Iterate And Optimize: Optimize Your Creative Business for Profit (The Smarter Artist Book 3)

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The top-to-bottom guide to taking your writing and publishing business from "Square One" to "Stratosphere."

Iterate and Optimize is a behind-the-scenes peek into how indie publishing company Sterling & Stone grew their three-author team into a juggernaut — and a next-level guide for authors looking to explode their sales and do the same.

In Write. Publish. Repeat., bestselling authors Johnny B. Truant, Sean Platt, and David Wright explained how to build a thriving international publishing empire with no luck required.

Rather than resting on their laurels in the years since WPR was written, they've been evolving their once-fledgling business a little bit at a time: expanding to eight publishing imprints, ten high-profile podcasts, a coordinated staff working behind the scenes, millions of words published and hundreds of thousands of books in the hands of eager readers.

In *Iterate and Optimize*, they show you how they grew their business from the ground up in tiny, incremental steps — and give you a road map so that you can do it, too.

More than "just another self-publishing guide," this book delves deep into the business behind the success of Platt, Truant, and Wright's company Sterling & Stone, making it the essential "advanced course" follow up to *Write. Publish. Repeat*. It explains how to tweak your processes over time while maintaining momentum, wringing more profit out of assets you already have. You'll learn how to diversify and create more products with less work, generate more money doing what you already do now, and set yourself up so you can build a readership who will support you in the specific ways you intend to evolve. You'll learn how to grow from a bare-bones, minimum-viable-product business into a slightly larger business or an outright empire — not with massive, flashy (and risky) moves, but by the sustainable magic of incremental growth: small improvements made consistently over time.

In this book, Platt, Truant, and Wright give you all the nitty-gritty they've learned and implemented since their last nonfiction publishing bestseller. You'll learn how to "iterate and optimize" the way you handle:

• Exclusive versus "going wide" distribution
• International and multi-format sales
• Advertising and marketing
• Optimizing book covers, descriptions, and metadata to increase conversion
• Slowly and sustainable building your assistants or contractors, plus outsourcing right
• Advanced product funnels, including the changed role of free books
• Networking and in-person meet-ups
• Workflow management and systems
• The writing and pre-writing process so you can "write better faster"

• Social media
• Podcasting
• Crowdfunding - what works and what doesn't
• And much more!

This book isn't for the faint of heart! It's only for serious "authorpreneurs" who've read and internalized the lessons of its predecessor *Write. Publish. Repeat.* **and are ready to kick their businesses up a notch**. In *Iterate and Optimize*, the authors hold nothing back … giving you a true insider's look at all the details that make Sterling & Stone run.

There has never been a "gold rush" or "magic button," despite the flood of online marketers who want to convince you otherwise.

Iterate And Optimize: Optimize Your Creative Business for Profit (The Smarter Artist Book 3) Details

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From Reader Review Iterate And Optimize: Optimize Your Creative Business for Profit (The Smarter Artist Book 3) for online ebook

Z.R. Southcombe says

A useful & thorough 'companion' book to the Self Publishing Podcast.

Samantha Harris says

I finished WPR earlier this year and had received a copy of I&O when Sean and Johnny came to talk at a Write It Already event during NaNoWriMo. This book is a little further along in the process than where I'm at, currently, though I found a lot of the podcasting info useful (plus it sent me along to listen to some of their podcasts from Sterling&Stone FM). They're very upfront about what they do and how they did it, but if you're not going for a broad spectrum business approach they're probably not the guys for you.

Kate M. Colby says

A no-nonsense, direct, and often humorous detailing of what the SPP guys have done to grow their business and how other indie authors and creative entrepreneurs can apply the same practices to their own businesses. Packed with too much information to absorb it all 100% in the first sitting. This is definitely one to keep close by and reference by topic later. Once again, well done, guys.

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sparklingunicorn says

Man, I really hate leaving a one-star review, especially when I gave Write. Publish. Repeat. (WPR) 5 stars. WPR was literally the book I based my entire business model on, so I waited for Iterate and Optimize for weeks and bought it the moment I had an opportunity to do so.

What a disappointment.

I really think the guys released this book way too early. If they had waited another year to see the results of their most recent projects, the information reaped from this book could've been drastically more helpful. As a result, most of the experiments the boys did with Sterling and Stone aren't finished yet, so we constantly have Johnny saying, "We can't wait to see how this turns out." Guys, if I don't know the results of your experiments, I have no way to tell if it's worth trying out for myself. Why would you even let me know about it if you can't tell me how it went?

The reason why I liked WPR so much is because it gave me actual steps that I could take and quantify on my own. It listed the experiences of Johnny, Sean and Dave, and then gave examples and strategies on how I could use those tools to grow my own business. In Iterate and Optimize, I just seemed like the guys were

patting themselves on the back for what they'd accomplished. "Look at our app! Look at our new book! Look at our podcast! Look at our crowdfunding success story!" I felt like I was being marketed to the entire time. The whole book reads like one big infomercial. It totally bummed me out.

