

How to Build Your Business Fast with a 30-Day Challenge

By Heather Robson



You have a choice. You can build your writing business slow. Or you can build it fast.

Neither is wrong. Most people go with slow because they want to be careful. They want to get everything just right. And because — whether they admit it or not — they're afraid of failing. If they move slowly, any potential failure feels further away.

This is why the fast route has a few distinct advantages.

Sure, you'll make mistakes — but you'll also gain momentum ... experience ... and while you may fail faster (not the end of the world, not matter how it feels), that just brings you a step closer to succeeding faster.

If you go the fast route, I recommend doing it with a 30-Day Challenge. This gives you a deadline. It gives you excitement and motivation.

And it gets you to take very specific steps with a very specific measure of success.

Essentially, with a 30-Day Challenge, you're experimenting and seeing what happens. And that makes it fun.

So here are the basic rules for a successful 30-Day Challenge.

Rule #1: Either pick a big, but not impossible goal that you can achieve over the next 30 days ...

Or pick something you can do every day for 30 days that will build your momentum ...

Write down exactly what you're going to do for your 30-Day Challenge.

Rule #2: Then get on social media and tell everyone you're connected with that you're starting on a certain day, that you're going to do xxxxx every day for 30 days or you're going to xxxxx within the next 30 days ...

And then promise daily updates. That's a big part of getting your cheering section going. Also, you'll have the potential for people to ask you about it if you miss a day ... which can provide extra incentive for staying on track.

If you're not big on social media, pick five of your favorite people and send them an email telling them about your Challenge and then update them daily.

Or, if you have an email list, do your Challenge through email ...

The point is to let people know what you're doing and then to share your progress through regular updates.

As for the Challenge itself, what you can do is almost unlimited. Here are four ideas to help you get started ...

1. The 30-Day Video Challenge

Post a short video to Facebook or YouTube every day for 30 days.

Take a baseline before you start. Make note of how many followers you have. Also, jot down how many comments you've gotten over the previous 30 days as well as how many times your posts have been shared.

You'll want your Video Challenge to be fun and deliver a good result, so get comfortable in front of the camera. In the week or two leading up to the launch of your Challenge, start taking short videos using your phone. Also find a video editor program or app (there are plenty of free and low-cost options out there) and start tinkering with editing your footage.

And in your week lead-up, begin brainstorming the topics you'll cover in your videos. If you're doing this to build your writing business, pick topics relevant to your target audience.

When your start day comes, post a video every day without fail. Let your audience know it's available and how to find it. Invite feedback and engage with people who are commenting and sharing.

At the end of 30 days, compare your baseline stats with your new stats. How many new followers did you gain? How were comments and shares affected?

Even more important, did you make any valuable connections during the month?

Even if not, you've increased your proficiency with a valuable skill and expanded your presence on social media. Well worth the effort.

2. The Network Outreach Challenge

About a year ago, I interviewed Michael Katz, the author of AWAI's *[Creating Email Newsletters For Professional Service Firms: A Step-by-Step Guide](#)*. During that interview, he talked about how he's built his business just from sending simple emails to people he already knows. Friends. Extended family. Former colleagues.

Every day, he sends a handful of messages to tell a few of his acquaintances and connections he was thinking about them and to ask what they've been up to.

Often, the response he gets back includes a question about what he's been up to. He'll reply, talking about recent project or client. And often enough to build a robust clientele, the response he gets back is something like, "Oh hey, we've been looking for someone to do something like that for us." Or "I have a friend who needs a service like that. Can I refer you?"

Easy, right? Completely low pressure. So why not try that for your 30-Day Challenge? Come up with a list of 30 people you know who you haven't talked to in a while. Once a day, email a new person from the list and ask how they've been lately.

Just see where the conversations go. You might just land a project or two (or more). And even if you don't, you'll have rekindled connections with people you are happy to know again.

3. The Book Challenge

Writing a book in 30 days sounds crazy, but it really is possible.

And imagine if you wrote a book about what you do and how you do it and who you do it for and how it can transform their business ... that's a heck of a business card you have to give out going forward.

You do have to be a little more structured in your approach to this kind of Challenge because it's a bigger, more cohesive undertaking.

Start by choosing a topic and then write down everything you know about that topic.

Organize that list into chapters. Then based on how many chapters you have, you'll know how many days you have to complete each chapter during your 30-Day Challenge.

If you want to speed up your writing process, start by recording yourself talking about the chapter's topic. Don't feel like you have to be well-organized here. Ask yourself questions and then answer with everything you have: your philosophy, mistakes you've made, experiences you've had, what people you admire say, and so on and so forth. Then transcribe what you've recorded (or pay Rev to do it). Next, edit the transcription so it reads well and the organization of the chapter makes sense.

With this approach, you could finish a chapter every two or three days and have a first draft ready at the of your 30-Day Challenge.

You'll still want to go through a series of revisions before you publish your work, but putting together a draft in 30 days is something to be proud of. And you're well on your way to having a stand-out "business card" you can give to potential clients.

4. The New Skill Challenge

In just 30 days, you can become competent in a new skill. Competent enough to start offering your new skill as a service to your clients. Whether you're thinking about learning social media, or how to do SEO, or how to write emails, commit 30 days to learning, and you'll be surprised at how confident you feel by the end.

This kind of Challenge works best if you have some guidance, like an online program to work through.

Pick a skill you'd like to learn, find a program or course that covers all the bases, and then break the program down into 30 chunks. Work through one chunk a day.

At the end of your 30 days, you'll be able to proudly list a new skill on your website and LinkedIn page ... and you'll have a reason to reach out to your clients and prospects about new work.

You Can Do a Challenge Anytime

Another great thing about a 30-Day Challenge is it's something you can undertake any time. You don't have to wait for the beginning of a month to get started. And you don't have to do one every month. But whenever you want to give your business (or any other aspect of your life) a great big shot of momentum, this is a fun and effective way to do it.

The ideas I've shared here are just that ... ideas. Remember you can tailor-make your Challenge to suit your needs right now. Need more content on your site? Blog every day. Need to land a new client? Ask people you know for referrals — at least one a day. Launching your new website? Make a 30-day Roadmap to getting it done and do one step a day.

Whatever you do, have fun ... and recognize that no matter the result, at the end of your Challenge, you're better off than when you started. At the very least, you'll have learned something. And more likely, you'll have accomplished something great!

What kind of 30-Day Challenge would you like to try? Share with us in the comments below so we can help and cheer you on.

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4 Responses to "How to Build Your Business Fast with a 30-Day Challenge"

This is an inspiring message. By July 4th I will complete the Six-Figure Copywriting Program.

Sidney Dawson – over a year ago

My 30 day goal is to write 1,000 words a day. I have made very slow progress on a novel I am writing. After 2 years I have completed the research, outline and 2 chapters. Heather Robinson's article has inspired me to not only sit down and write, but to let my family, friends and colleagues know what I am doing and hold me accountable.

R K Laferriere – over a year ago

I will learn SEO every day for 30 days and make a video of what I learn each day. I will post the video on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest. I won't tell exactly what I learn but how what I learn applies to doing something for them for a fee. Is that too aggressive? Should I just talk about what I learn and wait for anyone interested to ask me about doing something for them for a fee? I need guidance.

Guest (cs55carols) – over a year ago

I will write every day. Ideally, I will finish a draft of a project/assignment piece, but it depends on the length of the project. I want to get faster and more confident at finishing writing projects.

Thanks for the article.

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American Writers & Artists Institute

220 George Bush Blvd, Suite D

Delray Beach, FL 33444

(561) 278-5557 or (866) 879-2924