

SHOESTRING MEDIA

THE BUSINESS CONCEPT

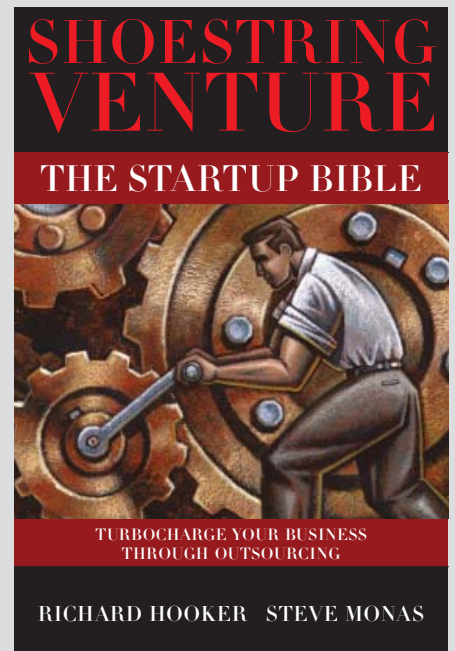
Shoestring Makes Brands, Not Books

Shoestring Media exploits several trends in the publishing and media industry to produce powerful brands that produce “accelerated” value to consumers, authors, distributors, and the business:

- Developing book and media series brands, such as “For DuMMieS,” “Demystified,” or “Harvard Business Review.”
- The brands precisely target specific consumer segments and build their identity and value propositions specifically for those target audiences.
- In addition to mainstream books and media, the brands support low-distribution long-tail books and media and help “accelerate” their sales.
- The brands are licensable to the rapidly growing market of self-published authors and even to other book and media producers.

The Strategy

- Precisely identify clearly-defined but underserved audiences and their precise media and resource needs.
- Produce a *brand* of books and resources, both mainstream and long-tail, that uniquely address that audience and needs.
- License the brand to long-tail self-publishers offering sales-multiplying value to the authors and a trusted brand to the long-tail consumer.
- Transfer much of the brand’s library production risk to self-publishers and others.
- Enlist self-publishers to build awareness and loyalty to the brand.
- Multiply the long-tail audience through the power of the brand.
- Publish individual titles under several brands to multiply the consumer audience.
- Use precision-targeting marketing tools (microtargeting, direct marketing, CRM, loyalty programs, viral marketing, database marketing) to connect with precisely defined consumer groups.
- Exploit every possible licensing and sales strategy, including allowing other publishers to license the series brand.
- We own the *brand* – let others own the *books* and other resources.
- Which translates to a unique business infrastructure of *brand managers* rather than editors and *audience managers* rather than marketing departments.
- Actively seek out partners to export the brands and its resources to international markets.
- Maximize outsourcing, crowdsourcing, and offshoring.





The Franchise/Brand Model

McDonald's is first and foremost a real-estate company and secondly a marketing company specializing in branding and product development. Their principal competency lies in finding the best places to put a fast-food restaurant; and that competency is supercharged by a powerful branding operation. What McDonald's *is not* is a restaurant company. That's the business of all the small- to medium-sized business owners who license the McDonald's brand and actually run the restaurants.

Shoestring Media is first and foremost a marketing company that specializes in product development, branding, and consumer intelligence. The principal competency of Shoestring Media is to identify precisely defined but underserved audiences (just as McDonald's greatest competency is finding good locations) and then backing that up with immensely creative branding and precision marketing. Shoestring Media is only distantly a publishing and media company that owns and manages a limited set of mainstream books. The real publishing is done by authors and other publishers who license a Shoestring Media resource brand and exploit the company's sophisticated audience outreach to multiply the value of their books, videos, and other resources.

Sample Brands

SHOESTRING VENTURE

- A series of *practical* business intelligence books for one-person, home-based, or bootstrap business owners
- Includes mainstream, specialized business intelligence titles along with specialized industry titles and open-source software manuals.

THE SMALL BUSINESS MBA

- Targeting small business owners, the series translates the traditional corporate MBA curriculum into small business terms.

WHAT THE #&%*!!!

- A series of introductory books that targets the exasperated, the frustrated, and the confused in a variety of topics by employing no-holds barred humor.
- Subjects include test preparation, software, technology, and required curricular topics.

THE THOUSAND MILLION BILLION . . .

- Targets consumers who want to learn how to cook creatively, not follow recipes, by teaching them "how to think in food."
- Titles would include "The Thousand Million Billion Pizzas," "The Thousand Million Billion Burgers," "The Thousand Million Billion Cookies."

THE USER'S MANUAL

- A series of self-improvement, relationship, and career books targeting people who want practical, usable, and "evidence-based" advice for making positive improvements and changes in their lives.
- Titles include "Hope: The User's Manual" (cognitive-behavior approach to resilience), "Career: The User's Manual," "Good Kids: The User's Manual," "Marriage: The User's Manual," etc.

POWER USER

- A series of mainstream and highly specialized long-tail books targeting advanced software users.
- Mainstream titles would include "Power User Adobe Illustrator," "Power User Microsoft Excel."
- The brand would support a huge library of highly specialized titles, such as "Power User: Adobe Illustrator SVG" or "Power User: Microsoft Excel Business Statistics."