

Marketing Guide

Not all authors want to invest time and money in marketing their book. Some authors simply have a story to tell their friends and family. However, if you do wish to actively publicise and promote your printed book or eBook and if your budget doesn't stretch to a professional publicity and promotional campaign, read on...

Your publicity and promotional efforts as your book's author can make a huge difference to your book's sales. What to do then?

Generalizing about publicising and promoting printed books or eBooks has drawbacks, of course, because every book is different and requires its own special approach. So it's important, as you read this article, to consider your audience and also that no marketing can ever guarantee sales!

Audience

Presumably, your book is aimed at a particular market or markets. That might be travel, aviation, biography, self-health, health, mystery fans, or children and their parents. The first thing you should do is to track down the magazines that are read by the people who will be reading your book.

For example, if you've written a book about how to be a forgiving parent, then those magazines include 'Parenting and Child'. If your book is about flying aces from World War II, then those magazines include WWII magazines, but also publications like 'Flight'.

Website

Books tend to get "lost" when grafted onto existing web sites. For best results, create a web site specifically intended to promote and support your book. This permits you to focus all of the site's resources on promoting your book and leveraging off of its success.

Choose a web site address based on your book's title, rather than your name. If you have done a good job of choosing your title, your title will be easier to remember than your name. If you have a 'personal' web site, you can easily back link to your book's highly-focused web site.

When writing your book, include as many reasons as possible for readers to visit your web site. Success requires more than simply listing your web site address in your biography or on the last page of the book. Give readers valid reasons to visit your web site. Promise updated content and new information, such as ideas and topics that occurred to you after you completed your book.

If your book is in black and white, but includes photographs or charts, post colour versions of the visuals on your web site. Don't view your web site strictly as a promotional tool. Instead, view it as a "service" or resource intended to help readers make the most of your book.

Whenever a reader writes a particularly favourable comment, immediately ask them for permission to use the comment on your website with either their name, or their initials and their location. Many readers will welcome the opportunity to share their enthusiasm for your book with others. Most people like seeing their words and their names in print!

And use your book's website URL in your personal email signature!

Social Media

Create Facebook or Twitter accounts using your book's title and use them specifically to promote your printed book or eBook. Create back links to your book's website so that all your 'friends' and social media contacts can spread the word on your behalf!

Press

Don't just send a press release to the publication. Find the name of the actual editor who reviews books or who covers the subject that you've written about. Unless your press release makes a soft landing on the desk of the person who might write about your book, it's a good bet that the wrong person will just toss your press release in their bin. So hit Google and the phone to find the name - or names - of the right individuals at those magazines. Getting reviewed in a niche publication is well worth the effort because people who read that magazine are predisposed to buy your book.

Next tackle the major newspapers. Again, it's important to send your press release to specific individuals, rather than 'editor' or no name at all. Most newspapers have editors for a variety of subjects: science, health, sports, lifestyle, travel, and so forth, so find the right person. Don't forget to send your press release to the book review editor, of course. But there are many other places in the newspaper where your book can be reviewed.

Radio

Next come radio stations - radio talk stations to be precise. Post, email or fax your press release to as many as you can. That usually means purchasing a database of such stations (and their producers or hosts), or hiring somebody to make a database for you. There are several good lists of radio talk shows and whilst most of these directories are online or in the library, you will probably have to purchase one, or a subscription to one, to get the best results.

T.V.

Definitely contact your local television stations. Find out the name of the producer who arranges author interviews, or the reporter who covers the subject that you've written about. (If it's a novel, then look for the lifestyle reporter.) Don't forget all the smaller, 'cable TV' channels.

Local press

As you're posting, emailing and faxing to radio stations, newspapers and magazines, pay particular attention to your local press. Writers always have a better shot at appearing in one of their local papers, or on a local station than one further afield. Most regions have a plethora of small, sometimes free, community newspapers. These papers are often hungry for material, especially if that material is for free.

What to send to the print media and radio stations? You certainly don't want to send a copy of your book unless one is specifically requested. Instead, send a one or two page press release that tells the recipient to call you to schedule an interview or receive a review copy.

National media shows

So far, we haven't mentioned anything about the national media: The One Show, Daybreak and similar shows. There's no question: You should contact them all. Get the name of a producer at each show (they're generalists, so it doesn't matter who) and send them all a press release. Between broadcast and 'cable TV' there are dozens of TV talk shows so you'll have plenty to target!

Contacts

Do you have any friends in the media business? You would be surprised how hungry - sometimes desperate - reporters, television producers and radio hosts are for guests. Call your friends and let them know that you are available.

When you contact a producer, let that person know that you are available 24 hours a day. (Never turn down a show, even if it's at 2am!) Often shows receive last minute cancellations, and if the producer knows you are available, you may get a call.

Whatever else you do, try to saturate the media.