

# **MASTERING BOOK HOOKS FOR AUTHORS**



**How to Capture Reader  
ATTENTION and Book Sales  
in 30 Words or Less.**

**R O B E A G A R**

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## About the Author

Okay, I know what you're thinking. You're wondering, "I appreciate this free e-book, but who is Rob Eagar and why should I listen to him?"



I understand your question. I may not be a household name, but here's why I'm glad you chose to download this free resource.

I'm one of the most accomplished book marketing experts in America. Cool, right? I've coached over 600 authors, consulted with numerous top publishing houses, and helped both fiction and nonfiction books hit the *New York Times* bestseller list. I've even helped a book become a *New York Times* bestseller after 23 years in print!

Enough of me bragging, though. The important part of my bio is to know that I'm an author just like you. I've written five books, two were traditionally-published and three are self-published, with more books to come. I wrote my first book in 2002 and made a full-time living as an author for six years. But, then everything changed.

In 2007, I decided to start a consulting practice called Wildfire Marketing to help other authors increase their book sales. Since then, I've worked with numerous *New York Times* bestsellers, including Dr. Gary Chapman, Lysa TerKeurst, Wanda Brunstetter, DeVon Franklin, and Dr. John Townsend.

I'm dedicated to helping authors reach more readers and sell more books. I'd like to help you, too. I created this free resource, *Mastering Book Hooks for Authors*, as a way to connect my expertise to your author journey. However, I have a lot more advice to share. If you enjoy this ebook, you will also like my *Author's Guide* series, which is a collection of books dedicated to teaching the critical marketing skills needed for success:



For details about these books, visit: <http://getbook.at/AuthorsGuideSeries>

For more information about my online courses and consulting services for authors, visit <http://www.RobEagar.com>

But, enough about me. Let's talk about you – and your books!

**Rob Eagar**

## Endorsements

"I recommend Rob Eagar to any author or publisher looking to take their book campaign to a higher level."

**Dr. Gary Chapman**

#1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Five Love Languages*

"I give Rob Eagar my highest recommendation. If you want to increase book sales, make him the first person you hire."

**Lysa TerKeurst**

5-time *New York Times* bestselling author

"Rob Eagar gets great results and strategically places authors in the right spaces. I'm happy with what Rob did for me, and I highly recommend him."

**Dr. John Townsend**

*New York Times* bestselling author of *Boundaries*

"Rob Eagar provided effective marketing strategy and worked closely with my team to execute new promotional ideas. I highly recommend Rob."

**DeVon Franklin**

CEO of Franklin Entertainment and *New York Times* bestselling author

"Rob revolutionized how I market my novels and connect with readers. His Book Marketing Master Class gave me more fantastic ideas that I knew what to do with."

**Dani Pettrey**

Bestselling novelist with over 300,000 copies sold

"Rob Eagar's expertise helped me develop a new brand and create an exciting new website. It was beyond my expectations and included everything I asked for and more."

**Wanda Brunstetter**

6-time *New York Times* bestselling novelist with over 10 million copies sold

"Rob Eagar knows how to use words and has fine penmanship. You should really listen to him."

**His Mother**

English major who taught Rob to speak clearly

## What is a Book Hook?

What if you could get people excited to buy your book with just one sentence?

Sound too good to be true? It's possible. For instance, how would feel if your novel or nonfiction book was introduced to the world like this...

*The first man to walk on Mars is now sure he'll be the first to die there.*

*Could you let thousands of strangers die to save your family?*

*Breaking the law never seemed so right.*

*You can train your brain to win.*

*Be debt-free in 12 months – no matter how much you owe.*

*What if your sex life can get hotter with age?*

If you're a living, breathing human being, these statements grabbed your attention, right? Imagine how readers react when they see these lines as the opening description for a book. They can't help but feel curious to know more. That's the power of a "hook." You've hooked the reader's attention with no intention of letting it go.

Once you've got a reader's attention, you've overcome the biggest hurdle to the sale. Now, you're in a much stronger position to close the deal.

What if I told you how to create a hook in three easy steps? Would you want to learn how? Of course, every author would be curious to know the answer.

That's the power of a hook. And, it just worked on you (Ha!)

I want to teach you how to grab a reader's attention in 30 words or less. In fact, once you learn how to master the skill, you can do it in 10 words or less.

