

Bachelor's thesis

International Business Administration

2020

Katrina Nee

PUBLISHERS INNOVATING MARKETING THROUGH ALTERNATIVE
CHANNELS.

– Reaching Readers Beyond the Page.



BACHELOR'S THESIS| ABSTRACT

TURKU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

BBA International Business

2020| 45 pages, 5 pages

Katrina Nee

PUBLISHERS INNOVATING MARKETING THROUGH ALTERNATIVE CHANNELS.

- Reaching Readers Beyond the Page.

There has been a belief that the physical book and its relevance in society is waning, this thesis set out to explore if this is in fact true. To answer this question, I used a mixed methodology to have both qualitative and quantitative data that could be analysed. I did this by conducting an email interview with a marketing manager from a publishing house that headed an experimental marketing campaign, as well as using secondary data to support the findings from this interview. In the following thesis I explored the history and dramatic changes that the publishing industry has endured and ultimately adapted to. The publishing industry has proven itself to be one that can weather change and use it to its advantage. I examined the humble beginnings of the publishing industry by outlining the development of the industry through history, as it has proven itself to be an industry that embraces change and can evolve alongside technological developments. This disproves the popular belief that the book industry is a dying art form, it is in fact flourishing and likely to continue to do so. By utilising not only the traditional marketing methods but also the new, publishers have been able to increase the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns. The traditional marketing methods have not disappeared into the abyss but rather have been adapted to be effective in a world that is driven by fast technological changes. The modern techniques applied by publishers largely revolve around the digital space and are effective and essential in creating successful marketing campaigns. This research used a mixed method approach, with an email interview with the marketing manager of Sourcebooks, who headed a campaign using book subscription boxes. A questionnaire was also conducted however, due to a small number of respondents the data collected proved unreliable. Secondary data was used in order to provide context to the findings of the primary research. The research looked to the impact of book subscription boxes and determined that they are an effective marketing tool that can be utilised by publishers. This research found that the history of the publishing industry and its ability to evolve has allowed it to progress alongside the advances of technology, rather than be hindered by it. The publishing industry has been able to enter and adapt to the digital world. This research found that the traditional methods used by publishers are still present in marketing today but have evolved. The use of traditional methods also allows for publishers to create alternative and newer marketing methods that allow them to reach readers in new ways. As there were issues in gaining access to interview and collected data from the questionnaire, the recommendation of this research would be that there is further research done on this topic. This research found that user generated content is what benefits publishers in market campaigns today and allows them to stand out in a progressively similar marketplace. The implications of this is that publishers can distinguish themselves in a digital space. Publishers can develop their readership reach in order to remain relevant and expand, this is vital as there is an abundance of competition in the current marketplace.

Keywords: Publishers, Traditional Marketing Methods, New Marketing Methods, Books, Book Subscription Boxes, Digital Space.

CONTENTS

1.0 BACKGROUND	5
1.1 RESEARCH TOPIC AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	7
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 TRADITIONAL MARKETING METHODS	8
2.2 NEW MARKETING METHODS	15
3.0 METHODOLOGY	21
3.1 MIXED METHODS	21
3.2 QUALITATIVE METHODS	24
4.0 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	25
5.0 CONCLUSIONS	31
5.1 KEY FINDINGS	31
5.2 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS	34
6.0 REFERENCES	36
7.0 APENDIX	39

FIGURES

Figure 1: Retail Book Channels of Distribution: 1985-2015 Printed Books and E-Books Market Share Percentages (Greco, A.N., Milliot, J., Wharton, R.M., 2014, p222).

Figure 2: Screenshot of Google search for Furyborn Book. (Nee, 2020).

Figure 3: A Simple model of consumer decision making (Khan, 2006, p132).

Figure 4: Book consumers decision making process (Nee, 2020)

Figure 5: Circle of Influence (Reed, 2008).

Figure 6: Merger of Influence (Reed, 2008).

Figure 7: Photo of Furyborn marketing campaign (Nee, 2020).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

ARC – Advanced Reader Copy

YA – Young Adult

SMM – Social Media Marketing

SM – Social Media

1.0 Background

For as long as I have been able to read, I have been a bibliophile. It was my love for literature which prompted me to study English Literature for my first degree. Where my appreciation for the written word deepened. However, something every reader has heard at least once and in some form is, 'books are dying out' or 'why buy a book when there is the Kindle, audiobooks, e-books, etc?' And this struck up the questions, are books a dying art form? Is our society being moved towards the electronic, resulting in the demise of the traditional book format? Are publishers adapting to the change in the market, resulting in physical books being still in demand?

And it is with these questions in mind I decided to explore this topic. How are publishers adapting with a fast-paced world? As this is very broad, I looked to the knowledge I had about the publishing world and the book industry. For many years I had been a customer of a book subscription box, "a book subscription box usually contains one book and numerous items relating to the book and/or genre of that book" (Writers Edit. No date). This could be an effective way that publishers could spark and maintain an interest in reading in the traditional format with their target market. When looking for academic literature on marketing relating to book subscription boxes, there is very little. This is where this thesis can offer a unique perspective. This thesis can offer insight into ways that the marketing around books has become adaptive to the readers' needs and changes caused by rapidly advancing technologies. I have examined traditional marketing methods to determine how publishers have adapted these methods. I have also investigated that by using book subscription boxes in conjunction with both traditional and new methods, publishers can create successful marketing campaigns. The earliest evidence of the written word is from 3500 AD from the "city of Mesopotamia, where the Sumerian race Concocted a writing style called Cuneiform" (Mukundarajan, 2017). I will detail a brief overview of the history of publishing as it will allow a deeper understanding of how enduring the industry is. The expansion and immersion of the publishing industry into society has been spurred on by the advancement of technology. By examining the past of publishing, it becomes apparent that it is an industry that embraces change and technological advancements.

With the invention of printing the publishing industry expanded and evolved. It was able to move beyond the control of religious orders and into the public domain. "It was in 1500 AD the printing revolution actually started. The printing press not only speeded up the book printing process, but it also reduced the production costs of books. The books were all the more affordable" (Mukundarajan, 2017). With this development the written word could finally be accessible to the masses. There was still a limitation on those who had access to books, those in the poorest parts of society were still barred access, due to a lack of education. This

was to change, as the price of publishing and producing books became less the lower classes had a wider access to the written word. It is from this point on that publishing becomes the industry we are more familiar with today. It is still an industry that has proven it can acclimatise to the rapid changes both in society and technology, and an industry that will continue to do so. In this thesis I will examine how publishers are adapting their marketing methods to accommodate for a society and its technologies that are moving faster than ever before.

1.1 Research Topic and Research Questions:

The publishing industry has undergone an immense number of changes from its humble beginnings to now, where it has had to adapt to the ways in which technology and the internet have embedded into our everyday lives. The way in which technology and the internet have advanced, and advanced quickly, has caused a change in the way we process information and engage with entertainment. Whether that be in the form of television, movies, video games and books. The publishing industry has had to adapt in order to survive, and it has adapted quite well. This thesis is structured by first examining the literature around the topic of marketing in publishing. Examining the traditional marketing methods, then the newer marketing methods, which provides context for the research that was conducted. The research conducted in this thesis was a mixed methodology approach, which involved an interview alongside a questionnaire and secondary research. This thesis aimed to answer the research stated below.

The questions being addressed are:

1. What were the previous methods used by publishers before the proliferation of the internet into society?
2. What are the newer methods publishers have had to create in order to stay relevant?
3. How effective are these 'new' marketing methods in reaching readers?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Traditional Marketing Methods

As I have already briefly explored the history of publishing, I will now examine the traditional methods used in marketing, starting from the seventies. What is interesting was the changes the market shares underwent. “In 1972, the chains [referring to chain stores] accounted for 11% of all book sales, and independent stores held a commanding 58% share. Only 31% went through non-traditional channels”, this may not seem interesting, but it is when compared to the figures from 2001 (Greco, Milliot, and Wharton, 2014, p221). In 2001 the market had new channels to which book distribution was divided, “chains declined somewhat to a 23% market share, while the independents sustained yet another dramatic decline, [...] with only a 15% share. As for the rest of the market: book clubs, 20% share: wholesale-price clubs, 7%; mass merchandisers, 6%; mail order, 3%; food and drug stores, 3%; discount stores, 3%; used bookstores, 3%; the internet, 8%; and all other, 10%” (Greco, Milliot, and Wharton, 2014, p221). This is an interesting change, as the internet was essentially non-existent for consumers in the seventies to access but had emerged and was beginning to infiltrate markets by 2001. However, there was a model to predict what 2012-2015 would entail for the book market. “The data indicates clearly the downward spiral will continue for Barnes & Noble, the speciality retailers (decreasing floor and shelf space as books go digital), and retail stores in the other category. Amazon.com will gain the most market share through 2015” (Greco, Milliot and Wharton, 2014, p221). This prediction was largely accurate; however, this model underestimated the sheer growth that Amazon would undertake in those years. No one could have predicted the extent of which the internet would permeate our lives. It is by looking at the past of the marketing in the publishing industry that we can gain insight into how they have become so adaptive to the dramatic changes that occur within the market and in consumer behaviours. Below is a chart from Greco, Milliot and Wharton (2014) showing the figures and the changes the publishing market underwent.

Table 7.1 Retail Book Channels of Distribution: 1985–2015 Printed Books and E-Books Market Share Percentages

	<i>Barnes & Noble Bookstore</i>	<i>Borders</i>	<i>Amazon.com</i>	<i>Specialty Retailers**</i>	<i>Other***</i>	<i>iBookstore/Google</i>
1995	10%	9%	0.003%	27%	54%	—
1996	12	10	0.08	28	50	—
1997	14	11	0.72	28	47	—
1998	14	12	3	28	43	—
1999	14	13	4	27	42	—
2000	16	14	5	26	39	—
2001	17	15	7	25	36	—
2002	17	15	8	25	35	—
2003	18	14	9	26	33	—
2004	19	14	10	25	32	—
2005	19	14	11	25	31	—
2006	19	13	13	25	30	—
2007	19	13	15	24	29	—
2008	19	11	18	23	29	—
2009	19	9	20	23	29	—
2010	18	6	26	22	28	—
2011	17	3	29	22	28	1
2012*	16	0	31	20	26	7
2013*	15	0	33	19	25	8
2014*	14	0	34	18	22	12
2015*	12	0	35	17	20	16

Source: Albert N. Greco.

