

SMITH PUBLICITY'S POWERFUL

Book Marketing Tips & Insights



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Becoming a TED/TEDx Talk Presenter: Speaking Opportunities with TEDx

A Smith Publicity long-term client was a highly successful business professional and author. She was the COO of a Fortune 200 company and sits on the boards of several organizations including one of the world's leading telecommunications companies. Over the course of her book publicity campaign, we secured a number of high profile media placements across national print and broadcast outlets, as well as targeted trade publications. Attracting speaking engagements was also one of her goals. Therefore, along with our publicity efforts, she also worked with an expert who successfully pitched her for a local TEDx talk. I asked her if I could share the path she took to secure this prestigious speaking engagement.

Below are her insights, plus information compiled from TED, to help authors and experts become presenters. Being selected as a “TED Talk” speaker is an honor and often opens doors to new opportunities and builds credibility. We use the link of her TEDx talk in our publicity pitches to the media.

What is a TED Talk?

- TED is a nonprofit devoted to “ideas worth spreading.” It started out in 1984 as a conference bringing together people from three worlds: **T**echnology, **E**ntertainment, **D**esign.
- TED conferences bring together the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers, who are challenged to give the talk of their lives (in 18 minutes or less).
- On TED.com, the best talks and performances from TED and partners are available to the world, for free.

TEDx was created in the spirit of TED's mission, “ideas worth spreading.” The (TEDx) program is designed to give communities, organizations and individuals the opportunity to stimulate dialogue through TED-like experiences at the local level.

Famous TED Talk presenters include Al Gore, Steve Jobs, Elizabeth Gilbert, Bill Gates, and Tony Robbins. Others presenters, while not household names, are innovators and leaders in their fields and definitely people to watch.

The Overall TEDx Process

The author wanted to be presented as a speaker candidate to her local TEDx. She found the TEDx coordinators young and dynamic, and the process from initial pitching of an idea to the final “yes” a bit of a meandering journey. Her several month progression included submitting a written proposal, follow up telephone calls, updating the original proposal, presenting the topic, and then telephone and in-person rehearsals. This was *not* a straightforward process. As we experience with publicity, this task needed a dynamic positioning strategy, combined with patient and persistent follow up.

Three Essential Tips to Positioning a Speaker for a TEDx Event

To begin the journey, here is the link to find and contact local TEDx organizers. Based on our client's experience, here are the three important answers TEDx looked for in choosing a speaker and presentation topic:

What is your ONE big idea?

- What are you going to share that will SURPRISE your audience?
- What is the CULTURAL SHIFT?
- TEDx wants speakers who are creating a cultural shift in their fields and causing people to change the way they approach a problem, topic or solution.

How TEDx Organizers Identify Potential Speakers

TED Talks guides organizers on how to select TEDx speakers. Advice from the TEDx website:

- Seek out extraordinary voices in your local community who have a unique story or an unusual perspective—and who can convey it in a dynamic way
- Local voices that few have heard before
- People who can present their field in a new light
- Perspectives that the global TED community may not have access to
- Diverse demographics, ethnicities, backgrounds, subject matter
- Becoming a TED Talk presenter brings serious credentials to any personal brand, and is often a goal for business and other non-fiction authors looking to build their platform as a thought leader. For those starting out, it may make sense to begin with a local TEDx program. One final tip, whether presenting at a TED event or any other venue, TED offers a Speaker Guide with tips to help prepare and present a “great” talk.



How to Use Your Book as a Marketing Tool

What is 6" by 9", usually weighs about one pound, and gives business professionals a serious edge over their competition? A book.

In a sea of marketing material that *tells* what a business can do, a book serves as the *proof* of that work. Most importantly, executives, consultants, and experts in various fields of business who compile their knowledge, experiences, and results into a book not only expand their networks and résumés, they gain one key component to success: credibility.

Credibility—especially for those in consulting and service industries—is crucial to marketing a business, and being a published author establishes a person as someone who has reached a certain level of expertise. Every reader becomes a potential client as they learn more about the author's philosophies, thought process, results, and more. Industry peers recognize the author as a leading voice in their field.

Who can benefit from using a book as a marketing tool?

- Consultants, specializing in virtually all trades
- Service-providing business owners, from insurance companies and home security experts to psychologists and financial planners
- Self-help professionals, life coaches, and motivational speakers
- Non-profit organization leaders

Publishing a book is the first element of the book-as-a-marketing-tool strategy, but the book doesn't do much good if no one knows about it. Media attention around the book is the second crucial element. When a businessperson becomes an author and executes a [marketing campaign](#) for their book, they attract media attention. Potential placements range from expert commentary in major news outlets, to interviews on podcasts, radio, and television, to becoming a regular contributor for industry-specific publications, and more. As a result, when a prospective customer visits a company website and sees that the company or executives have been featured across various media channels, it shows them that the company is trusted.

But traditional media coverage isn't where the opportunities end. Today's professionals find their author status helps them secure more speaking opportunities and even coveted TED talks. So, how difficult is it to get started? At one point in time, publishing a book was an exceedingly lengthy and difficult endeavor, with a relative handful of gatekeepers determining what books were worthy of publication. But publishing has been democratized. Anyone can publish a book and share their message with the public. Publishing options are vast and cost-effective thanks to avenues like self-publishing and print-on-demand. For as little as \$1,000, an author can have a professionally designed and produced book.

“There are more avenues open to authors now and more publishing opportunities to get their expertise out there,” says Mike Onorato, publishing industry expert and past Vice President of Publicity at Smith Publicity. “If you have a credible perspective that can add value to someone in their professional life, the various publishing options available to you now can help bring your voice forth.”

The bottom line: success hinges on credibility, and authoring a book can greatly enhance that credibility. But for this strategy to be effective, people need to see the book, so make the most of your investment by [marketing your book](#). Use it to secure media placements, speaking engagements, and other opportunities, which will ultimately place you front and center in front of the eyes that matter most: your customers.

Says Onorato, “Simply put: books open doors and create opportunities.”



10 Virtual Media Interview Tips for Authors and Thought-Leaders

Though the Covid-19 pandemic has certainly prompted many changes in the way we communicate and conduct book publicity campaigns, virtual media interviews were happening long before stay-at-home orders forced TV studios to adapt. Replacing the old studio remote interview, we increasingly saw foreign news correspondents reporting via Skype, and it wasn't uncommon for authors and experts to be interviewed via video-conferencing platforms. It's easy to see why: travel costs eliminated, studio expenses reduced, and convenience for everyone involved.