What if every book you write had a captivating hook? Consider the results:

- Your Amazon page will convince more readers to buy a copy.
- Your Facebook ads will convert better and save you money.
- Your email subscribers and social media fans will share more word of mouth.
- Your friends will like you more.
- Your mother will stop questioning your life choices to write a book.

All aspects of an author's life improve when you have a mesmerizing book hook.

In case you're not familiar with the term, "hook," here's my definition:

*A hook is a statement or question designed to generate immediate curiosity and make the reader desire to know more.*

Developing a hook for your book sounds like a no-brainer. However, I'll be honest. Creating a book hook is not always easy.

Recently, I challenged a large group of authors at various experience levels to send me a hook for their books. No one passed the test, even though I received numerous attempts. Every author sent statements that were bland, vague, or downright boring. Even established authors struggled with the exercise.

When I told the group that none of their hooks were effective, some complained that creating a good hook was just too hard. Their tone implied that hooks aren't important enough to warrant the mental struggle.

One author even asked me, "What's the big deal? I've already sold a lot of books without creating hooks in the past." This author's perspective brings up a valid question, "Is a book hook actually important?" Let's analyze the purpose of a book hook, then you be the judge.

What is a hook supposed to do? One thing only. Get people's attention.

## **ATTENTION!**

That's all. Attention is the word that matters.

In other words, you're not simply creating a hook. You're creating a way to get people's attention.

Now, ask yourself, "Is getting people's attention important to selling more books?"

Heck, yeah. How do you expect to sell something when you can't get a person's attention in the first place?

Attention is everything.

It's next to impossible to sell a book to someone who is distracted, dispassionate, or disinterested.

I've been there. I can remember numerous occasions when someone found out I was an author and asked me, "What is your book about?" In my excitement, I launched into reciting the main points of my manuscript. But, about 30 seconds into my response, I could see the other person start to look around the room, or look down at their phone, or even worse, watch their eyes glaze over.

It's a miserable feeling when you know a person's attention on your book waning.

There's that word again – attention.

On the other hand, think about how much easier it is to sell a product when you HAVE someone's attention. You can feel the enthusiasm, the interest, and the desire to know more.

I don't mean to sound depressing, but how many more books could you have sold in the past if you had gained more people's attention?

More attention = More book sales

I'm not trying to be cute or sound trite. Every author faces the same challenge. If you want to sell more books, learn how to get more people's attention. That's why a hook is so important.

Creating a hook might seem unnecessary, but that doesn't mean you should downplay the importance of developing one for your books. I know you can do it. Why?

Writing a book is one of the most difficult tasks in life. Yet, you found a way to push through the struggle and get the job done. If you can write a book, you can write a hook.

What if it's possible to get more people to buy your book using just one sentence?

Do I have your attention?

## **Word of Mouth is Lazy**

Selling books by yourself is hard. Imagine if no one bought your book unless you sold it individually to each reader. The process would be exhausting.

But, what if other people helped promote your book for you? Selling a book via word of mouth is much easier, wouldn't you agree? Every author dreams of readers telling their friends, "Oh my gosh! You have to buy this book...it's amazing!"

However, few readers are professional marketers. Instead, they are accountants or managers or teachers or parents or average Joes. These people aren't trained in marketing, nor are they interested in promoting your book as their job.

Most readers, though, are happy to recommend a book if it makes them look good and doesn't require too much effort. Notice that last phrase, "doesn't require too much effort." This reveals a commonly neglected fact about word of mouth:

Word of mouth is lazy.

That's right, word of mouth is laaazzzzzyyyyy.

I learned about this concept in a wonderful book called, *Word of Mouth Marketing* by Andy Sernovitz (I highly recommend that you buy a copy... see my word of mouth?) In his book, Andy says:

*Word of mouth is lazy. You must help it along if you want it to go anywhere.*

Take a moment to digest that quote. Word of mouth is naturally lethargic, which creates a problem for authors. Many writers assume that after they write a book other people will love it as much as they do. They expect readers to quickly buy 10 copies and give them away to friends. Word of mouth will be easy.

In the real world, though, people are busy. People forget to tell others about your book, even when they like it. And, most people aren't professional marketers, so they don't know what to say to friends even when trying to make a recommendation. They say whatever comes to mind, which may not be persuasive. That's why it's ultimately the author's job to help make word of mouth happen.

