

# True Friends newsmag

ANG DYARYONG NAIIBA!

FEBRUARY 2009 ISSUE

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 7

## Luck Is What You Make it

I've lost count of the amount of times I have been told by some budding writer that their ambition was to have a book published, and then after a predictable pause they shrug their shoulders and come up with the 'perfect' reason why their dream could never be realized.

If I had just one dollar for all the unfulfilled dreams that have been caused by a lack of motivation and self confidence I'd surely be able to live the rest of my days living it up in the lap of luxury at a Shangri-La, Ritz Carlton or some other equally prestigious hotel.

Why is it that people give up so easily? Why do they assume that those who have managed to get their works into print live in a totally different

By: Brian Salter

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world, on a higher plain from them, as they continue with their ordinary humdrum lives?

Everyone has dreams. But unless we are prepared to expend a little time and effort into a project, why should we expect others to beat a path to our door, cheque book in hand, ready to finance our dream?

Luck, as the old saying goes, isn't just for the lucky few. Instead they create their luck by having the nerve, the sheer effrontery if you like for believing in themselves and their pet project. That, and a feel for lateral thinking that doesn't lead them down the same old cliché-ridden well worn path.

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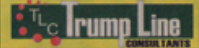
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Standing from left: TT Columnists Edelweid Austerio, Annabelle Libao, Amy Guinacao & Miam Medrano. Seated are Brian Salter & TT Editor Tony Bertolone.

## PASAWAY NA PUSO

PUSO -- katagang makapangyarihan, nakakalilig, makalaya, minam naman madagap at madalas pasaway. Kapag puso ang pinag-usapan, marami ang natatwala. Marami rin usap ang silahangit. At karamihan ay unangay sa tungang ito. Iba't ibo man ang kuwento at dahilan ng buwat nilalang kung saan sangkot ang puso, it's still a part of our everyday experience. Boring ang buhay kung wala kang matatagpuan na love life or sex life na kumikwira pasaway na puso ang siyang nagpapalita.

Pinakbet Ni Amy Ni Amy Guinacao



Hanga na sana ako sa kaibigan kung si Mabeth nang mabiko ko siyang all-out smile sa bagong pakikilala sa aming foreigner guy friend. "Ang cute niya girl, 'di ba' kamsukha niya si Ian Veneracion?", 'di niya mapigilang sabi. Sa sobrang tuwa ko, pinagap ko ang kanyang pulad and gave her a handshaka. "Wow, congrats 'ol! You did have an eye for a perfect creature." "Aho ba, kamis ka!", nakagungo niyang protesta. Natatwa na lang ako

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Let's stick with that dream of writing a book for the moment. Without wishing to brag, I have a number of published books to my name. None are what I could, in all honesty, describe as literary masterpieces; but they fulfilled their respective requirements, which as often as not were to do with bringing in new business for my company, since for some reason there are many who would believe that someone who has written a book must be an expert on that subject!

(There is also the added thrill for an author of actually discovering his masterpiece on the shelves of a bookshop; and for I one will never forget the rush of excitement on my first visit to the Saudi capital of Riyadh and finding three of my tomes on each there.)

Each and every author has had to start at the beginning. There is no magic fast track to the top. So how come some make it, whilst countless others fail at the first hurdle?

The answer, I am convinced, lies in psychology. Put yourself, for example, in the position of a publisher. Someone

knocks on your door saying they have a book in their head which they just know would be perfect for publication. What questions would you, as that publisher, want answered before committing yourself to the project?

Most commercial publishers actually have a Q&A document which they ask budding authors to fill in. What is the book about?, of course, comes pretty near the top of the list. Who would read it?, is also another given. Why would they want to read it? What makes you think you are an expert? What other books out in the market already cover the subject? How will your book take the subject further? These and many others are obvious questions that someone you are asking to put money into the project will want answered. Yet how often do the guys with dreams even think through any of these questions? Remarkably few, if the truth be known.

It's a bit like going for a job

interview. It amazes me how many people go for interview having done no research whatsoever on the job or company they are applying for or to. Why would the personnel manager be interested in a candidate who shows so little interest in the job, especially when there is an army of people all trying to get that one position. Yet in the many years I used to interview job seekers I'd say fully one third of them had simply not bothered to do any homework. And if they couldn't be bothered with the position I was offering, then why should I be interested in taking them on?