Moving forward, as video interviews likely become commonplace, it's crucial for authors, experts and thought-leaders to understand how to be the best guest possible during a virtual media interview. A great virtual interview can propel a book marketing campaign to new levels of success, as you'll be able to show other shows how good you are "on air."

Here are some key tips to be the best virtual guest:

1. **Maximize audio quality.** Headsets or earphones with a microphone always produce better audio quality.
2. **Keep your computer [and other electronic devices] quiet!** Make sure to enable "do not disturb" on your computer so the dings and pings of email and other notifications aren't heard. Close all other computer applications so that the videoconferencing platform is the only one running. And don't forget to silence your phone, Apple watch and other personal electronics.
3. **Familiarize yourself with the media's preferred videoconferencing app.** Skype and Zoom may be two of the most popular video platforms but they are not the only ones media are relying on. Download the media's preferred videoconference service as soon as you have your interview details and be sure to familiarize yourself with the platform's capabilities, test the audio and video, and hold a test call prior to sitting down for your interview.
4. **Your webcam is your only focus.** It's tempting to look at yourself or other things on your screen during an interview. Don't! Focus your eyes only on your webcam. Looking away from it is akin to being on TV and not looking at the host.
5. **Stay plugged in.** Don't do interviews with your laptop or tablet running on battery; it's just not worth the risk of disappearing during an interview because your battery dies, or having to fumble to plug in your computer while being interviewed.
6. **Stay in front of the lights.** Simple rule: Lighting directed toward you is good, lights or windows behind you are not.

7. **Silence!** Make no mistake, absolute silence in your home during an interview is essential. There should be not talking, pet sounds, TVs or noisy appliances in the background. If you have young children, be sure to have another adult entertaining them during the interview... preferably outside!

8. **Own the Internet.** Virtual media interviews require consistent, strong Internet connections. When being interviewed, tell everyone else in your home to get offline completely! They should not just be off heavy streaming platforms like Netflix or online games, but off of everything to ensure you have the best possible connection.

9. **Don't cut your head off.** Keep your webcam at eye level. You don't want your camera pointed up so you look like you're looking down, or pointed too low so you lose your forehead. You want to be as centered as possible with as little space between as possible between the of your head and the top of the screen.

10. **Be wary of the "hot mic."** As soon as the show you're appearing on begins, pay attention and be ready to be interviewed. Don't talk, brush your hair or do anything else. "Live times" can be fluid on programs, and you could be on camera before you know it.



Preparing for Success:

7 Facts About Book Marketing Campaigns Every Author MUST Know

Congratulations! You've finished your manuscript, turned it into your editor or self-published your book and now you're done and ready for media to come knocking and the sales to start, right? Wrong. Writing a book is just the first part. Now comes the fun! Marketing and promoting your book. But not knowing what's in store for you can be a daunting challenge. So here are seven facts about book marketing campaigns – some of which may surprise you – you should know and be ready for. As the author of the book, you know the content the best so you're an integral part of its success. You won't need to master all of them, but you should know and be aware of all of them.

1. **Writing** – You'll need to write original content based on the book that can be pitched exclusively to print and online media. Excerpts can be used in a pinch, but writing a byline or thought leadership piece specific to a target media outlet is very effective. Not only does it showcase your credibility and the subject matter you're writing about, but it's also great for SEO when media search of your name.
2. **Platform** – Platform, platform, platform. You ideally want to cultivate your author platform months in advance of your book launch. That means establishing your social media platforms, using them and updating them regularly, blogging and using email lists and reaching out to any network you may have to make them aware of the book. You'll want to contact your network prior to release, once it's out and again after it's been out; multiple touch-points at multiple times. And it's imperative that you provide a call-to-action – whether that is encouraging pre-orders, purchases or reviews. Tell them what to do!
3. **Social Media** – Three-to-six months before you have a finished book, you want to either create or refine your social media platforms. You don't need to be on every platform. We suggest picking two at first and spending time to populate and engage. As a guideline, Twitter is good for most genres. Instagram is a MUST for fiction and LinkedIn is recommended for business and leadership. You'll need to be active on your platforms – especially when the book is out. Engage with other authors and influencers in your subject area. Social is a great vehicle to communicate with the audience you want to reach.
4. **Invest** – You'll need to invest in a web designer (if you don't have a website), a social media person (if you don't have the time) and an article writer/content generator (if you're unable.) These are all key activities that will need to happen once your book is out and if you are unwilling or unable to do them, you should consider investing in someone who can assist.

5. **Partner** – Partner with a book publicist to help get the word out – there are thousands of books published every day. So how can you help your book stand out? One of the ways is to partner with a publicist to help with press materials, messaging and media outreach. A publicist can help you reach your target audience, help drive sales and build buzz and attention for your book.

6. **Amazon Optimization** – If you're self-published, you need to take the time to get your Amazon page in order. Make sure you have a short but concise book description and it's paramount you have an author bio and photo (claimed through your Author Central page) and you add categories where your book can be discovered. Videos are a nice addition to your Amazon page. Record a short (15-30) second video about the book and what you hope readers take away from it.

7. **Get your website ready** – Last, but certainly NOT least. Make sure your website is ready. You'll want a tab dedicated to the book. If your book isn't published yet, make sure a preorder link/info including date is prominent on your page. And keep it updated with blog posts or any other assets so the site is fresh and can be used. Always keep SEO in mind with your website. Using keywords with high search volumes will help people find your website and, as a result, your book.

Don't panic. You got this! You've done the hardest thing and that's writing the book. Marketing your book is FUN, but you'll need to go into this phase with eyes wide open.



Effective Ways to Promote Your Book Virtually

A book is so many things to an author; perhaps above all, it's a tangible dream—one that likely took years of dedication to come to fruition. Now that your book is finally finished and ready to launch, what will marketing it look like in these ever-changing times? It's no secret that 2020's pandemic changed the way the book world operates. How, exactly, have these shifts in our society affected how to promote your book and how will they affect the future?

While times are different, so are current book promotion strategies. Rather than looking at these modifications to the original plan as challenges, it's beneficial to view them as opportunities to introduce your book to the world in new and exciting ways. In fact, it's very possible that many of the alterations being made to old marketing tactics will become part of our “new normal.” In reality, the changes we're forced to make in book marketing now will ultimately be valuable additions to traditional promotion in the future.

Let's explore some of the new developments we're seeing and fresh offerings being included in book promotion services, as well as effective alternatives to the tried and true strategies we are used to seeing and using.

Swapping Physical Books for Digital Copies

One of the first things you will want to do when preparing to send your book to potential reviewers – whether a trade publication or an online influencer – is to make sure you have a digital version of your book ready to share. Since the vast majority of offices are likely to go virtual at times, if they aren't already, hard copies of books sent to physical mailing addresses may very well be overlooked or never even received. Outlets from the major trades, to magazines and newspapers, to broadcast and beyond are all requesting digital copies of books as part of their submission processes.