How can you help boost more word of mouth? Create a book hook. Here are two reasons why:

### **1. A book hook give readers something worth talking about.**

Never underestimate the connection between word of mouth and a reader's ego. People like to be the first person to tell their friends about something cool. People are more likely to recommend a book when it makes them look good. People are more likely to mention a book when it helps spark an interesting conversation. A book hook enables people to make a recommendation by having something clever to say to others.

## 2. A book hook trains readers how to spread word of mouth.

A hook can be easily transferred from one person to another. For instance, when your hook convinces someone to buy your book, then your hook also trains that reader what to tell their friends. If they want to spread word of mouth, they can simply repeat your memorable hook to someone else. That makes life easier for the reader to take action.

Word of mouth may be lazy and ego-driven. But, a book hook helps you overcome both of those problems.

## How to Create a Book Hook

What if you found out your book was getting turned into a movie? You'd be thrilled, right? Watching a book come to life on the big screen is every author's dream.

Ironically, visualizing that dream is a great technique to create a book hook. If you want to develop an effective hook, imagine your book as a movie. Remove your author hat for a moment and think like a screenwriter.

In Hollywood, a screenwriter's career is based on how well he or she can pitch a movie script starting with a powerful hook. In addition, whenever you see a movie poster or watch a television commercial, there's usually one sentence displayed that is designed to grab your attention.

Screenwriters know that if they're unable to "pitch" their movie in one sentence to a major studio, their idea will usually be rejected. That's because studios require a hook in order to feel comfortable investing in a new project. Movie executives know that a hook is necessary to sell a new movie to the masses. Thus, a screenwriter must to boil down their entire script into one concise idea that can capture a people's attention.

For example, below are three hooks for popular movies that came from books. Notice how the hook works for the movie script as well as the original book idea:

*What if a man with amnesia forgets he's the world's most dangerous assassin?*  
*The Bourne Identity* by Robert Ludlum

*What if a genetic breakthrough enables dinosaurs to be cloned and roam Earth again?*  
*Jurassic Park* by Michael Crichton

*What if a high-end law firm turned out to be a front for the Mafia?*  
*The Firm* by John Grisham

Many movies come from books. So, if a hook can be created for a movie, then a hook can certainly be created for a book. The trick is to look at your book from a screenwriter's point of view.

## How to Write Hooks for Nonfiction

If you're a nonfiction author, you might be thinking, "Not so fast, Rob. I write nonfiction. Your movie analogy doesn't apply to my genre."

Not so fast, my nonfiction friends. I agree that my movie analogy may seem easier to apply to a novel. But, the technique works well for almost every type of book.

For example, if you write nonfiction history, education, religion, or self-help, use the screenwriting technique to imagine your book turned into a movie documentary.

I enjoy watching documentaries, especially the "30 for 30" sports documentaries on ESPN. They use a clever method to promote their films. When you see a "30 for 30" television commercial, a narrator begins by asking the question:

*"What if I told you \_\_\_\_?"*

Then, the narrator fills in the blank and completes the question with a provocative statement. Below are several examples:

*What if I told you...Muhammad Ali was NOT the greatest*

*What if I told you...history isn't always written by the victors, but the losers*

*What if I told you...sports sometimes IS a matter of life and death*

*What if I told you...running a marathon is easy*

For a sample of ESPN's "30 for 30" documentary hooks, watch this YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJRisjTCuGE>

Notice how your curiosity is aroused by the question, "What if I told you \_\_\_\_?" It's a simple technique that's incredibly powerful, even for documentaries.

Here's another approach for nonfiction authors, especially if you write business, self-help, or educational books. Review your manuscript and make a list of the most controversial or contrarian teaching points.

Identify specific parts of your manuscript where you write something that would make people think, "Wow, I've never heard that before," "That's really controversial," or "I've never heard it put that way before."

Controversial teaching points work well in combination with the "What if I told you" technique. For example, notice how the following statements fly in the face of accepted beliefs:

*What if I told you...anyone can be debt-free in 12 months no matter how much they owe*

*What if I told you...the secret to closeness is inviting more conflict into your relationship*

*What if I told you...overcoming harmful habits has nothing to do with your self-control*

In many cases, the best ideas for an attention-grabbing hook can be found in the most contrarian or controversial advice within your book.