*Estimates.

(Fig. 1: Greco, Milliot and Wharton, 2014, p222).

The “effect of technological development and the vigorous competition in a capitalist society has resulted in products and prices of competing companies in many industries becoming increasingly similar” (Birn and Forsyth, 1997, p6). Publishers needed to adapt in order to stand out and to drive their sales, and this continues to be true. Marketers within the publishing industry have proven to be highly adaptive and forward-thinking. They have the ability and skill to predict that technology would pose issues for the publishing industry, suggests that marketing within the publishing industry has always been forward looking an adaptive.

There are challenges that faced marketing in the publishing industry at this time and by looking to these challenges we can see how marketing in publishing evolved. Publishing has always been an industry aware that change is vital for survival, “no company can afford to stand still: innovation in marketing, rather than the slavish application of the status quo, must be the order of the day” (Birn and Forsyth, 1997, p11). The first of these challenges to be examined is the threat of similarity. “The effect of technological development and the vigorous competition that exists in a capitalist society has resulted in products and prices of competing companies in many industries becoming increasingly similar” (Birn and Forsyth, 1997, p6). The expansion of capitalism, powered by increasing technological advancements, increased similarities in products and industries. Before a customer would go to their local bookshop or perhaps a chain bookshop to browse and buy books, this was beginning to

change by 1997. The internet was expanding the area that the consumer could exist in. Which in turn created more choices, but also similarity of choices. Why would a consumer buy from their local bookshop the same book that they can get cheaper online? This created the challenge for publishers to ensure that in a time where products and processes were becoming more and more similar that they needed to stand out. This is a challenge that still faces publishers today. Below is a screenshot from a Google search of Furyborn, there are 58,200 results for where this book can be bought.

The screenshot shows a Google search for "furyborn book sale". The search bar at the top contains the text "furyborn book sale" and shows "About 58,200 results (0.51 seconds)". Below the search bar are navigation tabs for "All", "Images", "Shopping", "News", "Maps", and "More".

On the left side, there are several search results:

- An advertisement for **Book Depository - Free Delivery To Ireland - BookDepository.com**. The ad text says: "Discover 20 Million Books With Free Delivery On All Orders. Everyday Low Prices. Over 20 Million Titles. Leading Online Bookstore. Types: Romance, Crime & Thriller, Children's Books, Food & Drink, Travel & Holiday, Fantasy." Below the ad are sections for "Romance Books" (Fall in love time and time again with our featured romance books.) and "Bestsellers" (Discover our bestselling books and see what's trending worldwide.)
- A result from **www.amazon.co.uk** for "Furyborn: The Empirium Trilogy Book 1: Amazon.co.uk ...". The text includes: "Furyborn: The Empirium Trilogy Book 1: Amazon.co.uk: Legrand, Claire: Books ... Dispatched from and sold by Amazon. Quantity: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 ... Series work relationship: Empirium Trilogy Ser..."
- Another result from **www.amazon.co.uk** for "Furyborn (The Empirium Trilogy Book 1) eBook: Legrand ...". The text includes: "Furyborn (The Empirium Trilogy Book 1) eBook: Legrand, Claire: Amazon.co.uk: Kindle Store. ★★★★★ Rating: 4.5 - 375 reviews"
- A result from **www.easons.com** for "Buy Furyborn Book at Easons". The text includes: "May 15, 2018 — Black Friday Sale! 25% off with code: BLACK | T&Cs & Exclusions apply · Home · Events · Blog · Loyalty · Store Locator · Help · Careers · Click & ... €19.60 · In stock"
- A result from **www.ebay.co.uk** for "Furyborn The Empirium Trilogy Book 1 by Claire Legrand ...". The text includes: "Furyborn The Empirium Trilogy Book 1 by Claire Legrand 9781492656623 | Be the first to ... Sold by books-etc (210346) 99.7% positive Feedback Contact seller. £10.34 to £11.37 · In stock"

On the right side, there is a section titled "Ads - furyborn book sale" which displays a grid of book covers and their prices:

- Furyborn by Claire Legrand**: £12.86 (Book Depository, Free delivery by Genie)
- Furyborn by Claire Legrand**: €13.45 (Book Depository, Free delivery by Genie)
- Furyborn by Claire Legrand**: €19.60 (Eason, Free delivery by Google)
- Furyborn by Claire Legrand (author)...**: €14.36 (Blackwell's, Free delivery by Google)
- Lightbringer by Claire Legrand**: €14.01 (Book Depository, Free delivery by Genie)
- The Cavendish Home for Boys a...**: €7.88 (Book Depository, Free delivery by Genie)
- Kingsbane by Claire Legrand**: (Cover image shown)
- Furyborn, Legrand, Claire**: (Cover image shown)
- Furyborn (Ebook)**: (Cover image shown)

(Fig. 2: Screenshot taken 22.11.2020)

In 1997 there was a concern that, "product and price- are becoming less important to consumer choice, and presentation (the way in which the company tells the market about products and prices) has become crucial" (Birn and Forsyth, 1997, p6). This was a valid concern, as there was an increase in similarity it fell upon the publishers and their marketing methods to present their products in an interesting way to stand out from the crowd. And this was the challenge that was facing the publishing industry at the time and is still a challenge today. The way they presented themselves to the consumers was becoming more important than the price or the product itself. Publishers now had to engage and interact with consumers in a way they had never previously done. Price has always been a challenge for publishers. What are consumers spending their income on? Which competitors are drawing consumers

in with their prices? Now with the advancement of technology, consumers have more options on where and what to spend their income on. This adds a new dimension to the challenge of price for publishers. For example, consumers can send their income on audio book apps, rather than the book itself, e.g. Audible. This is a challenge that has carried over to the new marketing methods used by publishers today and is the reason many these methods now exist.

“The publisher is selling a product that fills leisure time, so is in competition with the theatre, concerts, records, movies, television and video, magazines and newspapers. And, complicating the picture further, this leisure are overlaps with a growing range of electronic products these days; some of these are clearly alternatives to books and not all are being produced by traditional publishers” (Birn and Forsyth, 1997, p8). This quote reflects the time it was written; however, it highlights that technology even then was a possible threat to the book industry, and to the consumers leisure time. The challenges of gaining consumer’s attention has only increased as technology advances. Publishers now had to market their books in such a way, that they needed to prove that reading this book is how the reader should be spending their leisure time. A possible solution for this is book subscription boxes, as they can offer an excitement to the reader that piques their interest. A marketer will always look at the marketing mix of the four P’s, product range, prices, presentation, place (Birn and Forsyth, 1997, p6). These are important in the book industry as these are what will grab the consumer’s attention.

“The customer is always fickle and unpredictable; marketing may be an exciting function of business, but it carries a real element of risk” (Birn and Forsyth, 1997, p12). Like any other market the book industry has always been unpredictable, this is something that remains a constant. With the four P’s they could help marketers predict the trends that consumers followed and set, however this year, there may be a need to add a fifth P, Pandemic. Before the Covid-19 pandemic the book industry was experiencing an increase in sales. “The revenue from the global book publishing market is forecast to slightly increase in the coming years, growing from around 113 billion U.S. dollars in 2015 to about 123 billion U.S. dollars by 2020” (Herold, No date). Before the pandemic, the “unit sales of published books in the U.S. saw a decline from 2008 until 2012, reaching the lowest figure of the last decade. After 2012, sales of printed books started to gain momentum, and have slightly increased up until 2015 (Herold, No date). This now is being shaken by the unreliability of the markets due to the global pandemic. In traditional marketing the issue of reliability was always present. However, in the economy of 2020 the sense of unreliability has grown. According to PA chief executive Stephen Lotinga, “publishers have anticipated declines in revenue up to 75% as result of the Covid-19 crisis, with bookshops closed for more than two months,

publications dates postponed, orders for books cancelled and author called off" (Flood, 2020). More than ever the market is unreliable with publishers, authors, bookshop owners, and readers, all unsure as to what the future holds. While the future of publishing isn't without hope it does face an unprecedented level of unreliability. "While bookshop sales have rebounded strongly since stores reopened on 15 June, the PA is warning that 'publishing will require further support from the government to ensure a quick and full recovery'" (Flood, 2020). As this crisis is still on-going it is unclear how the publishing market will react and recover. What is likely to emerge is new marketing methods that will have publishing evolve yet again.

With traditional marketing methods, market research always held importance. "Market research attempts to identify, indeed anticipate consumer needs; what people want, how they want it supplied, and whether they want it differently in the future. As research can analyse the past and review current attitudes, but not predicts the future, it must concentrate on trends and needs careful interpretation" (Birn and Forsyth, 1997, p10). Market research has led to the evolution of publishing, allowing them to gauge future risks and trends and how to react to them. This is still an important facet in publishing today, as the markets can help guide publishers on the approaches they should be undertaking. In the present economy market research will become vital for a publisher's survival. As stated by Birn and Forsyth, "No company can afford to stand still: and innovation in marketing, rather than the slavish application of the status quo, must be the order of the day" (1997, p11). This was true in 1997 and remains true today, if a publisher was to ignore market research it would undoubtedly result in failure. A facet of market research would be the distribution methods used by publishers.

Traditionally distribution in publishing consisted, "direct from the publisher, but likely a bookshop, and possibly at a shop in a training or educational establishment of some sort. If so, the publisher may have sold it to a wholesaler" (Birn and Forsyth, 1997, p.12). Traditionally these would have been the main distribution channels for publishers. These would have allowed publishers either a selective audience by only supplying a book to certain bookshops, or a wider reader base by using wholesalers. With the rapid advancement of technology, the chain of distribution and the options available would have widened. Consumers can now get their books from online stores rather than their local bookshop, an example for this would be online retail giant, Amazon. Customers can get second-hand books, new or e-books from the online superstore. This presents publishers with a new challenge as with more and more readers turning to online booksellers, it could be that the role of the traditional bookshop is under threat.