Making sure you have a working digital file on hand will greatly increase your chances of your book being seen and considered. Of course, there are still select outlets that will prefer a hard copy, so it's a good idea to have those on hand, too. But with reviewers working from home, major delays in shipping, and more, digital is the way to go during these times.

Moving Your In-Person Events Online

In-person book events, including readings, signings, speaking or teaching opportunities, launch parties, etc., are on hold during challenging times, and may go on hold again in the future. If this happens: pivot and move your pre-planned event online! Despite current circumstances, there are still so many powerful ways to connect with audiences.

If you're a children's author who was looking forward to school visits and library or bookstore storytimes, consider working with your existing contacts to join virtual classrooms or to launch an online event via Zoom or another preferred platform. Don't forget to also harness the power of

social media. For instance, you can host live story-times on your Facebook page and invite your followers to events that you set up. Grow your networks by cross-promoting your planned events. If you're a business author who was set to present at a conference or as part of a panel, consider hosting a webinar or being part of a virtual panel.

Whether you set your events up independently or partner with a bookstore, school, organization, or other entity, social distancing does not need to prevent you from connecting with potential readers and letting them know about your new book.

Preparing for Virtual Interviews

Congratulations! You scored a broadcast interview to share more about your book, weigh in on current topics, share resources, and more. Since you won't be heading into a studio to record in-person, you will likely be asked to utilize either Skype or Zoom for your upcoming interview. *Now* is the time to make sure you have accounts set up to experiment using these platforms, and to even do a few "practice runs" with family, friends, or your publicist to make sure all is in working order.

When the time comes for the interview, remember the obvious: even though you are not face-to-face with your interviewer, you are still highly visible! Dress neatly as though you would if you were in-studio, and make sure the spot you've chosen to do the interview is as quiet and free of background noise and distractions as possible. A neutral backdrop is best... no busy backgrounds or messy shelves. Make sure you have any props you'll need (don't forget the most important one: your book!) on hand before the interview is set to begin, and that you or your publicist has forwarded any digital files—like photos—to the producer in advance.

Getting Creative

The good news about promoting your book in uncharted waters is, in many ways, you get to create your own path. There are more ways now than ever to set *your* book apart from others. Maybe it's your uncanny ability to get people talking on your social media pages, vivid illustrations or a moving excerpt that will capture the hearts and attention of your audience when shared across digital outlets, your important voice on television or radio, or a digital music playlist that perfectly complements your book.

When considering how to promote a book amidst current conditions, remember all of the tools we have at our fingertips. So much of our world, so many of our connections, and countless opportunities are already online: now is your chance to take your book, which you have worked so hard on, and meet them there.



10 Tips to Boost Holiday Book Sales

The holidays are a great time for authors to increase book sales. According to shopping data, over 40% of shoppers buy books/DVDs/video games during the holidays. Books are ideal, easy to find and order, low-cost gifts. Here are some tips to help your book get noticed.

1. **Develop an elevator pitch for your book.** Capture the essence of your book in one or two short sentences. Think of your book in terms of a movie trailer. This description is essential for all marketing. Here are examples for some holiday movies:

An affable underachiever finds out he's fathered 533 children through anonymous donations to a fertility clinic 20 years ago. Now he must decide whether or not to come forward when 142 of them file a lawsuit to reveal his identity. (*Delivery Man*)

Fearless optimist Anna teams up with Kristoff in an epic journey, encountering Everest- like conditions, and a hilarious snowman named Olaf in a race to find Anna's sister Elsa, whose icy powers have trapped the kingdom in eternal winter. (*Frozen*)

A chronicle of Nelson Mandela's life journey from his childhood in a rural village through to his inauguration as the first democratically elected president of South Africa. (*Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*)

For inspiration, visit <http://www.imdb.com>

2. **Gift Guides.** While magazine gift guides are busy collecting titles in August, there are still some great places in November—especially online and newspaper outlets—to present your book as a gift. Research local media outlets, which are always more inclined to cover a local author, and targeted online news outlets, and bloggers. Tips for bloggers—if your book is a great gift for a daughter to purchase for her father, reach out to bloggers targeting the buyer (daughter) too. If you don't have a publicist with contacts and media lists, create your own list by visiting media outlets/blogs and collect contact names and email addresses.
3. **Contacting Media and Bloggers.** When presenting your book to others to consider for a holiday recommendation, start communication by email. Be short and sweet; bullet points work well. Do not send any attachments unless asked. In your email, present:
 - A short sentence showing you are a fan or know their blog and know them as professional writers or journalists, etc. (personalizing it is great... "I enjoyed reading your piece about veterans of World War II meeting for the first time this past Veteran's Day. I recently published a book set in World War II..."),

- Your elevator pitch,
 - Who the perfect people are to receive your book as a gift,
 - Price (especially if you are offering a holiday special price for your book),
 - Holiday specials or incentives—if you sell the book from your website, offer signed copies, etc.
 - Formats available (hardcover, ebook, etc.),
 - Links to purchase your book from major retail sites (Amazon, Barnes & Noble), and your website if you are selling your book there,
 - Short author bio, condensed clips of reviews, testimonials, or awards, author website,
 - Email address, telephone number and note (early in the email) if you are a local author, and
 - An offer to send a review copy or PDF of your book.
4. **Make it Personal.** On your website and in any interactions with media or potential book buyers, offer to gift wrap and sign personalize copies for holiday gifts.
 5. **Charity.** Over the holidays, choose a favorite charity and share a portion of your holiday sales. Let people know! Buyers will have an added reason to feel good about buying your book.
 6. **Price.** In your “pitch” to media, bloggers, buyers, accentuate your price point: “Great Gifts for Teens under \$20,” for example.
 7. **Limited-time Gift Giving.** With a deadline for holiday shopping, consider offering something along with your book available only during the holiday sale. If it’s a book for mothers on dealing with stress, add a sampling of teas (be creative!).
 8. **Ebooks.** If your book is available as an ebook, offer a discount for a limited time during the holidays.
 9. **Social Media/Author Newsletter.** If you are active on Facebook, Goodreads, Twitter, Google+, your blog, and other social platforms, or have collected names for an author newsletter, show your holiday spirit with inspirational messages, especially as they relate to your topic/audience! Create a special holiday gift message on each platform, incorporating information from above (charity, special price, target audience, limited time offer, personalization, etc.). This may spark past buyers to purchase your book as a gift.
 10. **Local Events.** Check your library, civic organizations, religious community, and schools to find relevant holiday events where you and your book would be a welcome addition. Offer to sign books in person with gift bags!

