

*Marketing Creativity presents:*

# The Little Black Book



*for Creative Business*

*by Lisa Jacobs*

# Welcome

I am so excited to invite you inside The Little Black Book for Creative Business! I've been running my own creative business for five years now, and I've gathered a lot of new information along the way. I'm always looking for ways to offer like-minded entrepreneurs a learning curve, and so I've created this fabulous business-boosting resource.

When I started back in 2010, I was forced to learn every detail of my business through trial and error. Trust me, that's the hard road! If you're just starting out on your own journey, enjoy this shortcut and use it wisely.

Inside The Little Black Book for Creative Business, you'll find:

1. The office equipment I use and swear by;
2. The apps and software I cannot live without;
3. My favorite branding and design resources;
4. Payment processing and email management systems I use;
5. How I create e-books and downloadable files; plus,
6. LOADS of extras, such as: how to find virtual assistants, how I manage my schedule, and a slew of other fabulous resources!

So, without further ado, let me unlock the vault and spill the goodies!

# The Basics



## Home Equipment

Computers: I operate best on my Apple desktop (27-inch iMac). I left the PC world in 2011, and I've never looked back. Making that investment is one of my best decisions in business - there's nothing it can't do. I'll share more on this when we discuss apps and software in a few pages.

I also own a MacBook Pro (13-inch). I bought it during an international move in 2013 because my desktop would take months to arrive, and I

needed to work. I enjoy the MacBook Pro for internet browsing and writing when I'm away from my desk. However, I prefer the full controls (mouse, separate keyboard, etc.) of my desktop and do most of my heavy-duty work there.

A standing desk: I have a few regular desks for work, but I try to use my standing desk as often as possible. I use a Safco Stand-up Workstation. I'll soon write a love post about it - it really helps with my posture, productivity, and even the way I carry weight on my body (less belly pooch from being slumped in a chair).

Phone: I still have the iPhone 4S. I'm under contract and frugal about it! I look forward to 2015 when I can shop for a new phone and contract. I'm going bigger next time, and I'll be looking for something that fills my palm since I rarely take calls on a cell phone.

P.S. I've found this iPhone remote very handy for taking pictures (especially selfies).

Camera: I'm a Canon girl. I shot on the same Rebel (DSLR) for eleven years, until recently. My husband got me the Canon Rebel T3i for my birthday! It's amazing, and it's teaching me that digital photography has come along way.