Market research, “works by assessing whether marketing strategies are well targeted and identifying market opportunities or changes that are required by customers. [...] if planned well and effectively it will also identify new opportunities, market niches or ways by which to improve sales, marketing and communication activities” (Birch and Forsyth, 1997, p19). This is still relevant in marketing today. Customers and their preference can seem like an impossible aspect for marketers to predict, however, the consumer decision making process is something that marketers have dedicated time, money and research on getting right. In the consumers’ decision-making process, “the process of decision-making varies with the value of the product, the involvement of the buyer and the risk that is involved in deciding the product/service” (Khan, 2006, p8). As discussed earlier the money being spent on books is money that would typically be spent on leisure time, the marketers of books must research and examine the consumer decision-making process in order to effectively ensure consumers are buying their products. “The total product creates an image in the mind of the consumer, who undergoes a decision process which leads to the outcome in terms of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which reflects in the sales and image of the product/service” (Khan, 2006, p7).

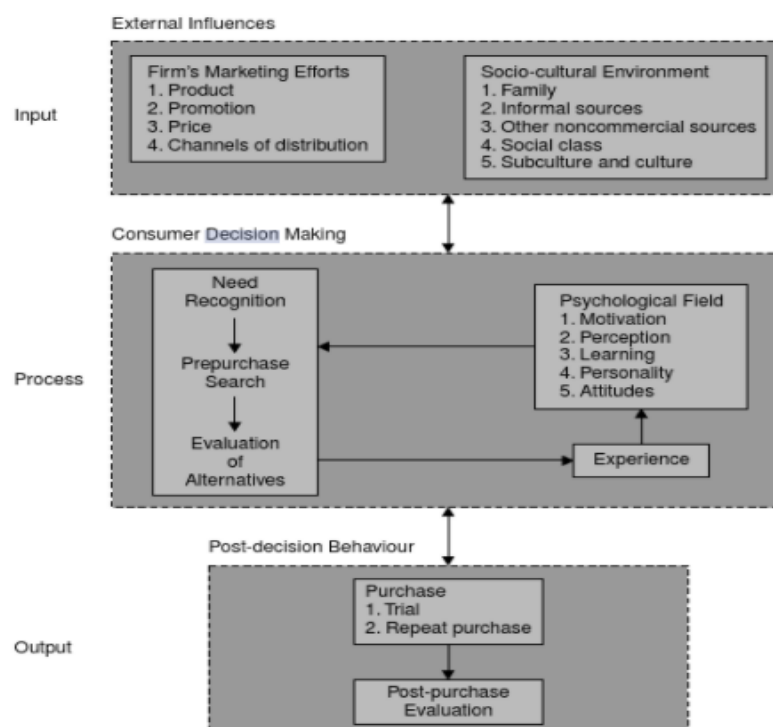
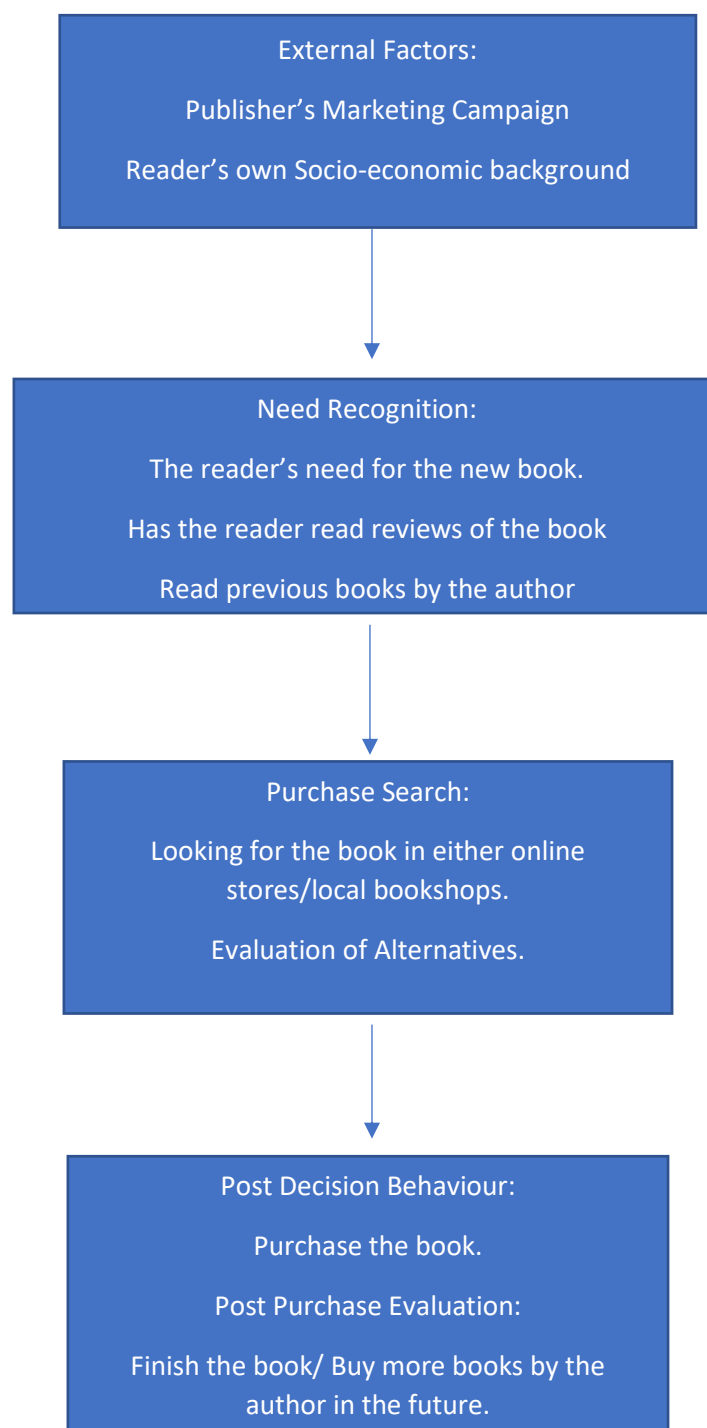


Fig. 15.1 A simple model of consumer decision making

(Fig. 3: Khan, 2006, p132).

The above diagram depicts a simple model of the consumer decision making process, this model would help marketers to research, analyse and hopefully predict the decisions that consumers will make in the hope they can market their products successfully. This model is both helpful not only with the traditional marketing methods but also now with newer methods emerging. The consumer decision-making process is still just as important to ensure that publishers and their marketers are not missing the mark with their target audiences. This is a fixture in marketing, even in the publishing industry and this is unlikely to change. “As research can analyse the past and review current attitudes, but not predict the future, it must concentrate on trends and needs careful interpretation” (Birn and Forsyth, 1997, p10). Below is a chart detailing how this process would apply to the consumer decision making process with the decision to buy a book (Fig 4: Book consumers decision making process, Nee, 2020).



2.2 New Marketing Methods

The new marketing methods were not available to publishers before the advancement of technology. These newer methods help publishers address some of the issues that had arisen due to this rapid advancement. These new methods emerged from the development of technology and the integration of the internet and social media into society. There was a shift of focus onto the brand of the publisher, author and the book itself, that was not present in the traditional methods. New tactics such as, guerrilla marketing and alternative marketing methods are becoming more common and effective at grabbing the attention of readers in an increasingly similar market. The role and power of the consumer grew, with marketing being able to have the end users of their products to themselves produce content that through word of mouth can spread the reach of the marketing campaign. There has been a merger of influence, where it is no longer just the influence of the marketing campaign itself, but that of the social circles the reader belongs to, as well as their interactions online.

Sutton advises that “publishers should move their focus towards consumers to strengthen their brands and thus gain long term audiences” (2013, p13). This is an indicator that the importance of the readers role had grown, they were becoming the driving power over whether marketing strategies were a success or a failure. She asserts that, “in publishing, there are three types of brands: the author or content provider, the literature, and the publisher. To the consumer, the publishers’ brand is not as recognisable and thus not as relevant to their buying decision as other consumer brands may be” (Sutton, 2013, p23). This highlights the challenge for publishers when they must market a book or an author, as their brand is more valuable than the publisher’s own brand, the publisher must add more value to the content which presents issues. Why would a reader choose their publication of a book over another book or another version of the same book? Sutton discusses alternative marketing methods that would increase a publishers viral marketing, such as literary festivals “which can also be costly and time-consuming”, she acknowledges that internet and “social networking sites are the perfect place to start with what Zarrella (2011, p113) refers to as, ‘*contagious campaigns*’ (Sutton, K. 2013, p25). This is insightful, however, with this thesis I will aim to go further into this realm and examine how book subscription boxes can be used as a marketing tool for publishers in the face of viral marketing.

In the current climate of uncertainty and rapid change it may seem that the future of the physical book is in danger. However, there is hope within the publishing industry to suggest that books are here to stay and there are some who see the expansion of the digital space as good news for the industry. “It’s an interesting time to work in marketing in the publishing industry, there have never been more ways to connect our books and our amazing authors

with potential readers” (Healy, 2019). Healy who works in the marketing department in Penguin Random House, sees the world as an “obviously digital one, so we spend a lot of time working with social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram or thinking about great content for those channels” (2019). This shift towards the digital space has not meant the death of traditional marketing methods, but more so an evolution of them. Healy suggests that one way of utilizing this change would be “guerrilla marketing, so creating bespoke outdoor advertising in unusual locations” that would draw readers to a book (2019).