Most of all, have fun and enjoy the holiday spirit by connecting with new readers and fans! Make Your Book Jump Off the Shelf!

12 Initiatives to Spark Book Sales and Make the Most Out of a PR Campaign

Even household, celebrity authors are sometimes not immune to book sales woes. So what can “the unknowns” – authors with absolutely no name recognition do to sell books?

For most authors, book sales are an important part of why they write a book. They want to entertain, educate, inspire or simply share their artistic work—and perhaps make money from the venture. For authors who are using their “book as a business card” to increase their name as an expert in their field or to attract new opportunities, book sales are typically a lower priority as they want to make money from consulting projects, speaking engagements, etc.

Book publicity, by definition, is using the media to create attention for the title, topic and author in the form of an interview, article, feature story, blog post, review, recommendation, and so on. Publicity is one initiative an author/publisher undertakes to help create awareness about a title. However, publicity alone is one small part of a bigger strategic plan necessary to give a book and author a better chance for significant sales.

A book publicist can present a book to a producer, editor or blogger, but if they are not interested in it, there is little a publicist can do to entice coverage. Furthermore, even if a book does get coverage it is still up to the audience if they are interested in purchasing the book.

While book publicity plays an important role in creating awareness (even veteran authors like Steven King and John Grisham do publicity for new books) there are several factors outside of a publicist’s role that positively or negatively impact book sales. In order to have the best possible chance of attracting media attention and potential book buyers, authors/publishers need to consider doing the following to set books up for the greatest chance of success.

- **A quality book, written by a credentialed author (essential for non-fiction) with a topic that will be of interest in the current market.** No one can predict book sales or the media’s reaction to a book, especially for a first time author. The expression “write about what you know” is crucial. It will add credibility to the project.
- **Professional help.** Books need to be professionally designed (cover and inside layout) and professionally edited, with well-written front and back cover copy. People *do* judge a book by its cover. A publicist’s job is presenting books to targeted media, but it will be the book, its message or story, and the author’s credentials that ultimately make or break the chances for coverage.

- **Complete Amazon, Barnes & Noble, BookShop, etc. retail listings.** Minimally, every book retail description should include a book cover, “look inside” (Amazon) or “read instantly” (B&N) feature, detailed author page with website, social media handles, author photo, detailed book description, author bio, all tagged properly in the right genre, and reviews even from friends and family to start. Again, there is often only one time to make a good first impression.
- **Engage the services of a book distribution firm.** Book distribution companies try to get books on the shelves of independent bookstores, plus larger retail outlets such as Barnes & Noble, Target, Wal-Mart, Costco, etc. The more visible a book is, the more potential buyers will see it. Minimally, books should be available to be ordered in any brick and mortar bookstore. Note: Having a publicity plan in place makes a book more appealing to distribution companies considering taking on a title.
- **Pricing strategy, especially for e-books.** Often authors/publishers offer free or inexpensively priced e-books to help create viral word of mouth buzz and recommendations. This is an especially good strategy for a series/trilogy—offer the first book for free or very low price to get the reader hooked for the next.
- **Well thought out social media plan.** Ideally, before publicity begins, authors already have established meaningful connections and given audiences relevant content, not overselling/pushing their book. Strategy and fan base building should begin well before a book is published, with the author interacting with bloggers, readers and professionals in his or her genre.
- **Professionally designed website.** This is a place where media and readers can connect with the author to learn about current projects, past titles and future work. Basic website information should include: about the author, about the book (with excerpts), reviews and media placements, a place for fans to sign up for news about future books, social media links, author contact information and links to buy the book from all major retailers.
- **Authors need to take an active role.** Book publicity alone will not generate book sales. Authors need to connect with both the media and potential readers to make good impressions. As publicists, we act as matchmakers: we present books and authors to the right people, but it is up to them whether or not to cover it. They may talk to the author and read through the book, but it is ultimately up to media professionals, and their impression. Successful authors actively work their network, visit local bookstores, connect with readers and other authors, and give good media interviews. **Amplifying publicity results.** Successful authors use publicity exposure (links to interviews/articles, reviews, “as seen in *Wall Street Journal*...”) on their websites, social media platforms, book covers, and future submissions to publishers and in their bio or marketing material. They ensure the investment of time and money in writing and promoting a book continues long after a publicity campaign is done.

- **Timing and luck.** There is no doubt that timing and luck play a part in the success of a book. Just because we (the author and publicists) are ready for the book/topic to be covered, it doesn't necessarily mean the media is. For example, a television show may have just done a segment on a similar topic. We also hear from media weeks, months or even years after they receive a publicist pitch that they are now ready to interview the author. Current news stories also dictate media interest. A politician's messy affair, a celebrity's death, breaking business trends/statistics, a hurricane, election or an awareness topic like bullying can suddenly make the topic of a book or an author's expertise front page news—or knock you off the agenda for a bit while they chase the news of the day.
- **Volume of experts and author vying for the same attention.** To go along with timing and luck, authors need to understand that there is stiff competition for media attention from authors and experts with similar stories and expertise. Your publicist will be aggressive, but know there are many experts vying to make their sound bite heard. When you see a fitness expert on *Good Morning America*, chances are they have been building their name and reputation for years. New authors need to have patience. This is a marathon, not a sprint. The analogy I use is baseball: when a first time author comes to us, they are in Little League and hope to play in the World Series. Occasionally, a player can jump to the Major Leagues, but most have to build their name and game working their way through the system to open the doors to the bigger opportunities.
- **Continuing relationships** after a publicity campaign is over. Authors need to continue interacting with media (especially book bloggers), supporting fellow authors in the same genre, and communicating with fans and readers. Becoming a well-known author is not an overnight process.



Put It In Writing: 6 Tips for Crafting a Strong Bylined Article

Writing a bylined article can seem like a daunting task but it's a crucial aspect of building your author reputation as an expert in your field and increasing exposure to new audiences. It's also an extremely useful exercise as it gives you the opportunity to apply your expertise to new and timely subjects. Some authors have even been inspired to write a whole book stemming from one successful article!

Here are some key tips to keep in mind as you begin writing bylined articles.