Likewise, if you write nonfiction memoirs or autobiographies, you can combine the movie screenwriter approach with a "What if" question to develop a convincing hook. Imagine your memoir as a dramatic tale playing on the silver screen. How would you make people curious about your story using one question or statement? Below are examples of hooks based on popular memoirs:

*What if a survivalist family forbids their daughter to go to school...yet she earns a Ph.D. from Cambridge University?*  
*Educated* by Tara Westover

*What if a desperate mother raises her son indoors...hidden from public view...because his birth is considered a local crime?*  
*Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah

*What if a doctor treating the dying...suddenly becomes a patient struggling to live?*  
*When Breathe Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi

## **How to Write Hooks for Fiction**

If you write fiction, there are various options to create an effective hook for your novel. For instance, it's easy to picture a novel as a major motion picture, such as a thriller, a

romantic comedy, or a horror film. Imagine sitting in a room with powerful movie executives who give you one shot to get their attention. How would you pitch your book using one punchy statement to grab their interest?

Employ a technique used by many screenwriters to sell their movie ideas. Like most movies, a novel consists of three essential elements: a protagonist that people like, a quest that the protagonist must complete, and dire conflict or an evil villain who is encountered along the way. Take your novel and identify those three crucial elements using these questions:

### **The 3-Step Screenwriter's Pitch Process**

1. What makes the main character unique?
2. What type of quest or journey does the main character undertake?
3. What kind of conflict or villain does the main character encounter during the quest?

Answer each question using a short phrase that provides key details. Then, assemble all three phrases together into a single sentence or question. Using this process can help create a winning hook. Below are examples of employing the three questions to generate an interesting hook:

*A retired cop. A town in need of justice. Can he stop a ruthless cartel from killing the innocent?*

*A poor girl emigrates to America. Against all odds, she completes law school. But, can she take down a deadly human trafficking ring preying on other immigrants?*

*A neglected daughter. Her desperate search for love. Can a poor maiden win the heart of a rich baron?*

Imagine pitching your book as a movie script and use the three screenwriter questions to sum up your story into a pithy sentence or series of short phrases.

Your initial attempts may be difficult. That's normal. When I create hooks for my books or my author clients, I rarely nail the hook on the first try. Do not give up. Worse, don't kid yourself and settle for a bland hook that you know is lackluster.

A bland hook isn't a hook at all. It's just a boring sentence that causes readers to lose interest. Worse, a bland hook causes you to lose precious book sales. Trust me, it's worth the extra time and effort to develop a hook that generates a noticeable reaction from

the reader. I've helped several authors increase their conversion rates on Amazon almost overnight simply by developing a better hook.

It doesn't matter what technique you use to create a hook as long as the end result is effective. You can use the screenwriter's 3-question technique. Or, you can also use the "what if I told you" question to help put your brain in the right mindset. Effective hooks make readers want to know how the story in a novel will play out. A sense of curiosity is automatically aroused.

In addition, an effective hook is concise, easy to say, and easy to understand. A long sentence rarely qualifies as a hook, because it requires too much mental energy to keep the reader engaged.

Thus, I always recommend keeping your hook as brief as possible. Fifteen words or less is typically ideal. Brevity matters for three reasons:

1. The more words that you try to cram into one sentence, the harder it becomes for people to read that sentence quickly and fluidly. Good hooks must be easily digestible.
2. Your hook will be used as the attention-grabber for online advertising purchased on Amazon, Facebook, and BookBub, which typically have a short word count limit or tight space restrictions.
3. Most importantly, the longer a hook becomes, the harder it is for readers to share that hook with friends and help spread word of mouth.

Keep your book hook short and concise. Use as few words as needed to get the reader's attention.

Let's make sure you know how to identify the difference between a good hook and an ineffective attempt. In the next section, I'll discuss common mistakes authors make when trying to create a hook. Then, we'll look at stellar examples you can follow for inspiration.

## **Examples of Ineffective Hooks**

Many of the authors that I coach find it easier to create a book hook by seeing the difference between good and bad examples. First, let's start with what NOT to do. Read the following "what if" questions and ask yourself if they grab your attention:

*What if you could wake up every day motivated and excited about your job?*

This hook attempt is too vague and generic. You can't tell what makes the book unique.