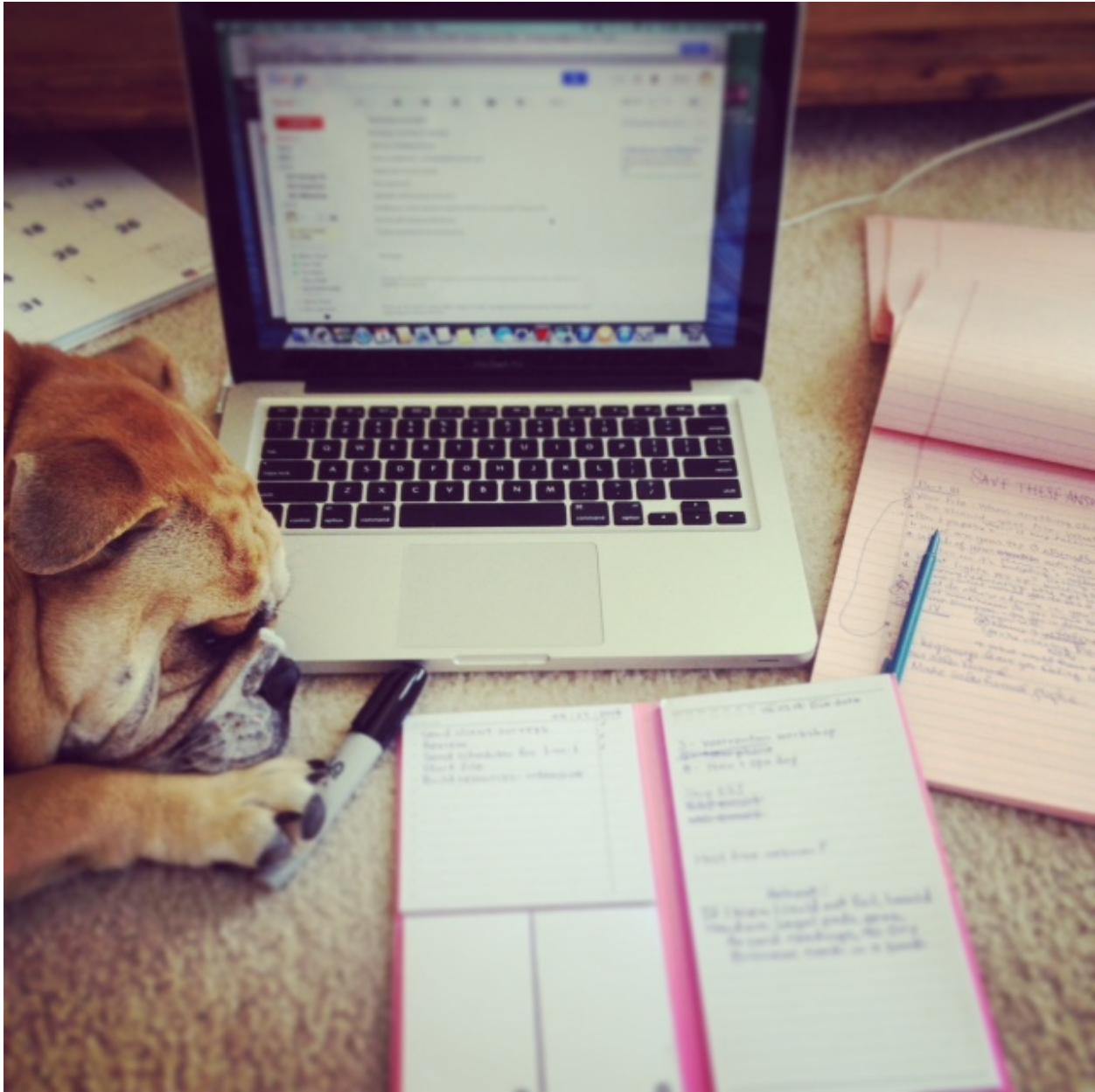
Lens: Besides the standard lens (which I shoot on frequently), I love, Love, LOVE my 50mm lens (also Canon).

Planners: I love Your Best Year Productivity Workbook and Creative Business Planner by Lisa Jacobs, but I am biased. I'm also a fan of Erin Condren's life planners - they're cute and sturdy.

Oracle cards: For my "Let Me Pull a Card" blog posts, I use Sonia Choquette's Soul Lesson and Soul Purpose oracle card deck. Find it here: Soul Lessons and Soul Purpose: A Channeled Guide to Why You Are Here!

Miscellaneous: Last but not least, there are a few basic items I could not do without ...





- Legal pads - They are great for list-making, and I particularly love them for coaching. I often assign a legal pad for each client so that I can easily flip the pages to track the difference between where they started with me and what we're currently working on.
- Five Star 5-subject notebooks - There's nothing better than a brand new one!

- Papermate pens - the cheapie blue ones that come in a bag. I never have to worry about my family stealing them!
- Coffee - I love my Keurig, and I've found a way to make my own cheap k-cups. You get a 4-pack of Cafe Cups (you can find them at Target, Walmart, the grocery store, etc.), but **here's the secret!** Putting regular coffee in the cafe cups just makes a big mess - why? Because the coffee in regular k-cups is an instant mix. Otherwise, the plastic k-cups would be heavy with grounds after use, and they're not. In a big Folger's can (or other storage container), you mix two parts regular grounds with one part instant grounds, and voila! Put that mix in the cafe cups and you have the convenience of the Keurig without the expensive cost of the k-cups.
- An 18 x 24 inch drawing pad - You can find this in the children's stationary section of any Walmart or Target for cheap. I take mine out on the living room floor with my calendars, income goals, and upcoming plans and map out several months in advance. It's important to get out of your work space and do a business brain dump every now and again. I often advise my coaching clients to get a big floor pad and do the same.

# Software & Apps

## Smartphone Apps

Instagram (free) - I love it for both personal and business use.

A Beautiful Mess and Party Party (new!)- My favorite apps for smartphone photo editing.

