

# TRIBE BUILDING from the TRENCHES

**14 TIPS**

from those who  
have done it

JEFF GOINS • JEFF BROWN • NATHAN BERRY  
CHRIS DUCKER • RAY EDWARDS • MICHAEL PORT  
PAMELA WILSON • AND MORE

# TRIBE BUILDING

## from the Trenches

14 tips from those who have done it

Today, we live in a noisy world. Everyone is vying for everyone else's attention. So, what are we to do? There are, of course, only two options. One is to be quiet and let the talkers talk. Of course, there's nothing wrong with this, but that's not always the right choice.

Recently, I read an interview with John Grisham, in which he shared how it took him three years to write his first book. He was a busy lawyer and a new dad, arguably in the busiest season of his life, and as he was writing this book, he would occasionally go into the bookstore and look at the tens of thousands of books there, wondering to himself, "Who wants to hear from me?!"

But the truth was lots of people did.

The same is true for you. You have a tribe, an audience out there who is waiting for you to speak up. But if you just start talking, they won't listen. You have to earn their attention, and that is a subtle art that takes practice.

When I decided to become a writer, I knew it would take work and that I'd have to build an audience, so I sought out people who were smarter than me. And I learned from them. This is how we grow in our craft today: we surround ourselves with those who are wiser and more experienced than we are.

So, to help you build your own tribe, I've rounded up some of the smartest tribe-builders I know to offer some helpful and useful advice on how to share your work with the world in a way that won't be annoying or forgettable. These are authors, speakers, and entrepreneurs who you should listen to because they've actually taken the journey and found success.

Read on at your own peril, though. Because once you hear this advice, you can't un-hear it. You will be responsible for what you know and for what comes next. And you just might be called to act, to speak up, and let your voice be heard.

I hope you do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J Ben". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of "J" being particularly large and stylized.



**Jeff Brown**  
**@THEjeffbrown**

**T**hough **“Done is better than perfect”** is a mantra that makes sense when you’re afraid to hit publish, it can’t continue to be your mantra long term. Too many people six months or a year down the road are still publishing subpar work citing that line. In contrast to perfection, excellence with consistency, demonstrated over time, is one of the smartest ways to build a tribe and draw attention to your work.



**Nathan Barry**  
**@nathanbarry**

## **S**tart with just 10 people.

To do that you need to pick a niche (mine was designing iPhone apps) and list out 10 people who are trying to learn that skill.

Then email them and ask if they'd be interested in joining your list to learn more about \_\_\_\_\_.

Everyone who says yes gets added to your email program. Then follow up with two more questions:

1. What's your biggest frustration related to \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Where do you go online right now to learn about \_\_\_\_\_?

The answers to the first question will give you plenty of material to write about (just answer their frustrations). The second set will tell you where your target audience hangs out online. That's where you should write guest posts and promote your content.



**Chris Ducker,**  
founder of  
**Youpreneur.com**  
**@ChrisDucker**

# Be yourself.

When you're building a tribe around you, and what you're all about — and how you can help them — being YOU is the best 'marketing tactic' you can employ. Because, when you build the 'business of you', it's 100% original!





**Ray Edwards**  
**@RayEdwards**

**Y**ou already have a tribe waiting for you; your job is to find them. To find your tribe — or, more accurately, help them find you — an act of stunning courage and daring will be required. You'll need to find something you actually care about, and then act as if you care about it. Having that passion is key, in my opinion. People are attracted to passion. Nobody is going to follow you because of your spreadsheet. Unless, of course your tribe is the Spreadsheet Tribe...



