

What to do,
what it means and
why it works.

DAN TURNER'S

7

KEYS TO
SELLING

ART ONLINE

DAN**TURNER**FINE**ART**.COM



7 KEYS TO SELLING ART ONLINE

AN ART MARKETING PRIMER BY DAN TURNER

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Feeling overwhelmed?

Google returns over **six million results** for
"How do I sell my art online?"

If you're an average US Internet user, you visit
2,750 web pages per month.

I'm not kidding.

The problem isn't that you lack information.

The problem is that you have **TOO MUCH** information.

Too often, artists start down the **online art marketing path** and quickly find themselves bogged down in “how-to” details. They reach burn-out before they ever get a fundamental marketing plan in place. Trying to connect the dots in a half-baked, half-finished marketing plan is **disheartening** and **counter-productive**.

If you make good art
the world is filled with people
who would love to
buy, own and enjoy your work.

Isn't that comforting to know?

They would buy it right now except...

they
don't
know
you
exist.

So what can you do to change that?

It all comes down to **Inbound Marketing**, which means:

- 1) Getting people to ***find you*** online.
- 2) Turning your visitors into ***followers***, then ***leads***, then ***customers***.

As you read through this book you may occasionally think

"I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO THAT."

When that happens, remember Universal Rule #1:

Those who know **HOW** work for those who know **WHY**.



OTHERS



YOU
(or, soon to be you)

In other words:

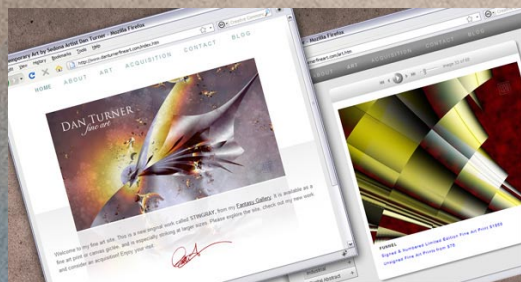
- You don't have to **do everything** yourself.
- You don't even have to **fund everything** yourself.
- **Stop the self-torture.** When needed, enlist the help of friends, family, patrons and freelance writers/designers.

Let's take "how-to" off the table for the next 12 minutes. Instead, ***let's focus on WHAT to do and WHY you're doing it.*** HOW is easy. HOW will take care of itself.

Now let's fix your online marketing > > >

KEY 1 YOUR WEBSITE & BLOG

Your Website & Blog are the **center of your online sales universe**. You can roll them both into a single site (best) or keep them separate, but artists need both components.



Serious buyers will visit your website *several times* before buying. Make it easy for them.

Your WEBSITE is your well-organized art gallery, showcase and museum. It stays still, it stays dependable and it *looks awesome*.

Ideally you want *your own dedicated domain* with a streamlined URL, not a sub-domain hooked to someone else's site with a confusing (or too-long) URL.



- **Make sure your website *looks like it was designed RECENTLY.***
- Make sure your website *is optimized for search engines* (SEO).
- Make sure your *visitors can easily find what they're looking for*, again and again.
- Make sure your *visitors can easily opt-in to your mailing list.*
- Make sure your *pricing is clearly visible.* Do not force people to call you or email you for pricing.
- Make sure *buyers can easily BUY your art, right from your site*, when they're ready.



Thinking of using Flash? Don't. Flash is virtually invisible to search engines. Further, it is banned on some newer devices, which means visitors with those devices literally cannot view your site.

Your BLOG is an ongoing, linear dialog and running commentary on you and your art. *The primary purpose of your blog is to drive visitors to your website,* whether through search rankings or through social channels.

- It moves, it's exciting.
- It expands and explains.
- It builds trust.
- It updates and highlights your creative activities.
- Visitors can comment and you can respond.

Unless you're a naturally gabby person and a good writer, blogs are HARD WORK. Be prepared for some serious starts and stops before you get a rhythm going. *The important thing is to get your blog firmly in place and online.* Start posting. Make mistakes. Your blog is the engine that keeps people coming back to your site.

The more you update your blog, the more visitors you attract. More visitors mean more fans for you and your art, which leads to more sales.

If you find that you can't keep your blog current and functioning, farm it out.

Yes, it's that important.