Little Moments - A super fun photo editing app that also includes #photoaday challenges and prompts. It has tons of filters and extras to choose from as well.

## Computer Apps, Sites and Software

Focus@Will (free version) - A mix of neuroscience and music, Focus@Will helps sharpen your focus and improves your productivity. I've tried it, and I think it works! Tell me what you think.



Skitch (free) - for screenshots and miscellaneous photo editing (it draws and adds arrows to photographs). (Sample on next page.)

Pinterest (free) - All day, every day. Where some people mention Evernote for digital storage and organization, I prefer Pinterest. I keep a few secret boards for things I'm not ready (or don't want) to share.

Dropbox (free version) - It took me a minute to learn how to use Dropbox, but now I can't live without it. You can store any digital thing there. I use it to share pictures, audio and video files, and PDFs with my clients. I also use it to share personal photos with my friends. Plus, you can add the app to your phone and store all of your mobile photographs there as well.

# Creative Business Resources

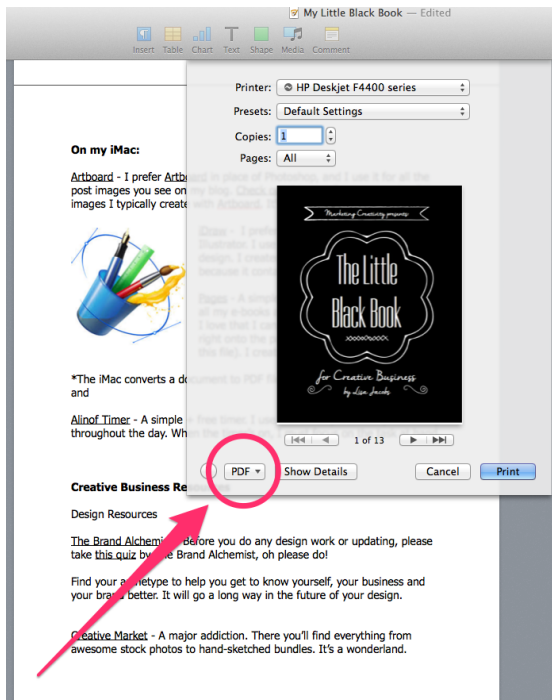
## On my iMac:

Artboard - I prefer Artboard in place of Photoshop, and I use it for all the post images you see on my blog. Check out this post for an example of the images I typically create with Artboard. It's so simple and user-friendly.



iDraw - I prefer iDraw in place of Adobe Illustrator. I use it for vector files and creative design. I created the cover of this very e-book with iDraw because it contains some vector images.

Pages - A simple word processing app. I create all my e-books and downloadables in Pages, and I love that I can easily drag graphics and design right onto the page (as I did with the cover of this file). I created The Little Black Book for Creative Business with Pages.



\*The iMac converts a document to PDF file in Pages by clicking: File, Print, and (in the bottom left-hand corner of that pop-up) choosing the option "Save as PDF." See screen clipping to the left (made with Skitch).

Alinof Timer - A simple and free timer. I use it to block periods of productivity throughout the day. When the timer's on, I must focus on the task at hand.

Focus - a photo-editing app that helps me create the tilt & shift effect.

Quicktime Player - An application that comes on the iMac. It's what I use to video record my screen for tutorials. (Simply open it, select File, and choose "New Recording.")



Photo Booth - Another application that comes on the iMac. It's what I use to video record myself.

## **Design Resources**

The Brand Alchemist - Before you do any design work or updating, please take this quiz by The Brand Alchemist, oh please do!

Find your archetype to help you get to know yourself, your business and your brand better. It will go a long way in the future of your design.

Creative Market - A major addiction. There you'll find everything from awesome stock photos to hand-sketched bundles. It's a wonderland.

## **Design services**

I have used and recommend the following designers:

Creative Delivery - My current Energy Shop logo and branding came from Nicole, and I'm still over the moon about it a few years later. I felt that she really listened to my desires and turned it into a logo I love and adore.

The Languid Lion - I want to add Geri Jewitt to the list of designers I love, even though I've never worked with her personally. I've connected with her online, and I am familiar with many of the brands she's designed for. She's definitely another one to check out.