In a world where the digital space has become a reality, “social circles have become the main source of influence, overtaking external marketing communications and even personal preference” (Kotler, Kartajava and Setiawan, 2017, p7). We tend to live out our lives in digital spaces, this has possibly increased due to the Coronavirus. Online social media platforms are how we connect to not only people we know, but also others, be they influencers, celebrities, brands, etc. “In this transition and adaptation period to the digital economy, a new marketing approach is required to guide marketers in anticipation and leveraging the disruptive technologies” (Kotler, Kartajava and Setiawan, 2017, p46). As mentioned earlier this does not mean the end of traditional marketing, but the evolution of it. In traditional marketing segmentation and targeting were vital, and “in the digital economy customers are socially connected with one another in horizontal webs of communities. Today, *communities* are the new segments” (Kotler, Kartajava and Setiawan, 2017, p47). People can feel connected and part of an online community which due to technology they can be in contact with and influenced by even if they are in different segments that traditional marketing may have been unable to access. There is also the concept of “co-creation” as the consumer no longer only consumes content but can they themselves make content (Kotler, Kartajava and Setiawan, 2017, p50).

This effect of “co-creation” can be seen with book unboxings on YouTube, these are where the youtuber who is either gifted, affiliated or purchases the book boxes, shares what is inside and their thoughts with their viewers (Kotler, Kartajava and Setiawan, 2017, p50). The viewers of the youtuber form a community in which they interact with the youtuber and each other, via the comment section and other social media platforms. In the unboxing video the youtuber discusses the bookish items that are in the box as well as the book itself. A ‘booktuber’ as they are sometimes referred, create content that centres around reading and books, and them and their audiences are an alternative marketing tool that can be used not only by book boxes, but by the publishers themselves. Publishers can track the popularity of their books by seeing the reaction of the youtuber and their viewers. The viewership on these videos can be quite large, and example of this is Book Roasts’, “4x November Book Boxes Unboxing: Unplugged, Book Box Club, Owlcrate & Fairyloot!” video posted on the 3/12/2019, which has 36,035 views (Book Roast, 2019). The viewership can fluctuate over between

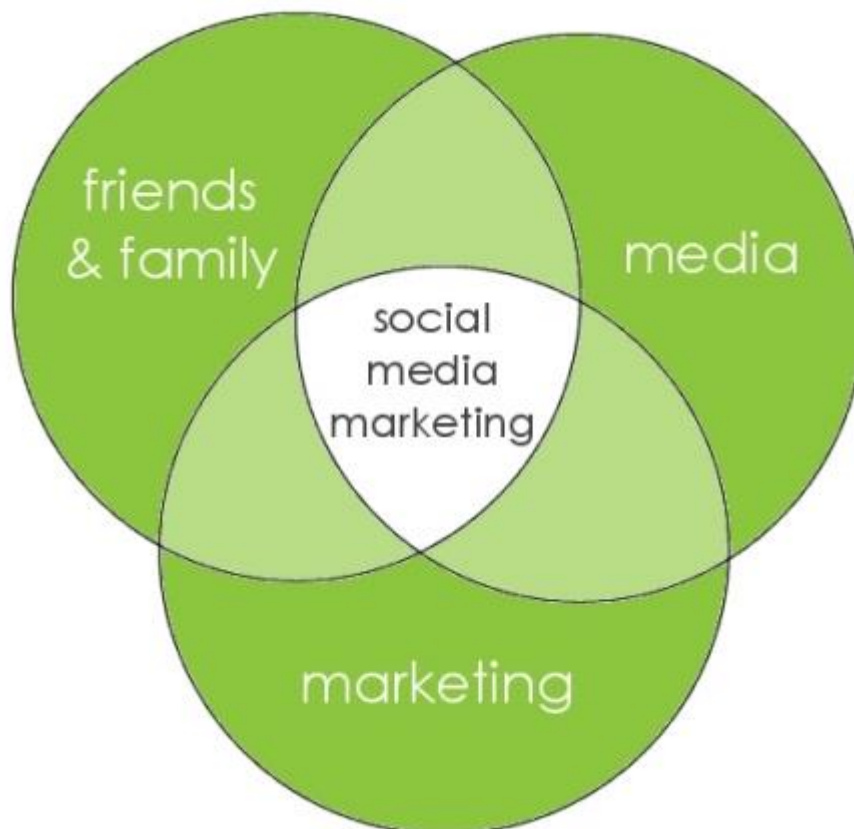
videos, for example a more recent video by this Youtuber, “August Bookish Boxes; Owlcrate, Fairyloot & Book Box Club” posted on the 09/09/2020 which has 8,116 views, on the date accessed by researcher (Book Roast, 2020). Regardless of which is being examined, traditional marketing methods or new marketing methods, it is fact that, “the Holy Grail of marketing is ‘word of mouth’. [...] It’s the most effective, yet the hardest thing to do with traditional media-unless a TV chat show book club start kicks it for you” (Reed, 2008). With the rise of social media, book subscription boxes can do this with their campaign not only reaching the customers of the book subscription boxes, but also the subscribers and followers of others, who then create content around the book box. In traditional marketing it was the circle of influence, which was the “layer of influence that marketers try to penetrate”, see figure below, (Reed, 2008). This would be the natural word of mouth that would be generated from traditional marketing campaigns. The outside circle is the marketing campaign and each inner circle is a layer of influence that the marketers need to penetrate to influence their target customer.



(Fig. 5: Circle of Influence, Reed, 2008.)

However, with the rise of social media and new marketing methods this arena of influencing consumers has become easier for marketers. “It’s what happens when people become media

and they market stuff for you and each other. They create their own media (blogs, social networking profiles), they review and recommend, they pass on YouTube clips, they tag interesting media and websites with keywords so others can find them. It all gets mixed up” (Reed, 2008).



(Fig. 6: Merger of influence, Reed, 2008).

Book subscription boxes have given the publishing industry an opportunity to adapt to a world where social media drives a large portion of people’s spending. According to Reed, “people listen to recommendations from peers rather than marketing from companies” (Reed, 2008). This can be useful in terms of book subscription boxes, as they “are community-driven and word of mouth travels fast within this community” (Writers Edit. No date). Book subscription boxes create communities, in which their customers are encouraged to reach out and communicate and interact with one another. This will in turn allow for a more organic marketing strategy for publishers to ensure their brand as well as their writers continue to grow. Flatt sees book subscription boxes as “exciting because they suggest that subscription boxes are reaching a new audience beyond the books trade’s norm” (Flatt, 2018). This works as a successful marketing tool where marketing managers in publishing houses can reach new

customers and retain existing customers. Publishers would be able to reach readers beyond the conventional methods that have become the norm. With book boxes reader may be introduced to not only new genres, but also books they may not have reached for themselves.

Book subscription boxes can be a way to engage with markets that may have been over-looked in traditional marketing campaigns. “Book subscription boxes are community-driven and word-of-mouth travels fast within this community. If an author’s book is featured in a box, they have a higher change of reaching new audiences, spaces and fandoms which can facilitate new discussions” and increased sales (Writers Edit. No date). This would greatly increase the readership of the book and may enticed customers of book subscription boxes to purchase books by the same author in the future. As book subscription boxes are relatively new, there is a limit on the literature that is available. However, they may be an effective marketing tool in a rapidly changing society.

Amazon is an unavoidable presence in the publishing industry. Amazon has changed the way consumers buy and consume products, not only in the publishing industry but across all industries. It is a company that has managed to completely reinvent the marketplace, and the digital marketplace. “Amazon Publishing is a triumph of vertical engineering: If a reader buys one of its titles on Kindle, Amazon receives a cut both as publisher and bookseller- not to mention whatever markup [sic] it made on the device in the first place as well as the amortized value of having created more content to draw people into its various book-subscription offerings” (Montgomery, 2019). Amazon not only dominates in digital books but physical books as well. According to the CEO of Codex Group, Peter Hildick-Smith, “roughly 25.5 million U.S. households bought books in the past month, and fully a quarter of those households use Prime Reading, a feature of Amazon Prime that allows subscribers to borrow 10 items at a time from a catalog of 1,000 eBooks, magazines, and other media, including the tech giant’s originals” (Montgomery, 2019).

However, Amazon has received negative response to the control it has gained over the publishing market. “Three of publishing’s most important organisations have teamed up to write a letter to the chairman of the House Antitrust Subcommittee investigating the market power of Big Tech to press their case” (Milliot. 2020). Due to the sheer size of the market dominated by Amazon, these publishers feel that “Amazon no longer operates on a level playing field when it comes to book distribution, but, rather, owns and manipulates the playing field, leveraging practices from across its platform to appear to be well outside of fair and transparent competition” (Milliot, 2020). Audiobooks which were a format of books that most readers are familiar are now more widely assessible due to the advancement of technology. Many audiobook providers are now operating via Apps that their customers can access.

“Publishers typically make downloadable audio available direct to consumers through a number of channels, which can include the publisher’s website, subscription services like Audible, and various e-tailers.” (Maughan, 2015).

As with physical books, there is a pressure for audiobooks to be able to stand out. In order to stand out Hachette state, “One thing we do is to promote digital audio is create special low-priced offers for download titles we know make great gifts” (Maughan, 2015). Regarding audiobooks again Amazon is present through their company Audible. Audible “has helped grow the audiobook market to the point where it is a vital revenue stream for publishers” (Doctorow, 2020). These newer methods for readers to consume books has widened the market for publishing, it has also led to obvious market leaders that are shaping the way the market operates.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Mixed Methods

To achieve the research objectives set above I aimed to use a mixed method approach of collecting data. I used both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to explore the topic of publishers turning to alternative methods of marketing in a fast-paced world of technology and social media. I aimed to use an embedded mixed method in my research, which “is the term given to the situation where one methodology supports the other.” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016, p172).

The original design of my research was to be single-phase and sequential, as this would have allowed me to “use both quantitative and qualitative methods concurrently but collect these separately,” which in turn would help support my analysis of the data (Saunders et.al. 2016, p172). My initial plan was to collect my data through a series of interviews, with marketing managers in publishing houses. The interviews were to be conducted in a narrative manner and would be open ended and unstructured, allowing for the marketing managers to discuss how they have experienced the shift in their marketing methods. As I was aiming to examine the use of book subscription boxes as a new marketing tool, I contacted book subscription box founders for interviews. This would have allowed me to analyse the research objectives from the point of view of the marketing managers. My aim was for my research to be an exploratory study as I to deepen the “understanding of an issue, problem or phenomenon”, in this case the use of book subscription boxes as a method to reach consumers (Saunders et.al, 2016, p174-175).