*What if I told you everything you know about love is a lie, but the truth may be more than you can handle?*

This hook attempt sounds unrealistic and trite. It feels too much like an infomercial.

*What if a teenage girl accidentally time traveled and fell into the body of a rebellious medieval woman who witnessed a murder and fell in love with a nobleman all the while trying to find a way home before she disappears forever?*

This hook attempt is too long. You're confused and lost attention by the sentence's end.

*What if I you could dance your way to a lasting relationship?*

This hook attempt is too ambiguous and needs more detail to grab someone's interest.

Use these examples above as clarification about what NOT to do. If your hook attempt is vague, long, or confusing, it will just be an attempt – not an actual hook.

Also, avoid using clichés or overly sensational language to cover up a lack of genuine suspense or intrigue. For instance, these clichés don't add value to the hook, such as "like you've never heard before," "you won't believe it," or "the best ever." Empty phrases just water down a hook attempt into meaningless mush.

## **Tease, Don't Describe**

Another common problem for fiction writers is the tendency to describe their story, rather than tease the reader. Readers aren't necessarily moved by the details of your story. They are moved by the suspense of not knowing what will happen in your story.

Avoid the desire to describe everything about your story. Trying to cram too many details into your hook will make the sentence too long and hard to follow.

For example, I coached an author whose initial hook attempt for a novel contained 25 words. The problem stemmed for the author trying to include too many descriptive elements, such as the protagonist's age, phase of life, along with the villain that was encountered. You can see the problem below:

*What if an aging entrepreneur and a retired Delta Force colonel must break the law in order to save America from a ruthless terrorist attack?*

The longer a sentence gets, the less power it contains. When you try to write a hook that contains too many descriptive details, the reader can struggle stay engaged. Skeptical readers who view your book for the first time aren't interested in processing a bunch of information. They just want to know – does your novel sound like an entertaining read?

Therefore, don't try to cram too many descriptive elements into your hook – save those details for your book description. Just use the hook to get people's attention in the first place.

For instance, I showed the author in the example above how to tease the reader by boiling the hook down to the core essence of the story, which only takes 7 words. Notice how the statement below has a lot more punch when the extraneous details are removed:

*Breaking the law never seemed so right.*

Remember, your hook is NOT the book description or synopsis for your novel. It is merely one sentence designed to make readers want to explore your book description. Most people won't feel interested to read your book description unless you display a hook to pique their curiosity first.

## **Tease, Don't Teach**

Some non-fiction authors struggle to write effective hooks because they attempt to use the hook as a teaching point. This misstep typically affects academic, religious, or business authors who are too focused on their methodology or curriculum. At times, academic authors can struggle to get out of their own head and view their book from the perspective of an uninitiated reader.

When most people see your book for the first time, it might be via a Facebook ad, an Amazon ad, or the top of the description page on Amazon, Kobo, Apple, or Barnes & Noble.com. In these situations, the average person is apathetic, cynical, or distracted. They don't care about your special teaching methodology, your six steps for success, your proven plan, or your sacred insights. All readers care about is: "What's in it for me?" That's why you need a hook to capture people's attention.

Thus, the purpose of a hook is to tease, not to teach. You can't teach people anything until you have their attention first. For example, the statement below concentrates too much on trying to teach the reader, rather than generate curiosity.

*What if loving your spouse requires learning how to implement the three steps of forgiveness?*

Readers don't care if you have three steps, five techniques, or 10 magic secrets. That doesn't mean your steps or techniques aren't valuable. The teaching component of your book is important. But, many people won't get interested in your methodology unless you use a hook to gain their interest. For example, you could take the didactic statement above about the "three steps of forgiveness" and turn it into an effective hook in the following manner:

*What if love isn't enough to make marriage great?*

Now, you've got a hook that grabs people attention. Once a reader's curiosity is aroused, then you can explain how your teaching content will improve their life. Tease first, teach later.

## **Say More by Saying Less**

The power of a hook lies in the ability to tease the reader using as few words as possible. Using the "What if I told you..." technique can be a great way to unleash your creativity and spark ideas that will tease readers. However, using the phrases, "What if I told you" or "What if," to begin your hook can add unnecessary length that steal the thunder from your hook.

Your hook will look and sound more persuasive by using as few words as possible. So, don't be afraid to jettison the "What if" words and display a powerful statement that grabs people's attention.