**My fabulous website design + The Luminaries Club membership** was done with the help of Ginny at My New Favorite Design - I chose her because I loved the clean layout of her personal blog. Her about page (mainly, her willingness to communicate) sealed the deal for me.

She also transferred my site off of the awful host it was on and onto the fabulous Pagely!

It was an absolute pleasure to work with her.

## Branding Materials

Vistaprint

Moo

Next Day Flyers



### Business websites

Etsy - When it comes to online storefronts, I will continue to recommend Etsy to new business owners. It has set the standard for the handmade industry, and customers have come to know and respect the website.

Additionally, their integration with USPS, Paypal and direct checkout is the best on the web.

My only complaint is that there's no integrated way to collect email addresses, and Etsy knows as well as anybody that a hearty email list is the key to small business success. In that regard, please watch:



Zapier - While their Etsy integration is not working (at time of print), this site still has a lot to offer. The developers at Zapier are trying to make it so every new sale on Etsy adds the customer's email list to your mailing list provider.

Here's what that would look like (if it all works out for Zapier): If you get a sale from a new customer on Etsy, Zapier will add that email to your Mail Chimp account, and Mail Chimp will then email your customer the opt-in confirmation request. It's perfectly legal. The customer can then click that email to confirm interest, and voila! Your list gets bigger.

If you're on another online selling platform, DO check-out Zapier right away. You may be able to set up the above scenario immediately. If not, contact them and they'll be happy to look into the integration for you.

## **Product Packaging and Shipping**

Uline - Uline has everything. I go there for my bubble mailers, plastic baggies, and anything else I need in bulk.

Premier Packaging - I've also enjoyed shopping Premier Packaging - particularly for my jewelry boxes, though I'm going to include a disclaimer: my last few orders have been off. They've not sent the right products, sizes and colors. That's created a real headache after-purchase.

Etsy Shipping - With your seller's account, Etsy is integrated with the USPS and offers commercial rates on postage. Once you enter in the weight of the package, the label is ready to print. They then add the cost of postage onto your monthly Etsy bill. It's phenomenal. Combine that with:

A digital scale - My packages are always under 5 pounds, so a desktop scale works perfectly for me.

Avery Shipping Labels (found on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)) - Grab a pack of these, and you truly have a click and ship operation!



## **Email Marketing**

Aweber - I love and highly recommend Aweber for email marketing. I appreciate the ease of creating pop-ups, opt-ins, and newsletter templates. I love the list and subscriber management, and I love the customer service.

I switched to Aweber when I got serious about list-building, but I often wish I would've signed up with them from the start.

Mail Chimp (free up to 2,000 subscribers) - Mail Chimp is extremely user-friendly, and I enjoy their service. After your list grows beyond 2,000

subscribers, you'll have to pay to manage them or switch providers elsewhere. Switching providers is a hassle (and will cost you precious subscribers), so make a decision early on that you feel comfortable using for the long run in business.

There are still more to choose from, but I only have experience with the two listed above. A few more to look into: [Mad Mimi](#), [Constant Contact](#), and [Get Response](#).

## Digital Product Delivery



[E-Junkie](#) - Okay, so it's not the prettiest website or platform; it hasn't been updated in years! But, it is a great tool for the beginner to intermediate e-book seller. You can easily upload your products and create affiliate programs. Plus, they have a killer selection of helpful articles for just about anything else you'll need to do with your project.

[Etsy](#) - I rejoiced when Etsy implemented instant, digital downloads!

[Ravelry](#) - If you ever consider selling patterns or tutorials, I've heard great things about Ravelry.

## Domain Registration

If you haven't already, be sure to grab the domain name for your business (and one in your own name, if it's available). I own [energyshopjewelry.com](http://energyshopjewelry.com), [marketyourcreativity.com](http://marketyourcreativity.com), and a slew of others (if I have a new business idea, buying the domain name for it is the first thing I do!). I use [United Domains](#), but you can google "Buy a domain" for many different options.

## Webinar & Video

Many of my earlier videos were shot with the iMac's built-in webcam. My operation has evolved slightly. I currently use:



Blue Microphone Yeti USB (pictured left) - Clear sound, very easy to set up. It just plugs right into your computer's USB port.