Using in-depth interviews, I wanted to gain narrative data that would then be analysed through the lens of thematic narrative analysis. This method of analysis “focuses on the content of a narrative, rather than on the way in which it is structured” (Saunders et.al, 2016, p601). I would be analysing the data recovered from each interview separately and then comparing the data and themes discovered in each interview (Saunders et al, 2016, p601). This was to allow me to discover if there are similar themes that arise from the research topic, allowing my research to be exploratory and hopefully answer the research objectives. In terms of the quantitative data that will be collected from the surveys sent to recipients of book subscription boxes, this data will be used to see if the marketing methods employed by the marketing managers are effective. As “exploratory research has the advantage that it is flexible and adaptable to change”, I wanted to use this to gain a deeper insight to the actual alternative methods being used in the publishing industry to stay relevant and current in a society that changes so rapidly (Saunders et.al, 2016, p175).

During my research I had encountered issues with gaining access to interviews, and I had to adjust my focus. I had primarily been focused on the perspective of the publishers and the book subscription boxes, however I was unable to interview any founders of the book subscription boxes. Instead I shifted my focus to the consumers of book subscription boxes, by looking at the consumers insights to the book boxes would provide more information on the success of the boxes as a marketing tool. I choose that the best collection method of this data would be a questionnaire. I opted for a self-completed questionnaire as it could be, “distributed to respondents through the Internet”, which allowed for a wider number of respondents to complete the survey (Saunders et al, 2016, p440).

Factors that had to be considered in regards to the questionnaire were, the “importance of reaching a particular person as a respondent”, as the questionnaire was focused on those who are or had been subscribed to book subscription boxes the questionnaire needed to be distributed to those who are more likely to have done this (Saunders et al, 2016, p440). I created a survey using Survey Monkey and distributed the survey across my social media platforms; Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Reddit. This survey was distributed via my social media accounts on the 26th of September 2020. I made it possible to share the link so that if someone knew of an individual who had a book box subscription could share the link with that individual. I used Survey Monkey as the host for the questionnaire as there is an analysis of the data section which made the data easier to handle. The second factor that had to be considered was the types of questions needed to be asked (Saunders et al, 2016, p440). This was important as the questions needed to be directed at the consumers of book boxes and the feedback, they could provide of this as a marketing tool. While designing the questionnaire I had to consider that a, “valid questionnaire will enable accurate data that actually measure the concepts you are interested in to be collected, while one that is reliable will mean that these data are collected consistently (Saunders et al, 2016, p449). When constructing the questions for the questionnaire I used a data requirements table, the template of which I adapted from Saunders et al, to determine which questions answered my research questions and would be included in my questionnaire (2016, p447). See this table in appendix (1).

Originally, the questionnaire design was to use non-probability sampling, in the form of haphazard sampling, as the questionnaire was being distributed online. “Haphazard sampling occurs when sample cases are selected without any obvious principles of organisation in relation to your research question” (Saunders et al, 2016, p304). This fit with my questionnaire design as I was distributing the link to the questionnaire via my social media accounts. However, there was a risk with conducting the sampling in this manner, “it is prone to bias and influences that are beyond your control” (Saunders et al, 2016, p304). As I was

posting on my own personal social media, it would only be individuals who know me personally or happened across the post that would answer the questionnaire. This could be the reasoning as to why the questionnaire had a low number of respondents. There were only three respondents to the survey, which meant that the data collected could not be deemed reliable or valid.

The questions that were included in the questionnaire were a mix of rating questions, on the likelihood of an outcome, list questions, closed questions and open questions. This was done in order to provide the respondents with variety, so they did not become comfortable with one standard answer, to which they select rather than selecting the correct one for themselves. According to Saunders et al, "the wording of each question will need careful consideration to ensure the responses are valid", due to this I took careful consideration and tried to write questions that were clear and not easily misinterpreted (2016, p462). The order and flow of the questions was designed to follow the consumer's experience path when interacting with book subscription boxes. This allowed the questionnaire to flow in a natural way that would not be jarring to the respondents. Unfortunately, due to time restrictions and lack of reach with the questionnaire, I had to readjust my methodology again. I made the decision to use secondary research to help establish that the findings from the interview reflect what is occurring in marketing within the publishing industry.

As the timeline in which I could research was closing, having to search for new data and research was time sensitive. Using secondary data addressed this issue, as "if you need data quickly, secondary data may be the only viable alternative" (Saunders et al, 2016, p331). As I had collected data from my email interview, I was able to place my findings in a more general context (Saunders et al, 2016, p331). By showing that the responses to the interview applied on a wider more general context I was able to prove that this was in fact what was occurring within the industry, and to answer my research questions. There were limitations regarding collecting reliable and appropriate data that could address the research questions I proposed to answer with this thesis. Often, "secondary data will have been collected for a specific purpose that differs from your research question(s) or objectives" (Saunders et al, 2016, p332). This was the case when I searched for data that would allow my research questions to be answered. In my search there were few secondary research projects done with this topic, so I had to find broader data that could then be applied to my research questions, rather than looking for research done on this exact topic. Which was something I was aware of when I chose to use secondary data, that I would only be able to answer my research questions partially (Saunders et al, 2016, p332).

3.2 Qualitative Method

When initially planning the format of the interview I had intended for it to be conducted via Skype. This would be an open interview that would flow more naturally and allow for the replies to the questions to give a better perspective on marketing within the publishing industry. Due to the corona virus as well as time differences, the method of the interview had to be adapted. As the interviewee was in America the best option that suited her was to conduct the interview via email (see Appendix 2). I interviewed Beth Oleniczak, the marketing manager for Sourcebooks Fire. Which is the publisher of *Furyborn*, the book that I had received in a book subscription box, *Fairyloot*, which led to the inspiration for this thesis. As the interview was conducted via email, I had reservations as I had first intended to have an in-depth semi-structured interview, where I could have a small amount of questions that through being answered would naturally cause further questions to arise. However, this structure was still possible, “after making contact and obtaining agreement to participate, you initially email a question or small number of questions or introduce a topic to which the participant will (hopefully) rely. You then need to respond to each reply, asking further questions, raising points of clarification and pursuing ideas that of are further interest (Saunders et al, 2016, p424). This is the structure and methodology I chose to use. I was concerned that this would cause the interview to lose its organic flow and would be time consuming for both myself and the interviewee. However, according to Saunders et al, “this may be advantageous in terms of allowing time for reflection on the part of the interviewer, in forming appropriate questions being asked and an answer being received” (2016, p424). This again proved to be true, by conducting the interview this way both the interviewee and I were able to consider the questions and responses carefully. Another advantage asserted by Saunders et al, is that due to the email’s written format it saves costs, such as time and money, that would be needed to transcribe or reformat an interview conducted in a different format (2016, p424). This also proved to be true as there was no cost on either of our parts and took very little time to conduct.

There was, however, some limitations, unlike in a face to face interview, whether it be in person or via the internet, there is a delay between the questions being asked and the response. This did cause a time delay in retrieving the responses and then analysing them. The initial interview email was sent on the 27th of October, and once I received a reply to my first initial questions, I then sent a follow up email with further questions to the interviewee. There was a delay regarding the follow up questions due to unforeseen circumstances, however this did not cause any substantial delay to the research.

4.0 Analysis and Findings

Throughout my research it has become obvious that the publishing industry is highly adaptive and one that is likely to survive the rapid changes brought by technology. From researching the history and the methods used as well as my own research it has become apparent that the industry of publishing is a robust one, one that is unlikely to fail due to advancements, but rather flourish alongside them.

Through my extensive research it has become apparent that no two marketing campaigns are the same. Each marketer needs to be adaptive with the campaign, so it reflects the content and reaches the correct demographics. On the cover of the advanced reader copy of *Furyborn* by Claire Legrand, which was published by Sourcebooks Fire and was received by subscribers of the Fairyloot book box, was a detailing of the marketing campaign that was being undertaken for this book. This shows the blend of both traditional and new marketing methods as well, but with a difference. In this campaign they underwent the traditional marketing of author events, national print review campaign, and trade show marketing, all of which would be traditional, and standards fixtures in a marketing campaign (Legrand, 2018). However, how this campaign was adapted to suit the target audience and the book content itself, was by having a “large ARC [advanced reader copy] distribution to booksellers and librarians”, as well as a large social network campaign that supported this (Legrand, 2018). By combining both the traditional and the newer marketing methods both publishers were able to draw attention to potential readers.

It is the newer marketing methods that have enabled publishers to remain relevant and to expand their reach readers. By interviewing the marketing manager at Sourcebooks Fire, who ran the *Furyborn* campaign, I was able to examine closely the way that marketers have been able to combine the older and newer methods to create successful marketing campaigns. Below is the back of the ARC of *Furyborn* that was included in the book subscription box, Fairy Loot, which shows the combination of newer and older marketing methods.

MARKETING & PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

- Major pre-publication buzz campaign
- Cover reveal
- Preorder campaign
- Large ARC distribution to booksellers and librarians
- National trade show appearances
- Top account mailings
- National print review campaign
- Major web promotions & reviews
- Media ARC mailing with special packaging
- Campaign for most-anticipated lists of 2018
- Series website with exclusive content
- Blog tour
- Social network campaign including Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Goodreads, & Snapchat
- Trade show marketing
- Consumer & trade advertising
- Consumer & trade newsletter promotion
- Book trailer
- Author events
- claire-legrand.com
- [@clairelegrand](https://twitter.com/clairelegrand)

ADVANCE READER COPY
NOT FOR SALE

Agent: Victoria Marini with
Irene Goodman Literary Agency

The stunningly original, MUST-READ fantasy series of 2018 follows two young women, centuries apart, who hold the power to save their world... or doom it.