1. **Read other articles from your target outlets.** This will give you a sense of the type of topics they cover, the tone of writing they prefer, and who their readers are. It can also help you think of ideas for your own article. Make sure you're reading articles from the section you're looking to get published in.
2. **Listen to what the editors want.** If an outlet's submission guidelines specify that they're looking for "600-800 word articles written in a conversational tone," do NOT submit a 3,000-word research paper, as it would not be the fit for this particular outlet. Submission guidelines exist for a reason. The editors know what their readers respond to and that's why they ask for certain content. Submitting an article outside of the given guidelines result in a rejection, and may make future submissions difficult.
3. **Make sure the article you're writing is (somewhat) unique.** While it's true that there is nothing new under the sun, you'll want to do a little bit of Googling to make sure the article topic you've chosen hasn't been written about 20 times in the past month. If it has, chances are the editors will know that and won't want to publish it.
4. **Choose a topic that is both timely and relevant to your background and expertise.** If you or your publicist has already gotten a specific topic request from an editor, that's great! Your only job now is to make sure you deliver content on that topic. If the topic hasn't been selected by an editor, it's important to choose a topic that is timely – it's something people are or will be talking about soon – it's relevant to an upcoming holiday/season/event, or it predicts trends or provides a unique take on a current trend. You'll also want the topic to be relevant to your expertise as credibility and credentials are paramount. Editors want to publish content from experts, so the more closely the topic matches your expertise, the better.
5. **Yes, you can use ideas from your book.** Before you go through the painstaking process of coming up with an article topic out of thin air, use your book as a starting point. Think of

how you might take some of the main concepts from the book and apply them to a relevant and timely issue.

6. **Don't make the article self-promotional.** Writing an article is an opportunity to provide valuable content that will increase your exposure and help solidify you as an expert in your field. It's not a vehicle to plug your book, your company, or your latest project. The editor will publish a byline along with the article that usually includes a short bio with a link to your website (or other site of your choosing). But the article itself shouldn't be promotional in nature.

Crafted thoughtfully and strategically, a well-written bylined article can be an excellent tool for getting your name, expertise, and book in front of an audience that might have otherwise not seen your work, ultimately leading to a stronger brand, bigger following, and well-rounded book marketing plan!



Baseball and the Art of Book Publicity

If you've spoken to many publicists, you may have heard some analogies between baseball and book promotion. At Smith Publicity, we use them often when speaking with clients or prospective clients, because they make key points succinctly and in an understandable manner.

Here is the analogy distilled to its simplest form: Publicity is like baseball because both involve small hits, medium hits, big hits, and huge hits. (Think singles, doubles, triples and home runs). If you try to “swing for the fences” every time, you'll strike out the vast majority of the time. The smaller “hits” – singles (i.e. local radio interviews), doubles (regional print publications, local TV), and triples (syndicated radio interviews, regional TV, large newspapers, etc.) often provide as successful promotion as one of the home runs (national TV, national magazines) can.

Oprah used to be the grand slam of publicity, or so many authors thought. The odds of an author hitting the *Oprah* grand slam were not good. *Oprah* has been supplanted by shows like *The Today Show* and other national, top-ranked programs. While Smith Publicity authors are indeed routinely featured on national shows and in national outlets, it is not easy, and many books and authors simply are not the right fit for such outlets.

If appropriate, authors should absolutely try for the grand slam, but should also pursue all other media—of any size.

If a successful book campaign is analyzed, book sales and valuable exposure typically result from persistent, steady coverage in all types of media. A grand slam can change the trajectory of a campaign and cause huge jumps in book sales, but only focusing on the “biggies” is a recipe— the vast majority of the time—for publicity failure.

Pete Rose set the record for most hits and is legendary as a champion, and he hit only 160 home runs over 24 seasons. Smith Publicity has had clients who've enjoyed very successful, long campaigns with no true home runs. You see the point, I'm sure.

So, I suggest authors relish the small hits—do as many radio interviews as you can, regardless of where they are. Do an interview with your tiny hometown newspaper. Get a mention of your book in a tiny special interest trade magazine with a circulation of 500. Get a mention in your college alumni publication. Take it all; do it all; relish it all; and stick with it.

Do indeed try for the homeruns—you have to—but don't swing so hard you end up striking out and never get on base.



Why a Subtitle is So Important in Book Marketing and Book Publicity

Authors often agonize when creating the main title for their book. Some high-profile authors pay thousands and thousands of dollars to experts just to come up with a catchy main title. But when it comes to book marketing of nonfiction books, the subtitle is the most important element.

A book's main title is designed to make an impact, catch attention, and pique interest. The subtitle does the rest of the work. It explains, or should explain, in a very specific way exactly what a book is about. In book publicity, the subtitle is crucial for this very reason. If a producer or editor receives a book with no subtitle or an inferior one, he or she is not going to take the time to look at the book. It's that simple. Time is precious to media. Many outlets receive hundreds of books a week in the mail. A title has to hit them hard, fast, and clearly.

In press releases, nonfiction books with bad subtitles often hamper book marketing efforts. Just as when media receive a book in the mail, when reviewing a press release, if a producer is not given the essential information within 10 to 15 seconds, forget about it.

Even the best main titles would not be as effective if not augmented by precision subtitles. Consider the super bestseller *Freakonomics* by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner. The main title is terrific; it's clever, hip, and unusual. But would you know intuitively what the book was about if it didn't have the subtitle of *A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*? Before the book exploded in popularity, an editor seeing the title in a press release or receiving the book might possibly not have taken the time to read this wonderful book. The main title, combined with the subtitle, says it all. The clever cover art of a sliced apple revealing an orange inside certainly helps, but it plays directly off the subtitle.

What does *The Tipping Point* mean to you, if that's all you read or heard? A publicist would have to make up for the lack of a subtitle by taking crucial time and space in a press release to describe it. But, add in the subtitle to Malcolm Gladwell's gem, *How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, and you have a powerful title. Gladwell's title still allows for some mystery as to the book's exact content, but it certainly provokes interest.

Another example: What would the title *Built to Sell* convey to you or a reporter or producer? Building what? Selling what? Add in the subtitle for this book by John Warrilow and you get everything you need to know: *Turn Your Business into One You Can Sell*.

When creating a subtitle for your nonfiction book, consider these points, each of which will help in a book marketing and publicity campaign:

- Above all else, make sure your book has a subtitle!
- Be creative, but don't go overboard. Save most of the creativity for the main title.
- Provide specific information in the subtitle, explaining in a few words exactly what your book is about.
- Keep it short. Create your subtitle as if you were writing a press release headline for the book.
- Keep Search Engine Optimization in mind. Try to use appropriate keywords and phrases that will help your book organically come up in searches.

The bottom line: When it comes to book publicity and getting people to take interest in a book, make it as easy as possible. Don't assume the reader will know what your book is about from the main title.

Your publicist will be thankful.



The Benefits of NetGalley for Independent Authors and Publishers

NetGalley is a cost-effective way to reach a growing community of professional readers (media, reviewers, booksellers, librarians, bloggers and educators) who can read, review and recommend titles.