Here's an example from a nonfiction perspective. The "What if" question below has 21 words. When you display such a long sentence, people can look at all the words and decide to skip over reading it. When people skip over reading your hook, they tend to skip over reading your description. When people tend to skip over reading your description, you tend to lose a lot of book sales. Follow my drift?

*What if I told you that anyone could be debt-free in 12 months, no matter how much money you might owe?*

When you have a hook attempt that is too long, drop the “what if” part and experiment with turning everything into a short statement. In our example above, the 21-word “what if” question can be shortened into a 12-word statement that packs a potent punch:

*Be debt-free in 12 months...no matter how much you owe!*

The purpose of a hook is to tease the reader. But, it’s hard to tease someone when the sentence is too long to keep the reader’s interest.

When in doubt, shorten the word count.

Let’s look at numerous ways great hooks can be displayed for fiction and nonfiction books.

## **Examples of Effective Fiction Hooks**

A hook is not a hook unless it teases the reader to know what happens in the story. Notice the provocative power of these hooks for novels:

*Beware a calm surface—you never know what lies beneath.*

*The first man to walk on Mars is sure he’ll be the first to die there.*

*A heartbroken man grieves over his dead girlfriend...until she reappears.*

*Could you let thousands of strangers die in order to save your family?*

*What if you could see your life as if you were never born?*

*Intelligent machines have calculated the best source of energy...is humans.*

*Lydia is dead, but they don’t know this yet.*

*Turning a corrupt U.S. Congressman is cheaper than you think. Now, America must pay the price.*

Each of these hooks are concise, punchy, and effective. Create a powerful hook and give your story the same treatment that it deserves.

## Examples of Effective Non-Fiction Hooks

These nonfiction hooks are persuasive due to their brevity and ability to generate immediate curiosity:

*You can train your brain to win.*

*Rare rainforest land...equal to 31 million football fields...is destroyed every year!*

*This one secret can take five strokes off of your golf game.*

*What if you could say no without feeling guilty anymore?*

*Everyone speaks...but not everyone is heard.*

*Why get mad or try to get even? Instead, get what you want!*

Notice how each hook grabs your attention. You may not agree with the premise represented by these nonfiction books. Yet, it's hard to deny the desire to know more about them. That's the purpose of a hook. Make people curious. Make them wonder. Make them want to read more.

## Bundle Hooks for a Book with Diverse Content

What if you've written a non-fiction book that covers many different topics? For example, you might have written a textbook on a broad topic, an inspiring compilation of true stories, or a self-help guide based on big issues, such as marriage, parenting, or religion. How do you create a hook for a book that features diverse content?

First, I strongly encourage you to strive for developing one over-arching hook that encapsulates the entire book. It might take extra thought and work, but the reward is worth it. There will be plenty of situations where space constraints or tight time limits will force you to use only one sentence to grab someone's attention, such as a Facebook ad, Amazon ad, book postcard, or a 10-second elevator pitch. It is possible to create a single hook for any type of book if you put enough creativity and deliberation into the process.

However, there is a second option you can consider: Create separate hooks for the various primary topics within your book and bundle them together. This approach can help your brain focus on a single topic and develop hook ideas that get people's attention. Then, you can display 3 – 5 of those hooks listed together as a bundle for

readers to see. This bundling technique allows you to present more hooks enabling you to gang up on the reader and intensify their sense of curiosity.

For example, I consulted with an author who wrote a helpful marriage guide that has sold over 100,000 copies. The author wanted to breathe new life into the marketing campaign but struggled to create a single hook for the book. I recommended developing several hooks that related to the individual chapters and display them together. The result was a persuasive list of hooks that stops readers in their tracks:

*What if your sex life can get hotter with age?*

*What if it's never too late to repair damaged trust?*

*What if love isn't always enough to sustain your marriage?*

*What if it's possible to love and hate your partner at the same time?*

*Committing your life to someone else isn't a prison. It's the path to greater freedom!*

Each hook represents a various part of the book but draws readers to different types of content covered, including sex, trust, conflict, etc. Rather than rely on one hook to do all of the work, you can spread the persuasive power across several hooks as a group.