Yes, luck is definitely something you can create for yourself. But sometimes it is also a matter of thinking outside the box to position your self in a different light from that competition. That's easier said than done; so in my next article I will be looking at some of the ways that you can do just that: sell your idea by being different and offering a USP (and if you don't know what that's about, then let's start on that theme next time).

Publisher's Message

Happy Valentine's Day everyone

We all love "LOVE" and there are so many types of love to savor and celebrate. But there's nothing greater than the sweetest love for our family. Such love is never selfish, never conditional, never unwavering and forever inspiring and uplifting. The same love that makes us work the hardest and sacrifice most of our interests just so we can provide for our family... sounds heavy! I know but it's true.

To all the singles out there (whether by choice or otherwise) do not despair because you have your immediate family to love and to love you back. And to the "attached" ones enjoy the day and may you forever be in love with your partner.

Cheers!



Catherine Kaldy

True Friends Publisher & Powerline Asia Ltd. Managing Director

Continued from page 1... Pasaway na Puso

na pagpapalad ang reaction niya. Yeah, the eye was one hell of a book. Mabikang

Nasaaliw na lamang akong

Part 1 of 3 series

(The author can be contacted at briansalter@baysender.co.uk)

Last time I ventured my opinion that luck isn't the God-given right of a select few, but rather it was something that everyone can help create for themselves.

I used the example of author 'wannabes' who wished to see their names in print. Why is it that so few make it whilst so many fail? Luck is really not the reason. No, those few who succeed have made their own luck and thought through the whole psychological process of winning.

Let's continue with the book analogy. In my experience, there are three tried and tested methods for getting non-fiction published. (We'll look at poetry, memoirs and novels later.) Without question, the easiest method is simply to become a world renowned expert in your chosen subject and wait for the world to beat a path to your door begging you to give speeches and thence to transfer your well respected brain matter to the printed page. OK. In reality that's not going to happen to 99.99 per cent of us. So how else can we get into print?

The second best method is to spot a gap in the market and seize the opportunity. This is much easier than many might imagine. For instance, when the internet was a new concept for businesses and remember, we are talking only ten years ago the newspapers were full of stories about this new phenomenon; but there were remarkably few books written on the subject. Most business publishers were scrambling over themselves to find someone anyone who could write about this new business area.

Internet not your speciality? OK. I once ran a company where my business partner needed to undergo a hysterectomy. There were plenty of books describing the mechanics of the operation; but there was almost nothing on how to cope with the after effects -- of how husbands, boyfriends and business colleagues reacted to the op; of how to cope with the friends who could continue for many days; of how to carry on with running a home or picking up at work from where the woman left off. So I set about interviewing over 50 ladies who had undergone such an experience and writing the book myself.

When I wanted new software which could prove prohibitively expensive, I made a point of approaching a publisher which specialised in books about software. Would they like a

## Luck is What You Make It (Part 2)

book written on XYZ-program that had just been released in a new version? If they said yes, I then approached the software vendor suggesting they give me a copy of this latest version or better still, give me a copy of work in progress for the next version after that and by having to write the book I gave myself the incentive of having to learn the best way of using it. (It's a fact that the majority of software users hate reading help files and manuals, preferring instead to buy better laid out how-to guides.) I was given eight expensive programs free this way, and was paid for the privilege into the bargain!

The third way is to self publish, which is what many people opt for in the first instance, so desperate are they to see their names in print. Little do they realise that with the advent of internet technologies, this can nowadays be an extremely inexpensive method of publication not just for non-fiction, but for fiction and poetry as well. I'll be looking at this option in the next article in this series.

**By: Brian Salter**  
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But lest we get overly hung up on publishing (this is meant to be an article on creating your own opportunities after all) let's consider something totally different from book writing.

An Indonesian friend of mine in the UAE was coming to the end of her contract in Dubai and was due to head home to her native Jakarta, having worked for two years in a hotel earning money to send home to her family and to put aside a little nest egg with which she wanted to start a business on her return. She thought of opening a restaurant, since this was something of which she now had experience.