I kept reading and reading, hoping to stumble upon some gem of information that would give me ideas to grow my business, but it never got there. The guys like to ramble, which wasn't an issue for me in WPR because each part of it had some sort of info relevant to my life, but in Iterate and Optimize it got out of control. I've only been in the indie publishing business for two years, so it really hasn't been that long, but some of the tips they presented in the book any indie author off the street could tell you. Examples:

- Bookbub is a magic tool that will spike your sales (if you can get in) and Facebook Ads can work miracles IF you figure out how to use them correctly, which any monkey with a typewriter could tell you.
- Hire a personal assistant to do all the stuff you don't have time for (seriously, a huge portion of the book talked about their staff, particularly Amy. If you're still a small-scale author like most of us out there pinching pennies to get by the thought of even hiring a PA makes you imagine yourself as Donald J. Trump).

I was looking forward to the advertising portion of this book the most, as I've hit a wall with sales and really need to grow my brand. Unfortunately Iterate and Optimize didn't give me any new ideas that I didn't have before I started reading. The boys stated at the beginning that they had to trim the book down so it was a book for WRITERS and not general entrepreneurs, but honestly I feel like they did the complete opposite. By the time you get to the end you have all these business people talking about how they're developing apps and are putting on conventions and selling fitness programs. One of them even had 30 people on staff to meet the goal of becoming a billion dollar company in the next ten years and whatnot. To people like me, that's huge, and it just leaves a bad taste in my mouth. My goal as an author is to write good fiction and have a sustainable income from just my books alone. I don't need to develop seminars or web programs. With the crappy changes in the Kindle Unlimited program recently I was hoping the guys would have figured out a way that indie authors can still make money, but all they've really told me is in order to survive you have to do everything BUT base your business off books.

I was more than happy to pay the $5.99 price point, but now that I've completed the book it feels like a slap in the mouth. It deserves a 3 star at a $2.99 price point, at best. It just sucks so badly because when I reached the end I felt like I'd been lied to and I was bombarded with all these extra links to their other stuff. Before I bought this book I would've willingly paid for anything these guys put out. Now I'm not so sure if I want to pay for another advertisement for Sterling & Stone.

Dustin Johnson says

This book was pretty good, but I didn't feel like it provided much advice not already in Write. Publish. Repeat. I feel like a lot of it was presented more along the lines of, "This is what has changed for us since we published Write. Publish. Repeat." and could have been summed up better in a new version of WPR as an additional chapter or revision. That being said, I'm a huge fan of everything Sterling & Stone does and this was a fun read. I just wish this book had a few more actionable items on improving my writing process, but maybe I've already implemented most of it due to all of the awesome and free content Sterling & Stone provides to the self-publishing community. As I read through the book, I found myself nodding and saying, "Yep, I do that." or "Yep, that was in Write. Publish. Repeat." The interviews at the end were fun to read, though there were quite a few erroneous sentences (to be fair, these seemed to be transcripts and they could have been literally transcribed with duplicate words and all.)

I should also mention that I've followed people like James Clear and Tim Ferriss for years, and they've already pounded the value of iterative improvement and marginal gains into my head. I've also read The Compound Effect which was another great book about iterative improvement. So it very well could be that this book is intended for writers that haven't been exposed to the topic of iterative improvement as often as I have.

Emma Sea says

4.5 stars, rounding up for the authors telling me at the beginning exactly what the book would cover, and who it would be useful for, and who it would not be useful for, and telling me to return the book for refund if it was clear it wouldn't be for me. I appreciate my time not being wasted, as it is with so many productivity and small business books. Yes, it was useful, not only in a big picture way, but also in an immediate implementation way.

Taylor Ellwood says

This book is chock full of excellent ideas and stratagems for taking your writing business to the next level. Its a book which teaches you how to take what you have and start making small, systematic changes that improve your processes and enhance your productivity. I've already made some tweaks to my writing business and started to see immediate results. If you want to make money with your writing and still enjoy doing it, this is a must read guide that will help you create and enhance your writing business.

Adam says

Assimilate and Scrutinize!

Talk about over-delivering! Sheesh, the boys have been busy with this one.

I'll admit, I was hungry for I and O. I pre-ordered it and was counting down the days till its release and, as soon as it was available (12:01 am this morning), I download it and started tearing through the pages. Not sure what I was expecting, well, that's not true, I was expecting A LOT! And what I got was pretty f'n amazing!

I think it's fair to say you should read "Write. Publish. Repeat." before this one, but I won't tell you what to do.