To be clear, I do not recommend creating multiple hooks and using the bundling approach for a novel. When you write a story, it is crucial to sum up the emotional suspense and overall plot into one powerful hook. Otherwise, you will struggle to get people's attention. In addition, you will struggle to land theatrical or movie rights for your novel, because Hollywood demands a succinct marketing hook. Look at any movie poster in the theaters and you quickly realize how space for promotional text is at a premium. Keep your hook short and sweet.

Now, you know the difference between an enticing hook and a bland attempt. The next step is learning where to use your hook.

## **Where to Use Your Book Hook**

If a tree falls in a forest but no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

If an author creates a hook but no one sees it, does the hook help sell any books?

What if I told you a hook is useless unless people actually see it? Like my "what if" technique, there? I can do it all day, but I digress.

Once you have a good hook, where do you use it? The answer is EVERYWHERE.

A hook only has power if the intended reader sees it. I stress the words “intended reader,” because not everyone will like your hook. Many people may come across it who aren’t fans of your genre. So, your hook will roll off their brain like water off a duck’s back.

That’s okay. Your hook doesn’t have to please everyone – just your intended audience. If you orient your hook to fans of your genre and make sure they see it, then you increase the odds that the right people will buy your book.

That’s why a hook should be displayed prominently wherever people view information about your book. Here are four key places to present your hook:

### **1. Feature your hook on your book’s Amazon page**

Amazon is the largest book retailer in the world. They sell nearly 50% of all print books in America and over 70% of all ebooks. Every day, millions of people search, browse, and buy new books on Amazon. Their website has the power to display your book hook to more readers than anywhere else. But, you must take steps for the hook to be easily viewable. Otherwise, it can appear like any other generic text on the screen.

For instance, make sure your hook is the first sentence featured at the top of your book’s product detail page on Amazon. Put the words in bold text for visual emphasis. In most cases, Amazon only displays the first 30 words of book description. Beyond that tiny amount, people have to click on a “Read more” link to access all of your book’s promotional copy.

In other words, people won’t read the full description for your book if a hook doesn’t grab their attention. That’s why your hook should be listed first in a bold font. Fortunately, Amazon has a secret “back door” that lets any author access their book detail page and make improvements. If you’re not familiar with this covert trick and want to learn the details, read my book, *The Author’s Guide to Marketing Books on Amazon*.

### **2. Display your hook on the back cover copy**

On your physical book cover jacket, feature your book hook as the first sentence on the top of your back cover copy. When people browse shelves at a bookstore, many readers look at the front cover then flip the book over to read the back cover copy. Make your hook the first words people see on the back cover. Use a larger font, bolded text, or a different color to make the words stand out.

Plus, there are some instances where your hook might serve as an effective subtitle. For instance, if you struggle to develop a supportive subtitle, try using your book hook in its

place. A great hook doesn't need to be relegated to the back cover. You can also feature the words on the front cover along with the main title.

### **3. Use your hook with Amazon, BookBub, and Facebook Ads**

If you buy Amazon, BookBub, or Facebook ads to promote your book, these platforms allow you to insert a hook to make the ad more effective. For example, Amazon lets you insert around 30 words of "custom text" as promotional copy for shoppers to see on an ad. Use your hook in that section. Likewise, Facebook and BookBub ads provide a section called "headline text" where you can insert a hook for people to see. If you want your ads to work effectively, you must grab people's attention first. A hook is your secret weapon.

### **4. Say your hook out loud**

Another way to heighten interest in your book is by saying your hook in conversation with other people. For example, use your book hook in casual discussion with friends, during media interviews, while sitting next to someone on the airplane, whenever you pitch a book idea to an agent or publisher, etc.

A great hook enables you to feel more confident about marketing your book. It brings an extra sense of excitement where you look forward to describing it to other people. You no longer have to fear the question someone might ask, "What is your book about?" Confidently reply by stating your book hook.

If most people tend to respond without interest, take their indifference as a signal to start over and create a better hook. Do not ride a dead horse. It's better to jettison a bad hook and develop something better.

Instead, you want people to perk up with interest after you say your hook and respond, "Tell me more..." That's how you know your hook is effective.

There's no bad place to display or recite a great hook. Use it everywhere all the time. People won't tire of seeing it or hearing it. More importantly, a great hook helps your fans spread more word of mouth by knowing exactly what to tell their friends.

