

# It's Never Too Early to Learn What It Takes: The Story of a Book by a 4-Year-Old

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At the age of 4, my son Luc completed his first book. Sure, it was only *Who's There: 101 Knock Knock Jokes for Kids*, but that's nothing to knock. Here's why: Motivation. We all need it. Motivation, purpose, and a goal make all the difference in our actions and achievements.

Why did Little Boy Luc write his first book at the age of 4? Because he wanted to make \$100. Luc enjoys singing, playing the drums and the piano, and writing songs. One day, Luc and his daddy (Tim DeTellis) were at Radio Shack, and Luc saw a piece of music equipment he wanted to buy. It was a speaker and amplifier combo for \$60. He told Tim that he really, really, really wanted to buy it, and Tim said, "No, Luc, you don't need that; we already have one just like it at home." "But Daddy," said Luc, "I really need this, I want it real bad!"

So Tim, wearing the publisher's hat that he and I share, said, "Luc, lately when we tell knock-knock jokes during our bedtime routine, you have come up with some really funny jokes. How about this: when I'm home during Christmas vacation, I'll help you write a book filled with your knock-knock jokes. We'll print 100 copies and when you sell your first 100 books you will have made \$100, and then you can go buy any kind of equipment you want with the \$100 you made."

Luc loved the idea! This book was written in seven days, and on January 1, 2003, when Luc, Tim, Kate (Luc's younger sister), and I sat down to read all Luc's jokes, we knew Luc would surely sell the 100 books fast.

Then Luc had a bigger and better idea. He came to Tim one day and said, "Daddy, I've been thinking about making the \$100 to buy my music equipment, and I thought of a faster way to make a hundred dollars!" Very curious, Tim asked, "How could that be?" Luc said, "All I need to do is sell one book for a hundred dollars!"

## **A Preschooler's Take on Sales and Publicity**

As it turned out, Luc sold his first 100 books for \$1 apiece, most of them by going door to door. He got many rejections, but soon learned that you sell more books if you have passion for what you are selling. You must believe in your book. Luc sure did.

The media did too. He has been featured on the largest television station in Florida (WFLA, NBC, in Tampa) as well as on a CBS affiliate in Orlando and Central Florida NEWS 13, a cable news station. Then to top it all off, he was featured on the cover of the *Orlando Business Journal* as being on the fast track to success. Luc is also the youngest member of the Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce.

What's next? He has now bought a light mixer with his earnings from the first book, to use when he performs concerts at home. And a premier book release event with McDonald's marked the launch of his second book this spring. All the media outlets that covered his progress with the first agreed to cover the release of the second, which is titled *Who's There Again? 101 More Knock Knock Jokes for Kids*.

Our book-marketing strategy has focused on media coverage, live events, and door-to-door sales to help build Luc's confidence in selling his book. Tim and I wanted to teach him three fundamental lessons. First, without effort, you have no result. Second, without a goal, you have no destination to aim for and no real reason to sell, sell, sell. Third, it's all about location. Where are you selling your books?

Luc has sold his while traveling by plane to visit his grandparents in Colorado and at other people's events, as well as door to door. He goes to the go-kart track and sells his book. He has copies with him wherever he goes, and he hopes his book will inspire other kids to write their own knock-knock jokes, be creative, and enjoy life every day.

Recently, Luc sold his book in an exhibit booth at the Orange County Convention Center. For the first 20 minutes he told people about his book without selling a single copy. Finally, the sales started to happen, and he sold seven copies in one hour. That's not bad pay for a 5-year-old. Can a small or medium-sized publisher live off that? No, but they sure can build a business around the principle.

*Danika DeTellis and her husband, Tim, head Muscatello Publishing, whose mission is to have an impact on the lives of readers with books that make a lasting difference. For more information, visit [www.LittleBoyLuc.com](http://www.LittleBoyLuc.com) or e-mail [Danika@MuscatelloPublishing.com](mailto:Danika@MuscatelloPublishing.com).*