There are 4 sections to I and O:

Part 1 is about you and what you've got to offer. There are some great exercises here that I skipped right over because I was in a reading frenzy, but I'm heading back and will do the work, honest!

Part 2 is all about Sterling and Stone, what they I and O'd, why they did it, and what they learned. I

absolutely LOVED this section! Lots of behind the scenes stuff. You get to meet the entire team, even the man with no title, Garrett... Lol. Anyway, there's some great stuff on their writing process as well as a deep dive into everything from product funnels, social media, dealing with criticism, and so much more. This section was the most fun for me as a fan.

Part 3 is pure awesome! It's all about how you, and I, can start to I and O right now! The cool part is that they go into detail on how to I and O your entire creative process, I'll be reading this section over and over again.

Part 4 is a collection of success stories. I'll be honest, I haven't read this section yet as I've already listened to the I and O podcast with the live interviews of the same folks. Still, great group of writers.

Anyway, that's all from me. I absolutely LOVED Iterate and Optimize!!! My only complaint is that I lost almost an entire night's sleep, bastards!

A must read for SPP fans, and for any writer on the path.

Gabriella Campbell says

Una buena continuación y actualización de Write.Publish.Repeat (aunque recomiendo leer ese primero). Pensado sobre todo para indies que ya tengan cierto conocimiento del sector y busquen optimizar su proceso de producción, promoción y relación con lectores. Tal vez un poco centrado solo en la experiencia de Platt y co., pero las entrevistas del final con otros autores dan una perspectiva algo más amplia.

Spencer Borup says

Platt and Truant (and Wright) are brilliant. This book is so full of gold I'll be sifting it for years to come. If you are building a business in any artistic endeavor, read this (or listen to it, since it's narrated by an awesome British dude) and then read it again. And if you are an author, whether traditionally or self-published, read WRITE.PUBLISH.REPEAT. first and then read this, then repeat.

Linda Fausnet says

Like Have a Coach in the Ring With You With a Squeeze Bottle of Water

I listened to the audiobook version of this book with the always delightful Simon Whistler. This book is a must-read for anyone who is serious about writing as a business. It's straightforward, honest advice without being overwhelming, which is no easy feat. I love the authors' attitude of - "this is what works for us. It may not work for you." I read and listen to all kinds of self-publishing gurus, and if it's one thing I can't stand it's experts who claim their way is the only path to success. One-size-fits-all advice never works because everybody has different goals. I also love the way the authors refuse to tolerate whiners who complain that the writing business is impossible, and I love the way they are not afraid to admit when they've totally screwed up from time to time. I also love the idea of being a Smarter Artist and not a starving one.

August says

I'm writing this review before I read the fourth part (the interview-appendix), but I imagine I'll take away a similar amount of goodness from those too.

Definitely a solid addition to the Smarter Artist series. I'm looking forward to reading the book about 1+1=3 (in terms of writers) because I feel like that actually might be a more applicable "third" book in this series - because I'm not sure you can really benefit from all of the advice in this book if you aren't already working closely with other creatives.

That said, tons of takeaways, especially because I am in their true target audience!

Daniel Willcocks says

This book spoke to me in volumes.

As a self-published, indie author myself, I have been following these guys for a couple of months or so, and cannot praise them enough for the work they're dedicating to help other writers who wish to publish without the barriers of publishing agents and publishers.

Iterate and Optimize is a fantastic insight into the heads of three indie authors who have been there, and admit that, although they have not yet 'made it' in the conventional sense, they're doing what they love for a living. It is not only an inspiring insight into how you can make tracks as an indie author in today's age, but also a reflection on what has and hasn't worked for themselves, and how it might benefit others in the same position.

My favourite part of the book is how they often reinforce that, although it worked for them, and they've found their methods, they're not saying that everything here is gospel. They're merely things that worked for them, and they're sharing that with an audience who are looking to try similar things.

The only part I didn't feel really fitted (though I understand why it's there), was the interviews at the end. Even in the way they're written they feel like clips from their Self-Publishing Podcast, which I already listen to a lot. For me, I feel I'd rather just listen to those clips than read them, but I can see their purpose for those that may be unfamiliar with SPP.

For me, this was inspiring, motivating, and certainly a fair amount of help. I'm already looking at rejigging my own profiles and book collections based on their advice as it just makes sense.

This book is a must for anyone who truly is interested in the world of indie publishing and would like to see an overview on how three guys certainly did it.

Rock on, guys.

Anne says

The first time I tried reading this was a year ago, but I wasn't far enough in my author career for it to resonate with me. Now, it makes more sense, and I can see how it would be applicable to certain areas of my writing life.

Ryan Pelton says

Great book on writing, publishing, and putting on your business hat. My only critique is the length. Could've been shorter and more concise. But great advice and helpful application for many disciplines.