When assassins ambush her best friend, the crown prince, Rielle Dardenne risks everything to save him, exposing her ability to perform all seven kinds of elemental magic. The only people who should possess this extraordinary power are a pair of prophesied queens: a queen of light and salvation and a queen of blood and destruction. To prove she is the Sun Queen, Rielle must endure seven trials to test her magic. If she fails, she will be executed... unless the trials kill her first.

A thousand years later, the legend of Queen Rielle is a mere fairy tale to bounty hunter Eliana Ferracora. When the Undying Empire conquered her kingdom, she embraced violence to keep her family alive. Now, she believes herself untouchable—until her mother vanishes without a trace, along with countless other women in their city. To find her, Eliana joins a rebel captain on a dangerous mission and discovers that the evil at the heart of the empire is more terrible than she ever imagined.

As Rielle and Eliana fight in a cosmic war that spans millennia, their stories intersect, and the shocking connections between them ultimately determine the fate of their world—and of each other.

sourcebooks fire
@Sourcebooks

publicity@sourcebooks.com • marketing@sourcebooks.com
sales@sourcebooks.com • sourcebooks.com • (630) 961-3900

(Fig. 7: Picture taken by Nee, K., 2020).

By using the new technologies to their advantage publishers have been able to adapt and grow as an industry. Beth Oleniczak is the marketing manager at Sourcebooks and led the campaign for *Furyborn*. I asked her how the marketing campaign, in relation to the inclusion of the book in book subscription boxes was created. She said that “the early distribution of advance-reader copies (ARC) is always a gamble, because there is a risk that people will read the ARC and then not buy the physical book once it’s on sale” (Oleniczak, 2020). However, the team at Sourcebooks were willing to take that gamble and use the book boxes to introduce the book to a wider readership, as “we knew the content was strong. We also know that the fantasy reader-and YA community-in general- is driven by word of mouth” (Oleniczak, 2020). This shows that Sourcefire and the marketing team there were using the concept of the merger of influence, whereby the subscribers of the book box would communicate and spread word about *Furyborn* organically (Reed, 2008). This is supported further by Oleniczak saying that, “we were confident that people would read early, talk about the book with their peers, and want to buy it” and she concludes with seeing that all of these factors needed to be present in order for this to have been a successful marketing method (2020). This is strengthened when supported by other research on the topic, “Word-of-mouth

marketing operates through a complex process that transforms commercial information into cultural stories relevant to the members of particular communities” (Kozinets, et al, 2010). Although their study was focused on the use of blogs as a marketing tool for a phone provider, they were able to ascertain that word-of-mouth is a powerful marketing tool in the digital world. This then leads into the importance of user generated content and its integration into the publishing industry and has become an essential facet in the marketing of books. “If you have influencers, or even readers, creating original content and sharing it on social media, it adds authenticity to the campaign” (Oleniczak, 2020) When asked if this was a common method to be used by Sourcebook, Oleniczak stated, “This was the first time we included an ARC of a book in a subscription box and, at the time, Furyborn had the largest marketing campaign we had ever launched” (2020). As a publisher they have had to take some risks in order to ensure the successfulness of the book, and the future of the trilogy. “When you have a book you know readers love, and it’s the start of a trilogy, you know that your marketing has to be strong enough to not only get the reader to read this book, but to hook them so that they’ll stick with the series” (Oleniczak, 2020). Although the book boxes were a gamble, it was a calculated risk that was supported by a wider marketing campaign, as it was combined with more tried and tested marketing methods, like those mentioned earlier: national trade show appearance, trade show marketing and author events (Legrand, 2018). The book subscription boxes were “a great cross-promotional tool, because when the boxes promote the books, they also promote the publisher, and we do the same for the boxes” (Oleniczak, 2020). As publishers have had to adapt to technologies and societies advancements it does so with measured calculations that allow for experimentation, but also a reliance on older methods.

When asked about the use of book subscription boxes as a marketing device, Oleniczak was very positive about them, “you’re reaching a very targeted readership, you get a nonreturnable sale, and the boxes have done an incredible job building online communities, so you also get digital and social promotion as well through unboxings and other user-generated content” (2020). Sourcebook Fire continued their partnership with book subscription boxes although not with ARCs of the following books in the Empirium trilogy, instead they did “social promotions and giveaways with FairyLoot and other subscription boxes for Kingsbane and Lightbringer on social media. That’s a great option for us because we already know that their followers are fans of the series and will help us continue to build buzz for subsequent releases” (Oleniczak, 2020). In regards to book subscription boxes being an effective tool for the marketing of books, Oleniczak stated that “We’ve utilized subscription boxes for debuts and for new series’ from authors with varying levels of notoriety and have found them to be useful in all cases” (2020).

A benefit of using the newer methods of digital marketing, especially those integrated with social media is that the publishers have real time access to whether the campaign is a success or not. Allowing them to perhaps adjust campaigns while they are ongoing if the reaction to the campaign is as positive as initially planned for. In their research, Nolan and Dane, concluded that, "SMM has established itself as a dominant pillar of contemporary marketing practise, thanks largely to the parallel rise of data analytics which enable the targeted use of SM data collected in real time or significant period" (2018). By having access to real time data publishers can see an almost instant reaction to the books they publish and can gauge whether their marketing campaign was successful or not.

When asked if she felt that there was still a place for the traditional methods to be used alongside the new methods, Oleniczak responded that, "Absolutely there is still room for traditional methods. However, as a rule we are always looking at the tactics and strategies that we're implementing vs. what actually sells books and are not committed to continuing to utilizing [sic] traditional efforts just because we've always done something a certain way" (2020). Oleniczak demonstrates that the marketing campaigns need to be adaptive in order to be successful. That by following a set campaign structure applied to all campaigns would not be successful. Oleniczak goes on to show how some traditional methods have adapted but have had new challenges that needed to be addressed, "Our trade shows this year have gone virtual, which has led to printing less advance-review copies for early distribution-so how can we be getting those books in front of gatekeepers in creative and more cost effective ways? It's an ever-changing landscape and if we didn't move with it we'd be stuck" (2020). It is apparent that the integration of social media into everyday life has altered the landscape of publishing. "So much of what we do is digital now; advertising, paid social, influencer promotions, etc. We're always iterating our efforts in order to meet readers where they are" (Oleniczak, 2020).

The future of the publishing industry and the effectiveness of the marketing methods used could be seen in the data from analysing the book market. "The revenue from the global book publishing market is forecast to slightly increase in the coming years, growing from 113 billion U.S. dollars in 2015 to about 123 billion U.S. dollars by 2020" (Herold, Book Ad Report). This prediction was made before the Covid 19 outbreak, so these figures may differ now. However, the publishing industry was thriving, and looked to continue to grow and expand. This may change now that the pandemic has effected the world in such an unforeseen way, Stephen Lotinga states that, "before the coronavirus pandemic, the industry was flourishing, with 2019 being the strongest year in the history of publishing" (Flood, 2020). And although the pandemic has made society shift into a new direction, "bookshop sales have rebounded strongly since stores reopened [...] 'publishing will require further support from the government

to ensure a quick and full recovery” (Flood, 2020). Flood is basing this on the situation in the UK which has since been put into a second lockdown. As this is a new and unforeseen challenge, publishers will yet again need to evolve and adjust their methods. This could be where a book subscription box could prove a useful method, as the boxes would be delivered to the readers’ home. Oleniczak states that the marketing “was incredibly successful! Furyborn was an instant New York Times bestseller- the first for the Sourcebooks Fire imprint, as was the follow up, Kingsbane” (2020).

The questionnaire’s results proved difficult to analyse as there were only three respondents (Nee, 2020). The lack of data collected mean that the data was unreliable and unlikely to be valid. The questionnaire was published on the 26th of September 2020, and the three respondents all completed the questionnaire on this day (Nee, 2020). Although the questionnaire was still available after this date there were no more respondents. The first question asked the respondents where they found the questionnaire, each respondent selected a different response. One found the questionnaire via Facebook, one via Instagram and the last was through a friend (Nee, 2020). This question was to determine which social media platform did the respondents access the questionnaire due to the lack of respondents this data is not reliable in order to determine how the questionnaire was accessed. The next question gave age ranges and asked which age range did the respondents fell into. Each respondent belonged to a different age group (Nee, 2020). All the respondents were female, the data of whether book subscription box customers are primarily interesting, however this cannot be inferred as the data size is too small (Nee, 2020). The next question was to determine which social media platform the respondents preferred to use, 2 of the respondents replied that Instagram was their preferred platform, and the final respondents replying that Facebook was theirs (Nee, 2020). All the respondents answered that they did at one point subscribe to a book subscription boxes but now no longer do (Nee, 2020). This question was to ascertain if book boxes have a long-lasting relationship with its customers, if book boxes had the ability to keep the custom of its subscribers. The book boxes that the respondents subscribed to were Pollux, a box with their local library and their third respondent did not specify (Nee, 2020). Each respondent only subscribed to one book box. The next question was to determine the length of time the respondents subscribed to the book box. One replied that it had been less than six months, one replied they had been subscribed for a year and the last was subscribed for more than a year (Nee, 2020). When asked how they heard about book boxes, one respondent said via YouTube, another said via a friend, and the last from a magazine (Nee, 2020). The next question was to determine if the respondents had subscribed to a book subscription box that had an overall theme, 2 of the respondents replied that theirs had no theme and the final respondent said yes (Nee, 2020). The respondent whose book

box had a theme, specified that it was romance themed. None of the respondents bought other editions of the books they received in a book box (Nee, 2020). Two of the respondents stated that they had been introduced to a new author via the book boxes, while the third replied they had not (Nee, 2020). All the respondents felt that the book subscription boxes were a good way to read books they may not have picked themselves to read (Nee, 2020). When asked if they preferred getting special editions of a book only available via a book box, two of the respondents replied they did, while the third replied they did not (Nee, 2020). When asked if they watch book box unboxings on YouTube all the respondents replied no (Nee, 2020). When asked whether they had posted about the book boxes on social media all the respondents replied no (Nee, 2020). The respondents also indicated that none of them interacted with the book boxes Instagram pages (Nee, 2020). The respondents signalled they would be very unlikely to use a hashtag that would be included in the box to be used when posted on social media (Nee, 2020). The respondents all indicated that they had not interacted with other individuals who posted about book boxes on social media (Nee, 2020). All respondents replied that they felt the book subscription boxes had positively impacted their reading habits (Nee, 2020). When asked if they felt if there was a community around the book subscription boxes two of the respondents replied no and the third replied yes (Nee, 2020). When asked if they were likely to continue being subscribed to book boxes, two of the respondents replied they would not and the third replied they would (Nee, 2020). The final question in the questionnaire asked the respondents how likely they are to recommend a book subscription boxes to others, one respondent replied very likely, one said likely, and the last said neither likely nor unlikely (Nee, 2020).