For important broadcasts, I'll usually add on:

Logitech HD Pro Webcam C920 - This plugs right into your USB port, and it will say it's only compatible with PCs. If you're an iMac user, you can still use it. You just need to download this app to make it work for you:

Webcam Settings - It's not free (currently \$7.99), but it's worth it because the Logitech HD Pro is a great webcam when you need better lighting and a clearer picture.

Skype (free) + Ecamm Call Recorder for Skype - Everything you need to record video interviews. It's helpful if both people plug-in a USB microphone and headset to eliminate feedback on the recording.

Google Hangouts (free) - I host the majority of my coaching calls on Google video hangouts, and though it takes a little getting used to at first, I prefer it over meeting via Skype.

GoToWebinar - It's how I host group meetings and webinars, and I find it to be extremely user friendly after a little clicking around.



# Blogging

I'm currently on a wordpress.org site hosted by Pagely. Before switching to Pagely, I was on a much cheaper plan that caused headaches and tears (that Pagely link will tell you the whole story). When I signed on with Pagely, there was a less expensive option (\$24/month), which I still pay. That has since been removed from their pricing tier.

My second favorite option for hosting is WP Engine - I think both are fabulous hosts for the Wordpress platform. I use the following plug-ins:

- Click to Tweet by Todaymade - Inserts a tweetable on the page, like so.
- Leadpages Connector - The link at the front of that plug-in takes you to the Leadpages software. It helps you create a landing/sales page with opt-in and count-down timers to your event. I like to use LeadPages for webinars and monthly hangouts.
- CommentLuv - I love when people comment and my site automatically populates a link to their last post. Great plug-in!
- Hello Bar - I LOVE this plug-in and that gorgeous opt-in bar that appears at the top of the screen, but I haven't used it since my site redesign. Plug-ins are user-friendly, but this was my favorite sign-up process ever; so simple!

## **For my membership program, The Luminaries Club, I use:**

- iThemes Exchange - I got the pro pack, and I had my web designer's help (Ginny at My New Favorite Design) to get it up and running. It takes payments from the customers, creates recurring payments in Paypal (a service Paypal charges \$19.99/month if you use it directly) and drips content to the members (sometimes you'll want to delay release of pages or products and that's what "drip" means).

## Miscellaneous Goodness

vCita - It's my client-scheduler, and it's really good.

Tasks Everyday - It's where I hired my first virtual assistant. After I read *Where'd You Go, Bernadette: A Novel*, I just had to take the plunge :)

Typeform - It's how I create and send client surveys. Very useful!



Canva - It's simple graphic design, no matter what type of computer you're on! I enjoy this site very much.

The Roost Tribe - Regularly serves delicious graphics and monthly inspiration by Bonnie Forkner.

Copyblogger - My favorite resource for writing tips and tools.

The Luminaries Club - Where I go when I need to recharge, reinvent, and unwind in creative life and business.

99U Videos - My favorite source of videos (and background motivation while I work).

Craftsy - My favorite place to learn new skills.

CreativeLive - My favorite place to take free, online classes.

JustUnfollow - Recommended to me by my friend, Karen at Begin Within Jewelry, you'll love this clever app for growing your Twitter + Instagram accounts.

And as always, you can find more from me at: Marketing Creativity! Send me a note and tell me what you think + what you'd add to *The Little Black Book for Creative Business!* Thanks and all the best, Lisa Jacobs

## About Lisa Jacobs

I am Lisa Jacobs, a work-at-home mom and CEO of a thriving creative business. I get paid to do what I love to do, and I want the same for you.

Through my blog, Marketing Creativity, I show people how to get more website traffic, sales and professional recognition. I want you to build a business that you rely upon for extra income, and I can help you brand, market and advertise your wares to make it happen!

Plus, I talk about building and expansion every chance I get because it is delicious, and I love it! The infinite potential for growth is, by far, my favorite part of this career.

While I discuss the strategy and operation of my business often, I rarely share the full story of how I built my own. Here's the truth: I never imagined I could do something I love, work from home, and get paid for it. To this day, the thrill of it still knocks me off my chair.



Thank you for being part of my journey and bringing me along on yours.

I am always, Always, ALWAYS! looking to connect with hard-working, like-minded artists, so please say "hello!" You're only a stranger once.

### **Please connect with me:**

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