On average, over 80% of the monthly traffic is represented by repeat visitors who regularly visit NetGalley to see what titles are available for request. In addition to the organic exposure a book will receive from being on the site, there are a variety of promotional programs to reach engaged NetGalley members.

Here are benefits to utilizing NetGalley as part of your book marketing efforts for any given title:

1. **The NetGalley Widget:** The widget is the primary tool publishers and authors are using to put their digital galleys in the hands of influencers and media. Use the email invite widget to invite your network and contacts to view your title on NetGalley. The widget provides a direct, pre-approved link to view your listed title(s) in a variety of secure reading options.
2. **Control in Who Has Access to Your Title:** Titles listed under “Find Titles” on Netgalley.com are available for existing NetGalley members to request or read, depending on your settings. You have full control over all approvals/declines for any requests, and can view a profile for each member requesting a title.
3. **Feedback and Reviews:** Members who are approved for your content can provide feedback about your title through NetGalley. This can include star ratings, a review, and information about how the member will recommend or promote the title.
4. **Marketing Efforts:** When considering how to market your book, affordable initiatives are available at your fingertips through NetGalley. Choose from Featured Theme Weeks and Homepage book cover spotlights to newsletter placements – the editorial calendar makes it easy to plan your marketing campaigns for any given title.

The NetGalley membership community is not personally vetted by NetGalley, as they believe and empower publishers and authors to know the readers who are most useful for them. This is why they ensure you have full control over who you approve or decline. You can always view the detailed profile of each member who requests a title before making your decision on approving them to read, rate and review your title.

Digital galleys can be read on all major reading devices and tablets, and are protected files that cannot be shared. This is also a major benefit during the pre-publication promotional book phase.



Tips on Responding to Bad Book Reviews

Writing is a solitary business. Publishing isn't. Once your book is in the world, you have little control over how the public responds to it. At Smith Publicity, we know you want good reviews. But if you want your work to reach as many readers as possible, you're destined to suffer the sting of a bad review. For many writers, it's more than a blow to the ego—it's a personal heartache. Writers have a professional, emotional, and mental vestment in their work, and when it doesn't hit every mark, it hits like a sledgehammer. But it doesn't have to derail your book publicity plans.

What to do?

Don't Respond

First of all, you shouldn't respond to bad reviews, either directly to the reviewer or indirectly (by complaining on social media). Resist the urge to reply to the one-stars on [GoodReads](#). You don't need to explain your intention, position, or word choice. There's no need to defend your character's motivations or the ideals you outlined in chapter ten. Your job is to write the best book you can. Readers take from it what they will.

You'll only look like a sore loser—and that won't endear you to current or potential readers.

You've got to have thick skin. Let the positive book reviews speak for you. If you start responding to every bad review, things can get out of control quickly.

Keep it in perspective

Presumably, you want people to read your book—right? If you're getting reviews, it means people are reading you, for better or worse. Remember: no well-read author is immune to bad reviews. The Great Gatsby is considered one of the greatest American novels, and [it got bad reviews](#). Same for [The Catcher in the Rye](#), and heavy-hitting memoirs like [Eat Pray Love](#).

Learn from it

As a writer, you'll get swarmed with mountains of feedback. Some of it will be viable. Some won't. Once the initial sting goes away, consider what the book reviewer is saying. Can you learn something from it? If not, so be it. But once you're able to approach a less-than-stellar review with objectivity, you may find something constructive that will help with your next project.

Bask in positivity

It's easy for us to focus on the bad reviews and shirk off the good ones. We tend to languish far longer in negative feedback than we do basking in the positive. For every negative review you get, re-read the positive, and shift your focus on those.

You can't please everyone

Once your book is out there, it can be easy to forget why you wrote it in the first place. Remember why you write. When you looked at those final manuscript pages, what were you thinking? You probably weren't thinking: *This is certain to get five-star reviews from everyone!* It's also important to remember that you can't please every reader—nor should you.

Four tips on excerpting book reviews

Book reviews are a fantastic publicity tool to showcase your work. You can use them on your website, share them through social media, put them on your book cover. Praise has far more validity when someone else is tooting the horn for you.

That said, there is craft behind the blurb. We often have clients ask: How do I efficiently showcase a fantastic 200-word review without blathering on for 200 words? The answer, of course, is the excerpt. Effective excerpting requires mindful strategy. It's not always as easy as it seems. Here are four tips.

1. Cite the source

All reviews should be sufficiently cited, which only makes sense—after all, anyone can print BOOK BEST EVER on their cover and never attribute it to anyone. If you have a choice between not using a blurb and printing BEST BOOK EVER without attribution, go with the former. Don't compromise the integrity of your work.

2. Choose wisely

The more reputable the source, the better. Obviously, not all writers have the resources or wherewithal to get blurbs from *New York Times* bestselling authors. But when you're going through your reviews and determining whose blurb to use, make sure you're strategic. Your mom may not be the best person to quote on your book cover, even if she's the most quotable.

3. Don't add words

With reviews, as in journalism, you can't put words in people's mouths that weren't there before. If you need to add an additional word to provide better context, you must put that word in parentheses. For example: Let's say [*Publishers Weekly*](#) used the following words to describe your book: "A truly remarkable feat that takes us on a wondrous journey through time." You can excerpt this as: "A truly remarkable feat ... (and) wondrous journey ..."

4. Speaking of ellipses ...

It's industry standard that you must use them if words are omitted from a quote.

5. **You MUST maintain the integrity of the review.**

- Don't try to be clever by pulling out only positive words from a review and then wrapping ellipses around them, unless you've still maintained the intent of the reviewer's words. For example, if Jane Doe says: "It's remarkable that a book this terrible was ever published." You cannot use ellipses to repurpose her intent.
- An example of unethical use of ellipses:
"It's remarkable that a book this terrible was ever published." – *Publishers Weekly*
"Remarkable!" – *Publishers Weekly*
- An example of smart use of ellipses:
"It's remarkable that a book this terrible was ever published, but despite its shortcomings, the author has a clear vision that is realized through an interesting narrative." – *Publishers Weekly*
"... a clear vision that is realized through an interesting narrative." – *Publishers Weekly*



3 Ways to Get Traditional Publishers Vying for Your Self-Published Book

A recent article in [Publishers Weekly](#) noted that 47 percent of publishers acquired self-published titles in the past year. That number jumps to 60 percent for general trade publishers. What does this mean for writers who want to get picked up by one of the traditional houses?

Not all self-published authors want to “go traditional,” but those who do should take note of these numbers, which have increased steadily in recent years as the industry experiences a publishing revolution. If you’re a successful self-published author, the traditional houses are more likely to take notice than they were, say, five years ago. There are plenty of [success stories](#) to prove it.