The responses to the questionnaire would have provided helpful insight to the effects of marketing through book subscription boxes, however as the data set is small it cannot be properly analysed. The lack of data makes it difficult to determine trends or responses of customers and their reactions to the marketing presented in book subscription boxes. The data collected was also unable to provide context to the findings from the interview and secondary research.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Key Findings

The aim of this thesis was to answer the three following research questions:

1. What were the previous methods used by publishers before the proliferation of the internet into society?
2. What are the newer methods publishers have had to create in order to stay relevant?
3. How effective are these 'new' marketing methods in reaching readers?

The research conducted in this thesis has revealed that the industry of publishing is a highly adaptive industry that has had the ability to evolve and progress alongside society. The statement that many readers so often hear that the physical book is a dying art form, is simply not true. The publishing industry has been able to tackle the challenges it has met since it first came to be and has been able to overcome them and develop new methods and strategies to ensure its growth and survival. Publishing has immersed itself into our everyday lives, even the lives of those who do not read for leisure. In this thesis I began by first analysing the history of publishing as that would highlight the tendency publishing has had to adapt over the centuries. With each new technological development or societal change publishing has been able to not only adapt but to flourish.

The research questions posed in this thesis were essential to examine what methods were used by marketers in the past and how they have evolved to what they are today. An unforeseen aspect for this thesis was the Covid19 pandemic, but this has caused the thesis to shift and question what of the newer marketing methods would be successful in the reality we currently reside. By examining the shift of attitudes and the market from the 1970s to the early 2000s, this thesis was able to uncover that although there has been a shift away from the traditional marketing methods to newer ones, the traditional methods are still essential. But have evolved to suit the modern times we live in. In the seventies it was largely the local bookshop or library where a reader would have access to books, however this has changed and shifted with the rise of the internet. Now a reader, need not leave the comfort of their home to have access to books, whether they be electronic, audio or physical books. With the rise of the internet, much like the creation of mass production of books, books became even more accessible to readers.

It is by looking to publishing's past that its future can be more easily gauged. However, as with any predictions, they are never 100% accurate. In the 1970s they failed to predict the sheer scale that the rise of the internet would be, and how it would infiltrate every person's life. And the same can be said of today, not many people could have predicted the challenges 2020 would have brought, not only to the publishing industry but the world at large. The coronavirus

will be another unforeseen challenge that publishing will have to adapt in order to survive. However, there is hope, as publishing has proven time and again its ability to evolve.

The traditional marketing methods that were examined in this thesis proved that although there have been new methods developed, however the older methods are still vital in marketing. They have had to evolve. The four P's have always been an essential tool and method in marketing, and this is true for marketing in the publishing industry. However, as technology and society have progressed there may be a need for the P's to be adapted. With perhaps there needing to be a fifth P added, for pandemic. As the pandemic is likely to be the reality for the foreseeable future, it is now an aspect that marketers will need to consider. There has also been a decline on the importance of price, as with the presence of the internet there are large variety of books available at a variety of price points, meaning the publisher needs to shift their focus and make their books stand apart. This shift towards the customer, although new, can still lend itself to the traditional methods. Market research and the consumer decision making process are still vital but now need to be focused more on the variety of communities and social interactions of the consumer than they have been in the past.

The traditional methods understood that the 'time' of the customer was important, as reading is a leisure activity, each marketer is aiming to convince the reader why they should spend their time with this book. By doing extensive market research to help predict the trends of consumer buying, it is also by examining the decision-making process that can help marketers see what campaigns successful, and which ones are not. This concept of the reader's time has gained importance today as there are more distractions demanding the readers time, this means that marketers need to be more creative and experimental in the ways they gain the reader's attention.

With the newer methods used by publishers, it is apparent that the rise of the internet and social media has played a large role in their creation. The shift of focus on to the read has been a dramatic one. The publishers' own brand has decreased in importance and the brand of the author and the books themselves have taken precedent. The reader's focus is on the personality of the author, their talent, and the book itself. This could be largely due to the move away from consumers trusting large companies and prioritising word of mouth via friends, family and trusted influences. Social circles have become a trusted source of information for readers, and this is something publishers and marketers alike have had to adapt too.

The rise of the internet has meant that the importance of digital marketing and utilising the tools available through social media has become an important fixture in modern publishing. By using social media, the publisher can communicate with the readers in a more personable way. Publishers can now become a familiar entity to readers. By utilising social media

platforms, like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, publishers can receive real time data from their campaigns, as well as access to readers in their homes. In traditional marketing the circle of influence was an important tool to help research consumers and their buying habits, however this shift to have the communities that the reader is a part of marketing process itself. The readers are now able to create content that in turn can be used as a marketing tool. Oleniczak saw the importance of this, and it help bolster the risk of including ARCs of Furyborn in book subscription boxes. Not only would readers be likely to speak to one another about the book, but they were likely to make posts, create unboxing videos and share information about the book. Meaning that the book would reach further than just those receiving the book box.

This thesis set out to discover if using book subscription boxes would be an effective method that could be utilised by publishers. Through my research and interview with Beth Oleniczak, this has been proven to be the case. Although there are some risks involved in included a book in a book box, there can be a multitude of benefits. As explained by Oleniczak, the marketing campaign needs to be tailored around the book itself. Each book is very different to the next and so each book needs to be marketed differently, as they may have different target markets that may benefit from differing methods being used. Although Furyborn utilised book boxes, it also used more traditional methods as well, as although they have evolved over the years, they are still needed in order to market a book effectively.

5.2 Research Limitations

The methodology that I had originally designed to conduct my research was to be a single phased and sequential, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. I had planned to conduct interviews with individuals from both a publishing house and from a book subscription box company. However, I was unable to gain access to an interview with the book subscription box company. This meant that my methodology had to be adjusted, instead I shifted my focus to the customers who would have received the book boxes, as I felt that their feedback could be used to discover if the book box was an effective marketing tool from their perspective. I decided to gain this data via a self-completed questionnaire that I created on the platform Survey Monkey. In the designing of the questionnaire I considered that there needed to be a variety in the questions, as this would not allow readers to become bored with the format of the questions. By doing this I increased the validity as the respondents would have been less likely to choose answers at random. I also created a data requirements table to ensure that the questions I was asking were relevant to the thesis. I distributed the survey via my Facebook profile, Instagram and Reddit. Unfortunately, I was met with a limitation in the data collected. As I had so little respondents the data collected was not enough to provide context to the thesis. This could have been combated had I distributed the survey earlier in my research timeline, and if I had spent more time promoting the survey. It would have been possible for a fee to have survey monkey distribute the survey as well, in hindsight I should have used this tool. As the questionnaire was not successful and time was limited, I decided to use secondary data to support the data from the interview. By using secondary data, I was able to gain data within my time limitation, as well as support the data collected from the interview I had conducted. These were the primary reasons that I decided to use secondary data. Of course, secondary data has its limitations, as this thesis topic has not been largely discussed there was limited resources that would be useful to my research. Many of the secondary data sources that I used were focused on answering or studying other aspects of marketing, this meant that I would only have a general view of the topics being discussed, rather than having access to data that specifically related to my topic.

Initially I had intended my interview to be narrative in style, so that it would allow the interviewee to expand on their points and for an organic flow to occur during the interview. Due to scheduling issues and with the interviewee being in the United States, the interview had to be adapted to an email format, rather than face to face. This had its downsides, such as there being a delay between the questions being asked and the responses. As there were time limitations this was a difficulty. However, there were benefits to having the interview via email. I was able to analyse the data easily as it was in written format. And the time delay also

was a positive, as it allowed the interviewee time to properly consider the questions and their responses.

The findings of this thesis are conclusive, the traditional methods used by publishers have not become obsolete but have evolved, much like the publishers' role in society. The adaptation of the traditional methods has strengthened the newer methods that have emerged. As the newer models may not be as tested and come with a higher risk, there is still a need to have marketing campaigns that consists of both old and new marketing tools. The thesis set out to investigate what the traditional marketing methods were, and it has done this by examine the history of publishing. The second research question aimed to see what the new marketing tools are, which revealed that although there are new marketing methods, the traditional methods are still beneficial and vital to a successful marketing campaign. Regarding the effectiveness of the newer methods it was through the interview and secondary data that it became apparent that the new methods are highly effective and are allowing the publishing industry to adapt to a fast-changing world. By closely examining the role of the book subscription box as a new marketing tool, it became apparent that the publishing industry can utilise newer methods to its advantage. The publishing industry can reach their readers beyond the pages of books via these new marketing methods.