Let's recap everything you've just learned into three simple steps. Here's how to create a powerful book hook:

Step 1 – Imagine your book is turned into a movie or a documentary.

Step 2 – Develop a hook using the three-step screenwriter’s pitch or employ the “what if I told you” technique. Cut out all extraneous words to make your hook short and punchy.

Step 3 – Display your book hook and use it everywhere.

What if I told you a simple secret that could revolutionize your book sales?

Now you know. It’s a book hook.

HOWEVER, your hook is NOT the end. It is merely the BEGINNING of your complete book description. If you have a great hook but a bland description, then you won’t convince many readers to buy your book. Your hook and your book description are meant to work together in concert to convince readers to purchase.

Do you know how to write a captivating book description? I find the process to be another challenge that most authors struggle to accomplish. I’m here to help. After coaching over 600 authors, I’ve developed easy-to-follow templates to create an enticing book description.

My template for writing a nonfiction book description will guide you through each step of showing readers you know how they feel, what they want, and the payoff your book will provide.

If you write novels, my fiction book description template will explain how to make the reader feel the suspense of your story and present the reader with an irresistible cliffhanger.

Both templates are outlined in my book, *The Author’s Guide to Write Text That Sells Books*.

In addition, I detail how to format your book description to capture more sales on Amazon in my book, *The Author’s Guide to Marketing Books on Amazon*.

If you found my instruction in this free guide to be helpful creating an attractive hook, then I invite you to go deeper and purchase these books. I’m confident you’ll find both resources to be worth the investment.

The easiest way to sell more of your books is to improve the marketing language that readers see. A captivating hook combined with a powerful description is the perfect combination to boost your book sales.

Imagine your Amazon page convincing more browsers into buyers.

Imagine your ads on Amazon, Facebook, and BookBub converting more clicks into sales.

Imagine enjoying a sustainable writing career.

It all starts with a compelling hook. You can do it!

Thank you for reading this free guide. I hope you enjoy my other books as well. I wish you all the best on your author journey. After you implement the instruction in this resource and experience results, please share your success story with me.

**Rob Eagar**

Wildfire Marketing

Contact me at:

<http://www.RobEagar.com>

## Other Books by Rob Eagar

Want to go deeper than a free e-book and get pro-level marketing instruction that works for *New York Times* bestselling authors? Rob's industry-leading advice can be found in *The Author's Guide* series, a collection of books dedicated to teaching essential marketing skills, including:



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## Get Expert Help with Your Books

Are you're tired of trying to figure out book marketing by yourself? What if an experienced coach guided you to the next level? Get personal help from one of the most accomplished experts in America:

### **Book Marketing Master Class**

Become the hero of your own author story! The Book Marketing Master Class teaches how to master all key aspects of marketing a book. Whether you're a first-time author or a seasoned bestseller, Rob Eagar will show you how to:

- Attract more readers using the power of free content and email.
- Create persuasive language, including hooks, titles, and back cover copy.
- Construct a complete marketing plan to maximize the book launch sequence.
- Turn your author website into a book-selling machine.
- Maximize inexpensive advertising on Amazon, BookBub, and Facebook.
- Connect with online influencers and turn media interviews into book sales.
- Discover multiple ways to create new income from your book content.

Rob's expertise applies to fiction and nonfiction, first-timer or bestseller, indie author or traditionally-published. He will personally teach you his proven marketing techniques and apply his instruction to your specific books, goals, and experience level. Work with Rob in person or receive instruction via live video sessions. Include your team and get everyone coached up at the same time. Receive follow-up access to ask Rob questions, hold you accountable, and request his review of your work. For details on the Book Marketing Master Class, visit:

<https://www.startawildfire.com/consulting/book-marketing-master-class>

### **Personal 90-Minute Author Coaching Sessions**

Are your book sales stagnant? Got a nagging question about book marketing or publishing? Ready to raise the bar on your author career? Reach your goals by talking directly with a world-class expert. Schedule a personal 90-minute author coaching session with Rob Eagar.

Individual coaching sessions include direct access to Rob to ask questions and learn how to improve your book marketing skills. Using live video screenshare technology, he will walk you step-by-step through everything you need to know. Get immediate answers to reach more readers, build a larger audience, sell more books, and increase your author revenue. For details about purchasing a 90-minute Author Coaching Session, visit:

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