KEY YOUR OPT-IN MAILING LIST

Email is the best way to keep in touch with your patrons, collectors, buyers and fans. **If any of the 7 Keys are magic, it's this one.**

Your opt-in mailing list contains
peoples' names and email addresses
who have specifically **given you permission**
to send them periodic emails about you and
your art. **It is the single most powerful**
online sales tool you can have.

Building your opt-in list is

tedious work that yields **amazing results.**

It enables you to send anticipated, personal and relevant emails to PEOPLE WHO WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

- Display an email **subscription sign-up form** (preferably “above the fold”) on your website and blog.
- Your **social media profiles** generally allow for multiple web addresses. Make one of them your email sign-up form.
- Include a link to your subscriber sign-up page in your **email signature.**
- Mention your free email Newsletters/Updates/Status Reports in all **outside communications:** press releases, postcards, feature articles. Capture email addresses **in person** at your art shows with guest sign-in books. When you **exchange business cards**, ASK your new contact if you can keep in touch with them by newsletter.

Use a professional email service provider such as [MailChimp](#), [AWeber](#), [Emma](#) or [Constant Contact](#). They range in price from free to inexpensive and provide automatic subscription and list management, tracking, customizable templates and have many other advantages.

An important distinction: **Your newsletter is not your blog.** It should contain more valuable content. If you promise your subscribers “inside” information, then ***do not*** send them a recycled blog post. Your opt-in list is your “inner circle.” Treat them with respect.

Write directly to ONE person. “Hiya Gang” is the worst possible way to start your newsletter. You may have hundreds or even thousands of names on your list, but each email is sent to a single address and (first) read by a solitary reader. ***That person has INVITED YOU into their inbox and TRUSTED YOU with their email address.***

Finally, always remember that your newsletter is a prospecting and lead generation tool. Gently SPRINKLE your offers into your email, and ***always ASK your readers to take action.*** (buy now, read more, forward to a friend, etc.). Otherwise, there’s no reason to send it.

KEY 3 YOUR BACKLINKS

BACKLINKS (also known as Inbound Links) **originate on other websites and point to yours.** Search engines grant higher priority to sites with large numbers of quality backlinks.

Okay. So where do *quality* backlinks come from?

Blog Comments — Find active blogs on topics that interest you, preferably with large commenting communities. Write comments that add value to the discussions. Like-minded folks often reward quality input with a click through to your site to learn more about you.

Guest Blogging — Start by leaving several first rate comments on high quality, high-traffic sites. Then write informative, relevant posts for those websites and offer them to the owners. These will increase your search engine visibility and provide a steady flow of visitors to your website.

Forum Links — Join online forums. Answer questions. Make comments. *Be helpful.* Before long you will be viewed as a reliable source of information, and folks will click on your signature link to visit your website.

Social Bookmarking — Common bookmarking sites are [Digg](#), [Stumbleupon](#), and [Delicious](#), and there are literally hundreds more. Bookmark your favorite sites, stories, blog posts, art and photographs from all over the web. Each bookmark you add also creates a backlink to your site. Just ONE good bookmarking site can send thousands of visitors a month to view your art.

Article Marketing — One of the earliest and still widely used ways to build backlinks. Write an article (or 10, 20 or 50), submit it to an article directory and get a backlink. There are thousands of article directories on the internet today, so *choose the highest quality* directories you can find.

Press releases — When you have newsworthy announcements (new art, upcoming shows, large purchases from prestigious clients) craft press releases for submission to popular distribution services. Identify the correct channels by searching for related stories on Google News or Yahoo News, and *noting where the top results originate*.

Popular Websites — Can you showcase your work on popular, relevant, local or regional websites? *Do it*. Costs generally range from **free** to **inexpensive** to **pricey-but-worth-it**. These can generate *the highest quality backlinks* you'll have.

KEY 4 YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media is a process. Start by building on existing relationships, make new connections, and *adopt this simple strategy: Be Helpful.*

Converting your social media friends, fans and followers into **buyers of your art** can be an EXTREMELY difficult thing to do. But it's not impossible. Artists who take the time to understand the process are reaping sweet rewards.

Social media has a long, slow sales curve. *It's SOCIAL,* meaning *it's not about the transaction, it's about the experience.* In addition to building genuine friendships and revealing a more personal side of yourself, it's about getting people to spend more time with your art.