So how does this happen? It might be easier today to get picked up by a traditional house if you’re self-published, but that doesn’t mean it’s a cake walk.

Here are some ways to increase your chances:

Write a good book

This should be a given. Chances are, most self-published authors think their book is good before they start selling it. But writing a good book means a lot of things. It means going through several drafts, [hiring an editor](#), and [hiring a professional book cover designer](#), for starters. It means making sure your T’s are crossed and your chapters are polished.

Get readers

If you want to catch the eye of traditional publishers, you need readers—and I’m not talking about friends and family. You need to gain a following. Who is your audience? How can you reach them?

You can’t just blast out tweets and expect to hit the Amazon bestseller list. Get to know your audience on an organic level. Writers from all backgrounds have to learn how to self-promote; this is especially true for self-published authors who don’t have the power of a major publisher to back them up. Your visibility will grow with your following. The more visibility, the more chance you have of standing above the crowd.

Don’t give up

In many self-publishing success stories, the authors have written more than one book and steadily gained attention. In some cases, they have tried unsuccessfully to get agents or publishers. In others, they simply chose to self-publish and stayed the course until someone in the industry took notice. But each of these scenarios share a commonality: tenacity. Publishing is a competitive business that requires determination, a drive to constantly improve and succeed, and—most of all—patience.



5 Steps for a Successful Social Media Contest

Running a social media contest can help you expand your audience, engage with readers (and could-be-readers), and get your name and brand featured more prominently online. If you know the right steps to take to get your contest up and running, it's easier than you might think to execute successfully.

1. Set and Understand Your Goals

It's important to know what you're hoping to achieve with your contest, and to set it up in a way that allows your goals to happen as effectively as possible. Knowing your goals will also make it clearer to you which social networks you should be targeting.

Are you trying to increase your email list, or gain more social followers?

You should make sure that submitting an email address or following your account on social media is one of the rules of entering the contest.

Are you holding a contest to collect artwork?

Have them follow you on Instagram and use a hashtag as a means of entry, so that your contest gets free promotion just from people entering it.

Having a clear idea of what you are hoping to gain from your contest will allow you to set it up in such a way that allows for maximum reach and effectiveness.

2. Clarify Your Audience's Incentives

Your contest won't take off unless your audience has a good reason to enter. What will they get out of it? If you plan to offer a prize, make sure it's clear what the prize is and how many winners there will be. (It doesn't need to be a physical prize – maybe it's the chance to be featured on your page! Signed book copies, author merchandise, and tickets to relevant events also make great contest prizes.) Regardless, your prize needs to be something you'd want to receive if the roles were reversed. If the criteria for entering your contest is not something you'd be inclined to do based on the reward offered, your audience probably won't want to do it either.

3. Launch with a Bang

Use Attractive Graphics - When you launch your contest, you need to capture your audience's attention. A great way to do this is with catchy graphics that you can re-use any time you promote the contest.

Promote Strategically - Be sure that your followers **KNOW** that your contest is coming up, as well as when it has launched and when their deadline is winding down. Don't let anyone forget about it!

4. **Manage Consistently**

It's not a great idea to launch your contest and then let it run for weeks without checking in. You need to make sure your entries are being received and organized as you go (and, if it's something that involves emailed entries of artwork or essays, responding to applicants to let them know you received their entry is always a great way to build trust and communication with your audience).

5. **Use Software to Help You**

There are many apps available online that you can use to help you run your contest and keep it organized.

- **Woobox** – This app connects Facebook and your website, and costs as little as \$1.00 per month.
- **Rafflecopter** – This one also works with Facebook and your website, but it also has its own WordPress plugin for extra accessibility. Free plans are available.
- **OfferPop** – This app boasts a ton of different types of contest formats for you to try out and gives you some useful metrics as well. You can pay per campaign or by month.
- **SnapApp** – This one works on basically every one of your social platforms, so it's a great one to use if you're targeting something other than Facebook. It's a bit more expensive, but it's used by lots of professionals, so you know you can trust it.
- **Shortstack** – Another option for Facebook compatibility and lots of different contest formats. Free plans are available.



Why Summer is Actually a Good Time to Start a Book Publicity Campaign

Summer. Our favorite time of year, and also the one time of year some publicists will tell you is not a good time to start a book marketing campaign. You might also hear that starting a campaign after Thanksgiving is bad, or that a mid-Spring publicity launch won't work, or even that mid-Fall is fraught with publicity perils.

What are you left with? Basically, September and January are the two “surefire” best times to release and start promoting a book.

Well, this thinking is flat-out wrong, and here's why ...

It's really pretty simple. If everyone follows traditional thinking on this topic, then most promotional campaigns start at the same times. This means you're beginning publicity at a time when most other authors are vying for media attention, and you're competing against the largest pool of books possible. Why not increase your odds of success by going against the grain, and start promotion when many other authors are not? This is even more important now, as literally thousands of new books are published every day!

It makes sense, on one hand, to think that summer is not the ideal time to launch a publicity campaign. Most of us take our vacations in the summer, so it seems logical that media opportunities are more limited for the same reason. If producers, editors, and reviewers are all on vacation, then what is the sense starting to pitch them?

Well, think about this for a minute. Does your local newspaper cease publication in the summer? Does your favorite talk radio station go on hiatus? Do all TV shows disappear for a few months in the summer? Obviously, the answer to these questions is a resounding "no!"

With the exception of most of the national daytime talk TV shows, virtually every other form of media still has air time or column inches to fill. Often, producers or editors are scrambling to find fodder for interviews or articles. At Smith Publicity, we routinely secure some of our biggest media "hits" for clients during the summer.

So, if you're nearing completion and publishing of your book, and stressing over when to start your publicity campaign ... don't. If you're ready mid-Spring or Summer, go for it. You just might get more attention than any other time.



Building Your Brand Via Instagram: 10 Ways to Optimize Your Page

Writing and publishing a book is just the beginning of an author's journey; promoting the book is more than half the battle. Something you may not realize as an author is that YOU are a brand. Selling your book isn't just about sharing an Amazon link, it's about building yourself as a credible source and creating content for others to interact with and share. With over one billion monthly users, Instagram is one platform in particular that authors should focus on to build their community.