6.0 References

- Birn, R., & Forsyth, P. (1997). *Marketing in Publishing*. Taylor & Francis Group, London. Available at: ProQuest Ebook Central. (Accessed 27.03.2020).
- Book Roast. (2020) *August Bookish Boxes: Owlcrate, Fairyloot & Book Box Club*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWtvjqt33AM&ab_channel=BookRoast (Accessed: 21.09.2020)
- Book Roast. (2019) *4x November Book Boxes Unboxing: Unplugged, Book Box Club, Owlcrate & Fairyloot!* Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrlwgo-LK1Y&ab_channel=BookRoast (Accessed: 21.09.2020)
- Doctorow, C. 2020. We Need to Talk About Audible. *Publishers Weekly*. Available at: <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/84384-we-need-to-talk-about-audible.html> (Accessed: 23.11.2020)
- Flood, A. (2020) *'Book sales hit record highs in 2019, but publishers 'now need help.'* The Guardian. 22 July 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jul/22/book-sales-record-highs-2019-publishers-need-help-government> (Accessed: 17.10.2020)
- Flatt, M., (2018) *Book Subscription boxes: industry hope or all hype?* The Bookseller. Available at: <https://www.thebookseller.com/futurebook/book-subscription-boxes-industry-hope-or-all-hype-806736> (Accessed 01.04.2020)
- Greco, A, N., Milliot, J., and Wharton, R, M., (2014). *The Book Publishing Industry*. Routledge. New York. Available at: https://books.google.ie/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ib03AAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=publishing+industry+marketing&ots=gfo2CbqZVQ&sig=vfBS_Kg80E0OX7IT4bnTyX62t0A&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false (Accessed: 19.03.2020).
- Healy, C. (2019) *How to market a book*. Penguin Random House UK. YouTube. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFs5QbIHZis> (Accessed: 19.05.2020)
- Herold, T. *Book Publishing Market Overview for Authors – Statistics & Facts*. Book Ad Report. Available at: <https://bookadreport.com/book-market-overview-authors-statistics-facts/> (Accessed: 17.10.2020)

Khan, M. A. 2006. *Consumer behaviour and advertising management*. New Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd., Publishers. (Accessed 24.10.2020)

Kotler, P., Kartajava, H., and Setiawan, I. (2017). *Marketing 4.0: Moving from Traditional to Digital*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley. Available at: <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.turkuamk.fi/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1424256&site=ehost-live> (Accessed: 09.08.2020)

Kozinets, R. V. *et al.* (2010) 'Networked Narratives: Understanding Word-of-Mouth Marketing in Online Communities', *Journal of Marketing*, 74(2), pp. 71–89. Available at: [10.1509/jm.74.2.71](https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.74.2.71). (Accessed 04.11.2020)

Legrand, C. (2018). Advanced Reader Copy. *Furyborn*. Sourcebooks Fire.

Maughan, S. 2015. 'How Publishers Are Marketing Digital Audiobooks' *Publishers Weekly*. Available at: <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/audio-books/article/68951-how-publishers-are-marketing-digital-audiobooks.html> (Accessed: 23.11.2020)

Milliot, J. 2020. Publishing Leaders Issuing Warning over Amazon's Market Power. *Publishers Weekly*. Available at: <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/bookselling/article/84119-publishing-leaders-issuing-warning-over-amazon-s-market-power.html> (Accessed: 23.11.2020)

Montgomery, B. 2019. The Amazon Publishing Juggernaut. *The Atlantic*. Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/08/amazons-plan-take-over-world-publishing/595630/> (Accessed: 23.11.2020)

Mukundarajan, A. (2017) History of Publishing. Available at: <https://notionpress.com/blog/history-of-book-publishing/> (Accessed: 21.11.2020)

Nee, K. (2020). Book Subscription Boxes Questionnaire. SurveyMonkey. Results Available at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-MSZMXWPY/>

Nee, K. (2020). Screenshot of Google web search. (Captured: 22.11.2020)

Nee, K. (2020) Photo of Furyborn marketing campaign. (Captured: 18.11.2020)

Nolan, S. and Dane, A. (2018) 'A sharper conversation: book publishers' use of social media marketing in the age of the algorithm', *Media International Australia*, 168(1), pp. 153–166. Available at: [10.1177/1329878X18783008](https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X18783008). (Accessed: 03.11.2020)

Oleniczak, Beth (2020). Interviewed by Katrina Nee, via email. (Initial interview email sent 27.10.2020).

Reed, John. (2008). What is social media marketing? *Publishing Talk*. Available at: <http://www.publishingtalk.eu/marketing/what-is-social-media-marketing/> (Accessed: 30/03/2020)

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., Thornhill, A., 2016. *Research Methods for Business Students*. **Pearson**. England. P169-601.

Sutton, K.M., (2013) *How Contemporary Publishers Reach Out to Their Customers: Transition from B2B to B2C Marketing in the Publishing Industry*. **Dipolomica Verlag**. (Accessed: 19/03/2020)

Writers Edit. *The Book Subscription Box: A Secret Weapon for Authors and Gifters*. Website. <https://writersedit.com/self-publishing/book-subscription-box-secret-weapon-authors-gifters/> (Accessed: 01/04/2020)

7.0 Appendix

1. Data Requirements Table for the questionnaire.

Research Objective: How effective are these 'new' marketing methods in reaching readers?			
Type of Research: Questionnaire			
Investigative questions	Variable(s) required	Detail in which data measured	X to mean included in questionnaire
Demographic Questions, age, gender	Gives an idea of the demographics of book box subscribers	Checkboxes with age ranges, or different gender selections. Limits responses	X
Preferred Social Media	Gives the data of which social media most used by respondents	Checkboxes and if other please submit option.	X
Do you subscribe to book subscription boxes?	Needed to avoid contamination of results	Check boxes that limit respondent's response, also included check box for those who have but no longer subscribe to book boxes	X
If yes, which book subscription box?	Determine which boxes are being subscribed to. Open ended and may cause contamination of result.	An open question that allows a wide range of an answer as many book boxes exist.	X
How many book boxes do you subscribe to?	Determine the amount of book boxes each respondent has subscribed to	A range so that data collected is not excessive and to gain data on the buying habits in relation to book boxes.	X
How long have you subscribed to a book subscription box?	To determine the average length of time subscribed to a book box.	A small-time range as to determine the length of time respondents subscribed.	
How did you find out about book	Gave common ways to have	To gain insight into how respondents first encountered book boxes	X

subscription boxes?	heard about book boxes and added if other please state option.		
Is there a theme to the box?	Yes or No checkboxes	Before adding to the questionnaire added, if yes which one. To determine which book boxes the respondents, receive.	X
Do you purchase other editions of books you have received via book subscription boxes?	Yes or No checkboxes	Sometimes those in the book community can purchase different editions of the same book, this question was to determine how many respondents did this.	X
Have you been introduced to a new author that you have since read more of via a book subscription box?	Yes or No checkboxes	Gain data to assert that the book boxes are a successful marketing tool.	X
Do you think book subscription boxes are a good way to read books you may not have picked out yourself?	Yes or No checkboxes	Gaining the consumer's thoughts on how book boxes may have expanded their experience reading books.	X
Do you prefer getting special edition copies available only via the book box?	Yes or No checkboxes	As some book boxes have editions that are unavailable elsewhere, this is to gauge the reaction consumers reaction to this.	X
Do you watch unboxing		As some YouTubers are affiliated with some book boxes and film unboxing	X

videos on YouTube?	Yes or No checkboxes	videos, this question is to gauge had the respondents viewed these.	
Do you post on social media about the boxes you have received? If yes, which social media platform?	Yes or No checkboxes	As many of the boxes and their marketing strategy promotes posting about them on social media, this question is to collect data if this occurs.	X
Do you interact with the book boxes Instagram pages?	Yes or No checkboxes	Book boxes and their branding tend to have a large social media presence on Instagram, this question is to determine if respondents interact with these pages.	X
If a book box comes with a hashtag to be used when posted about the box, how likely are you to use that hashtag?	Scale of very likely to very unlikely	Many book boxes use specific hashtags for certain boxes, this is to determine how likely a respondent is to use these hashtags.	X
Have you interacted with other people who post on social media about the book box?	Yes or No checkboxes	Book boxes try to create a community with their subscribers and can often encourage subscribers to interact with other subscribers. This question is to determine if the respondents had done this.	X
Has getting a book subscription box impacted your reading habits positively?	Yes or No checkboxes	The data being collected was the consumer's opinion had the book box a positive impact on their reading habits.	X
Do you feel like there is a community	Yes or No checkboxes	This was to determine if the respondents felt there was a community surrounding the book	X

around the book box?		box, as the marketing of the boxes aims to create one.	
Are you likely to continue using book subscription boxes?	Yes or No checkboxes	This was to collect data of the success of book subscription boxes and to determine would the respondents re-subscribe or remain subscribed to the boxes.	X
How likely are you to recommend the book subscription boxes to others?	Scale of very likely to very unlikely.	Determine whether the respondents would recommend book boxes to a friend.	X

Appendix 2. Interview Questions

How long have you worked in marketing in regards to book publishing?

With the Furyborn marketing campaign, how was the idea created?

Is this type of campaign typical for Sourcebooks Fire, or was it a new marketing approach?

Where did the idea to include the advanced reader copy in book subscription boxes come from?

Was the book only available in FairyLoot, or was it included in other book subscription boxes?

How do you see using book subscription boxes as a marketing device?

How successful was this marketing campaign?

How likely is it that you would try a similar tactic with another book?

In your experience in marketing within the publishing industry, have you noticed a change in the methods you would use to market books, from when you first started till now?

In your opinion do you think that the publishing industry has adapted to technological advances, regarding reaching and marketing for consumers?

Do you think that there is still a place for more traditional marketing methods to be used alongside the newer marketing methods? For example, in the Furyborn marketing campaign there was also a national print review campaign and trade show marketing.

Was using the book subscription boxes a good tool for the campaign in conjunction with the other aspects of the marketing campaign? For example, the social network campaign.

With the other books in this series, was there a similar tactic of using book subscription boxes?

With the consumers of book subscription boxes often creating their own content, be it YouTube videos, blogs, and Instagram posts, did this help the marketing campaign to spread beyond just the book box?

In terms of future marketing of the series, would book boxes still play a role, or would there be a move away from them, as they are now a fairly established as a series?

Could you see this, using book subscription boxes as being an effective tool when it may be the author's first book, to generate interest or introduce to readers?