**Asha Dornfest**  
**@ashadornfest**

**B**e consistently useful.

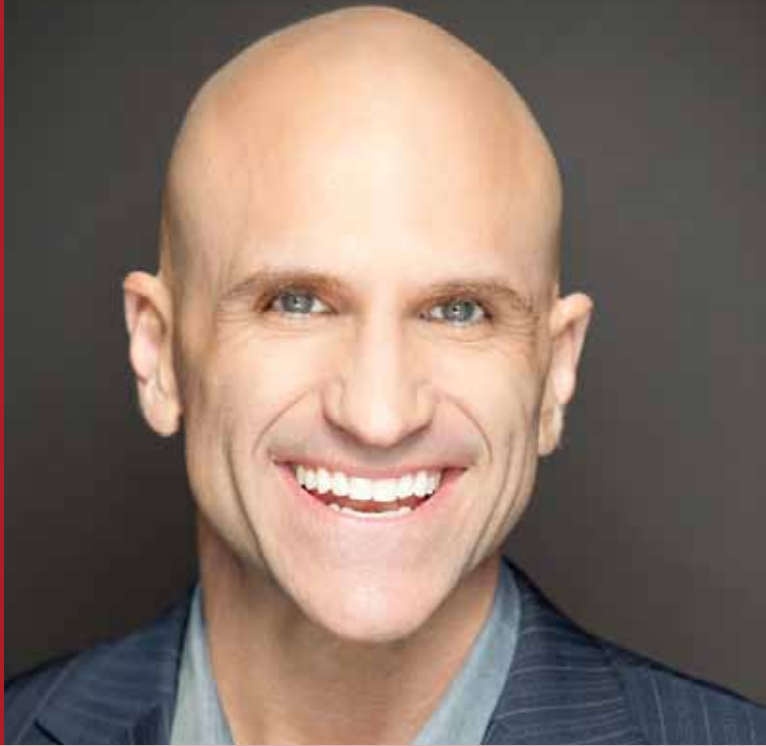
Do what you can to help your audience improve their lives. I'm not just talking about self-help or how-to: giving people a laugh, or helping them feel seen and respected or less alone through your storytelling, or brightening their days with art or photography all count. This is a giving business we're in. The more we give and celebrate "us" rather than "me," the more we can build a tribe.





**Carlos Whittaker**  
**@loswhit**

**T**he simple tribe building rule that I live by is to “Show the Party and the Pain.” I think when you are a lifestyle content producer like myself, people are drawn to consistency in my authenticity. My tribe has continued to grow as I have continued to show both sides of my life. The good and the bad.



**Michael Port**  
**@michaelport**

**M**y #1 tip for creating a tribe is focusing on creating connections between members of the tribe.

The first part of your job is to be compelling enough to get people to pay attention. The second part of your job is to support the development of the tribe. Remember, it's not about you. If you think it is, you're not much of a leader.



**Marion Roach**  
**@mroachsmith**

**H**aving a tribe is the cornerstone for building one's body of work. I depend on my tribe as much as I depend on air or water for survival. From them stems all creativity. After all, creativity requires both something to which to respond, as well as people on whom to test one's material. But at the heart of all creativity is discipline, and nothing reinforces the discipline of work like surrounding oneself with hard-working people.



**Timothy Grahl**  
**@timgrahl**

## **Focus on the real definition of marketing which is:**

- 1) create long lasting connections with people and
- 2) focus on being relentlessly helpful.

**If you do those two things, you will find success.**



**Emily Freeman**  
**@emilypfreeman**

**R**ather than building a platform with the spotlight on you, build a bench with room only for two. For me, imagining sitting on a bench rather than standing on a platform takes the pressure off and reminds me of my real job as a writer — to be relentlessly helpful to the soul of my reader.





**Shawn Coyne**  
**@StoryGrid**

**A** **ttracting a tribe of people who** will follow your work...post after post, month after month, and year after year requires sincerity of purpose (genuinely wishing to impart your expertise or passion to other like-minded people) and authenticity of message (being clear about what you are offering and what your offers will cost, with no hucksterism). When you are sincere and authentic and your craft is genuine, your tribe will follow. Hard work learning your craft with equal parts caring and you're on your way.





**Chris Marlow**  
**@ChrisMarlow**

**P**eople want to be part of a movement that is clear, compelling, and that invites them to be part of the story. Once they feel that they belong, they will passionately help move the mission forward and become loyal members of your tribe.



**Andy Traub**  
**@AndyTraub**

**Y**ou don't need a big email list to connect and influence. If you want to build your tribe and increase your influence start by asking people on your small list what their pain is and then write them back with something that helps them. You can't do this with 10,000 people, but the good news is you don't have 10,000 people on your list. Caring is a great way to build your platform and influence. Keep it simple.



**Pamela Wilson**  
**@pamelaiwilson**

**O**ne under-used and under-appreciated way to build your tribe is to sit down and talk with them. It doesn't have to happen in person: Skype or phone work fine.

To do this, invite current members of your tribe to participate in a focus group, call them one by one, ask them all the same set of questions, and *listen*. They will tell you everything you need to know about their challenges, fears, and desires.

Doing this will give you the best language and approach to use with your tribe. And it will inform and enrich everything you create for them because you'll truly understand how you can help them.

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So there you are. Some of the best tribe-building advice around. I hope it helps you find the audience your message deserves.

And if you're interested in going deeper, I encourage you to check out the Tribe Conference, an event where writers and creatives are encouraged to build their audiences the right way. Each of the experts you met in this ebook will be speaking at the event.

Learn more at [tribeconference.com](http://tribeconference.com)