Over time, a thousand little nudges will ultimately drive purchasing. But that won't happen overnight.

The sheer number of social networks is staggering.

You simply can't be on all of them, nor should you try.

BE SELECTIVE. CHOOSE WISELY.

Monitor several networks that appeal to you. Then choose no more than a handful (2-5) to become involved with. Be sure and set a budget for time, otherwise you'll quickly become overwhelmed and burned out.

Even though it may take years to find your rhythm, build your tribe and see the larger payoff, know that ***each of your tweets, texts, video links and status updates are magnifying your presence in organic search results.*** So even when it feels like nothing is happening, keep at it, since organic search is vital to your long-term, online success.

KEY 5 YOUR OFFLINE EFFORTS

Traditional methods of connecting with people ***still work.***

Offline marketing will **drive traffic to your website** and boost online sales.

Artists need **POSTCARDS**. They are mini works of art (your art!) that are *cheap to print, colorful* and *easy to carry*. Print several versions and keep them in your car, backpack, art supply box, laptop case, cargo pants — you get the picture. Make sure they include your contact information and your WEBSITE address. Hand them out at **networking meetings** and **art shows**. When appropriate, MAIL THEM to **Galleries, Patrons** and **Decorators**.

If you're a **public speaker, teacher** or **workshop coordinator** — bring your postcards.

Your **Press Releases** and **Guest Articles** for your online promotions can do double duty in your *local newspapers, regional magazines*, even *national publications*. Always include your WEBSITE address.

KEY 6 YOUR BUYERS, COLLECTORS & PATRONS

All of your marketing and sales efforts come down to *attracting* and *holding* the people who like you, promote you, support you and who will **ultimately buy your work.**

Many artists feel that **selling art to total strangers** is an important rite of passage. *"Finally! Someone besides Mom appreciates my work!"* Once you begin reaching people you WILL get response, and you WILL make random sales.

EVEN SO, in order to generate momentum and **attract repeat buyers**, you must be willing to

open conversations and build relationships.

Your talents, which may seem so normal to you, **are often viewed as MAGIC by others**. These are the people who *love art, love artists, and believe it is their civic duty to*

bring art into the world.

Help them help you. They are not mere buyers of your work. **They are people who will ultimately become your Collectors and Patrons.** Your well-being, comfort and survival are important to them. If you allow it, they will support your efforts in any number of ways, both large and small:

Some will offer studio space,
gallery space,
art supplies,
equipment,
even (yes!) cash.

They'll help you with marketing and sales, introduce you to their friends, and *open doors you never knew existed*. EMBRACE these opportunities and **treat these special people like the angels they are.**

KEY YOUR SHIPPING & FOLLOW-THROUGH

Your buyers might come from **down the street** or from **the other side of the planet**. Either way, you need to be prepared when things go right.

"I'll take it!"

When you see or hear those words, are you ready?

Can you deliver?

How are you getting the payment? Do you have to *find a box, build a crate, fill out forms* for international delivery, *decide on a shipper?*

Have you chosen a high-quality Print On Demand (POD) service that is professional and efficient?

The time to figure all that out is BEFORE the orders start rolling in.

Your customers' buying experience should be flawless every time.

Remember, you're building relationships.

Within three days **after the sale**, send your buyer a separate **THANK YOU card or letter** . Then **KEEP IN TOUCH**. Make sure they receive your regular email newsletter. *Send them a stamped, hand-written postcard greeting every 90 days.*

Make sure they know that you appreciate their purchase and look forward to a long relationship.

7 KEYS TO SELLING ART ONLINE



Now that you know the *WHAT* and *WHY* of art marketing,
always remember:

“you’re braver than you believe,
and stronger than you seem,
and smarter than you think.”

— *Christopher Robin (to Pooh)*

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About the Author

Dan Turner has a keen interest in helping artists sell their work.

Since the late 1990s, his popular [Freelance Workshops](#) have provided a business and sales blueprint for scores of commercial artists.

Today, his expanding series of [Special Edition websites](#) offer unique, online showcases for Fine Artists.

Dan is a former advertising agency president who currently maintains a [graphic design firm](#), a [digital fine art studio](#) and an Internet publishing business in [Sedona, Arizona](#).

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If you like this ebook please send it to every artist, fine art photographer, jeweler, sculptor and gallery owner who needs to read it!