnet to get new readers, this is the first of your work they will see. It has to really shine! You want them to finish it and say, "Oh wow, I need to get more of this!" What I'm trying to say is that you should devote just as much creative effort to your Reader Magnet as you do to your other work. If it doesn't *WOW* the reader, it will fail in its purpose.
5. *Your Reader Magnet should focus on one of the most interesting characters in your book(s).* It needs to be about one of the characters readers are going to like when they read your book (or that they like from having already read your book). Why? Because your Reader Magnet needs to be similar to your other book(s). Readers of the Bridgers series want to know more about Infinity, so it was a good idea for me to write Infinity's origin story as a prequel. It would *not* be as effective to write a prequel from the perspective of a character that isn't even in the other books, or from a character that was so minor that the readers don't remember the person.
6. *There could be exceptions to #5 above!* A character doesn't necessarily have to be a person. For example, in my Diffusion series, you could consider the alien entity to be a main character. You could also consider the tree kangaroo, Mbaiso, to be a major character. You could even consider the jungle itself to be a main character (the jungle is actually the antagonist in Diffusion). So, if your book has a nonhuman thing as a major element in the story, you might be able to write a very good Reader Magnet that focuses on that element (perhaps from the perspective of a person who wasn't even in the other book). For example, maybe I could write a Reader Magnet for the Diffusion series that is a story about Mbaiso (the tree kangaroo), from Mbaiso's point of view. This could work even if none of the familiar characters are in the Reader Magnet story. Here's another example: For the Bridgers series, the bridging device itself is a big part of the overall story. I could possibly write an effective Reader Magnet that tells the story of how the bridging device was built and tested for the first time (long before Infinity and Desmond even enter the story). These ideas would still work because they focus on aspects of these stories (instead of specific characters) that readers find fascinating.
7. *Make your Reader Magnet a complete story.* Sometimes authors try to use the first chapter or two of their book as a reader magnet, thinking that readers will read the chapter(s) and want to buy the entire book. I have come to the conclusion that this is not a good idea. Why? Because this frustrates the readers. In fact, it can *anger* some readers. Readers have given you something valuable in return for your Reader Magnet—their email address. In return, they want a full story, even if it is just a short story of 5,000 to 15,000 words. Make your

readers happy by giving them a polished, complete, satisfying read. If you do that, your reader magnet will pay for itself many times over.

Get a high-quality Cover

- It *must* have a professional cover.
- Pre-made cover sites for very inexpensive pro-quality covers.
- *My favorite Pre-Made Cover Sites*
- <https://thebookcoverdesigner.com/> This is where I got the cover from my Reader Magnet FUSED: TRAINING DAY. Prices: \$25 and up. My cover was \$45.
- <https://www.goonwrite.com/> This site has an amazing selection of pre-made covers, including entire series. Price: All covers are \$30 each! You can buy vouchers for future purchases.
- <https://selfpubbookcovers.com/>
- <https://www.dropdeaddesigns.com>

Format your Reader Magnet as an eBook

- You need an EPUB and MOBI file to upload to Bookbub and Amazon.
- ***Two free online tools for book formatting:***
- *The Reedsy Book Editor* (<https://reedsy.com/write-a-book>)
- *Draft2Digital* (<https://www.draft2digital.com/>)

Step 3: Start putting your Reader Magnet to work for you!

Your reader magnet needs to earn its keep by gathering more subscribers to your newsletter list and more readers of your other books.

If you don't have an email newsletter subscriber list, you NEED one

- It doesn't matter what you write or how you publish...
- If you ever intend to sell (or give away) your books, there are TWO online elements you really need to establish: **1) An author website**, and **2) An email list**.
- You need an email list that is NOT a social media platform.
- Because you need to have control over it.
- Facebook changes all the time... less exposure all the time (unless you pay).
- Instagram, Twitter, and all the others are the same way... they could change or go away.
- You need to have something that is **yours**, something you control (your email list).

Why every author needs an email list:

- Sales!
- Reviews
- Recruiting your ARC team (Advance Review Copy team)
- To better understand who your audience is (engage them... which is part of turning subscribers into fans... addressed below)
- It's never too early to start your email list. You do not have to wait until your first book is published. Start building an audience with interesting content, short stories, etc.

Once you have an email newsletter established with an email marketing service like **MailerLite** (<https://www.mailerlite.com>), you can funnel your new readers directly onto your subscriber list. Keep them on your list by sending out regular, entertaining newsletters, and they will eventually become your superfans!

Use Bookfunnel to distribute your Reader Magnet to readers.

- Bookfunnel is one of those must-have author tools that makes life *much* easier!
<https://bookfunnel.com>
- This is what allows you to give readers your reader magnet in exchange for their email address.
- It also allows you to distribute your books to your ARC (Advance Reviewer Copy) team.
- And much more!

Join Bookfunnel Multi-author Giveaways

- The single easiest way to gain new readers and subscribers!
- Bookfunnel takes care of all the details for you.
- These can be for gathering new newsletter subscribers or for boosting sales, Kindle Unlimited (KU) page reads, or retailer downloads of perma-free first in series books.

Put your Reader Magnet on Amazon and price it at \$0.00

- This is a good way to gather new readers for your series, gather reviews, and create a presence on a major retailer.
- Create your Amazon Author Page.