On 'cross examination' she had to admit she had thought simply of opening another restaurant in a street full of restaurants all selling virtually the same fare. But after a little discussion we came up with a far better plan: open something unique and people will have a reason to visit your

establishment rather than the competition. Not only that, but you can charge higher prices meaning bigger profit margins, and get free publicity into the bargain. So we put together a business plan for a fondue restaurant. Cheese fondues and meat fondues and chocolate fondues and Chinese hot pots something to appeal to every palate, all of which is easy to prepare (so less on staff costs), has no competition (so can charge higher prices), is *different* (so it will attract those wanting something a little out of the ordinary for special occasions) and makes a fun occasion for the customers (can you tell me of a more social meal than cooking at your own table?)

Yes. Creativity and lateral thinking are the keys to laying the groundwork for making one's own good fortune. And next time we'll also be examining ways to get free publicity and to turn our dreams into reality.

(The author can be contacted at [brinsalter@btinternet.com](mailto:brinsalter@btinternet.com))



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I've argued before that luck is not something destined for the lucky few; but rather it is everyone's grasp if only they will reach out and take the opportunities that throw themselves at us throughout our entire lives. The secret is in recognizing opportunities for what they are and manipulating them so that we can benefit to the max.

Sure, we won't win every time. But apart from time and effort, what is there to lose?

Last time I touched on self publishing as a means of getting one's thoughts into print. Now, it wasn't that long ago that this would mean real expense and was only really suitable for those who were so desperate to see their names on the cover of a book that for them it was worth the money.

But with the internet age, everything has changed now.

What if you write poetry or fiction? What if you want to write about your experiences in Hong Kong? What if you wish to espouse a cause? The truth is that you'll be extremely unlikely to find a publisher to pay out good money, taking a risk on your literary merits.

But if you're ready to create your own eBook all is possible. Now, an eBook is simply a pdf file of your book laid out as if it is already printed. There are numerous programs that can create eBooks for you - some are very cheap or even free. You could even create it in MS Word or a free office program such as Open Office and create a pdf

# Luck is What You Make It

(Part 3)

file from that (look on the internet and there are free resources for doing this too!).

Many online book sellers are now happy to sell your eBook for you (for a commission of course) including some of the big boys out there such as Amazon. But how will anyone find your book from the plethora of books available? The answer, of course, is publicity; free publicity!

There are plenty of ways. You could eMail a copy of the eBook pdf to a newspaper with a press release attached along the lines of *local girl causes sensation with new literary masterpiece*. (Who is to say what is or is not a masterpiece? Perception is in the eye of the beholder!)

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Another method you could try is what I did with a guide book I had written about Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. I wrote the book because there was nothing available at all (Saudi is a very closed society, not geared up to tourism) and I actually found it a fascinating city. I approached a publisher which specialised in Middle Eastern topics; but although they gave me a verbal commitment, my masterpiece sat in their in-tray for a few months until I finally gave up with them. (I later found out that the editor had personal problems that of course I knew nothing about.)

So having done all the work, I decided instead to make up a web site where I would make freely available [www.riyadh-ksa.com](http://www.riyadh-ksa.com). After a few weeks there were already people finding the site (via Google mostly). So I then sent out a press release to all Saudi papers in both English and Arabic. *Arab News* - an English language broadsheet asked me to come in for an interview; and the result was a full page write up of the site and of what I was doing in Saudi Arabia.

Within three days of the paper coming out, the number of visitors to the site skyrocketed to the point that I was now getting typically 6,000 downloads from the web site in a month. It shot to the number one site about Riyadh in the Google rankings, making it an ideal vehicle for selling advertising. And then Prince Sultan bin Salman 'Saudi Arabia's first astronaut and head of the country's Supreme Commission for Tourism picked up the newspaper article and as a result ordered *Al Tarath* - the country's heritage organisation - to find me and ask me to do work for them. That resulted very quickly in Al Tarath offering to publish the original book, which finally came out last November. I then put out another press release (mentioning that I just happened to have been a news anchor on Saudi 2 TV), this time generating articles in Al Riyadh and Al Shams newspapers, leading to a flood of eMails from Saudis asking where they could buy the book.

Apart from the writing of the book itself (which was great fun to do) I expended practically no effort in getting publicity; but the result is that it is widely known within Saudi Arabia, and already a magazine editor in the UAE wants to pick up and run with the story. More publicity. More sales. More interest in what started out purely as something to do as a hobby.

Yes. Luck is definitely what you make it. Never be afraid to push yourself to achieve your dreams. Have faith in yourself, think laterally and think psychology. And sit back and enjoy the ride!

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