Here are ten ways to optimize your Instagram page and position yourself as an influencer:

- 1. Follow less people than follow you.** Someone is considered an “influencer” if their social media ratio is 40 to 1 (meaning the author follows one person for every 40 people who follow them). If you are following too many people, slowly delete accounts over a few days so that you don't upset the algorithms.
- 2. Add a “category” to your account.** Instagram allows for users to choose a “category” to be listed on your profile. Choosing the “author” category will immediately signal that you are someone of influence, and might pique followers' curiosity about your knowledge, your brand, and your book. You're an author – now make it Instagram-official!
- 3. Use emojis and boast your accomplishments in your bio.** If you're a “Top 10 Motivational Speaker,” you must include that in your bio. Use emojis for each descriptor – really! Using those punchy little visuals will make your page more appealing and more likely to catch the eye of those scrolling. Also, be sure that the link to purchase your book is the featured URL on your page
- 4. Only follow people who will interact with you and who you will interact with.** Make a secret or private account to follow all your favorite celebrities and brands. This way you can still stay in the loop, but the number of accounts you're following stays low which, as tip number one states above, is ideal. It'll also ensure that you cultivate a meaningful community with which you can genuinely engage. Instagram isn't just about numbers... engagement is important!
- 5. Use brand colors.** Align your Instagram page with the rest of your brand by carrying over the theme of your website on your social media. When you post quotes, be sure to use your brand colors and fonts so everything is uniform. Not only will this be visually pleasing, but followers will be able to pick your page out when they see your unique branding. Anything that makes you stand out from the rest is beneficial.

6. Make your page attractive. Look at many popular Instagram accounts and you'll see their pages all have photos the same color tone. This is easier to achieve than you think. All you need is the Adobe Lightroom app on your phone. Then, purchase a photo preset package like Light & Airy, choose your favorite filter and edit every photo you post with that filter. Your photos will look professional in no time!

7. Save it for the Stories. Only post content in your newsfeed that goes with the theme of your page. Maybe you have a pattern of posting a photo of yourself, then a quote, then something promotional for your book. If you want to share what you ate for lunch, post it in an Instagram Story instead. Categorize your Stories as highlights on your page (Food, Health, Family, etc.) and be sure to have cover photos that align with your brand.

8. Don't talk about yourself too much. It's really not about you; it's about them (them being your audience, of course). Post about your book once every three posts or so. You don't want to be too self-promotional. Your goal of social media should be to engage with your audience and also let them get to know you personally. What tips can you share? How can you inspire them?

9. Avoid hashtag overload. Remember, you're the influencer, so don't appear desperate for followers by posting 20 hashtags. Use hashtags that are the most relevant and popular to your post and page. Too many hashtags can easily turn followers off.

10. If it's not the right platform, find another. Instagram isn't for everyone. If you can't easily post content that appeals to the Instagram audience, or find you're having a hard time getting followers, consider another platform like LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook to use as your main social account. Social media accounts take time, so it's most important that you're dedicating yours to the platform that makes the most sense for *you*.

Once you have these ten tips implemented on your page, there's only one thing you have left to do—have fun! Post what you love and you'll attract like-minded people who will become invested in you, follow your page, let others know about your brand, and buy your book!



Book Editor Tips for Authors

Here are key tips/information for authors from book editors:

1. Editors are looking for the same qualities that publicists are looking for in a project: **focused message, defined target audience, and differentiation**. For message, condense your book into one sentence, with three supporting points. For audience, define exactly who your target reader is (and hint: it's not "everyone"). Think, too, about what is also known as an "aspirational audience," which is when a book has the ability to reach unexpected readers and fans (for example, a title could be a diet/health book intended for women over 45 but may take on a new life and a huge fan base for those with thyroid issues). For differentiation, think about what you are offering readers: a new approach, provocative point of view, new research, etc.
2. Before you write your book, **check for originality!** Visit your bookstore or Amazon and read the table of contents of competitive titles. You want to make sure you are writing something new to your target audience.
3. Editors touted the importance of an **outline** for your book *before* the writing begins. The outline can be one to two pages, or expanded to 20 pages. At this stage, start thinking about chapter titles, ideas, flow, illustrations, appendices, etc.
4. As you are writing your manuscript, **keep a list** of where you are **sourcing** illustrations, photographs, images, quotes, research, etc. It will help your editor make sure all permissions are in place.
5. There are **different kinds of editors**, and although there are varying definitions for each role, here is a brief description:
6. **Acquisitions editor**—In the traditional publishing model, this person finds and signs on new authors he or she believes will be profitable for the publisher.
7. **Developmental/Substantive editor**—Works with an author to develop a book from an outline or first draft. The goal is to make the book functional, logical, and clear and complete for its readers, not just to make it correct and consistent.
8. **Copy/line editor**—Ensures that the manuscript meets style standards and corrects grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Copy editors also do basic fact checking.
9. Two **must-have resources** for writers (the book editors passed around their much beloved, used and bookmarked copies):
 - ***The Chicago Manual of Style*** <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html> Provides recommendations on editorial style and publishing practices for the digital age. Now offering the full contents of the 16th and 15th editions, it is the must-have reference for everyone who works with words.
 - ***Garner's Modern American Usage*** http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/secondary/garner_modern_american_usage With accessible, detailed, and up-to-date advice on thousands of language issues, *Garner's Modern American Usage* is the leading authority on current American English usage, grammar, spelling, and style.

10. Whether you are independently publishing or want to polish your work before presenting to a literary agent or publisher, here are tips on how to find a good editor:
- ASK! Talk to other authors and ask about their experiences/genre. You may have to “date” a few editors before finding the right fit.
 - Research editors at the Editorial Freelancers Association <http://www.the-efa.org> for potential editors.
 - Consult (for literary agents too!) *Jeff Herman’s Guide To Book Publishers, Editors and Literary Agents 2015* <http://www.jeffherman.com/store/jeff-hermans-guide-to-book-publishers-editors-and-literary-agents/>
 - When talking with editors, ask for sample edits (and then see if they are returned when promised, with new insights and explanations), and ask for pricing. There is a price range for good editing, most charging per word.

The role of an editor is to make the best book possible out of your manuscript. Whether you independently or traditionally publish your book, finding a solid editor who can work with you to define your message to your target readers, communicate the reasons behind his or her recommendations, and is skilled at the type of editing you need is an essential part of your publishing journey.



Tips on Using Blog Tours for Book Marketing

A book blog tour is a marketing initiative in which an author—instead of physically visiting a bookstore or event location—is a “guest” on a blog in some way including giveaways/contests, question and answers, interviews, guest posts, videos, excerpts, etc.

Blog tours are a great alternative to traditional in-person book events, saving significant marketing dollars on travel time and transportation costs.

The goal of incorporating blog tours into your marketing plan is to increase and grow your author brand, create awareness for your latest title (or body of work!), spark book sales, and build or continue to build long term relationships with influential bloggers and fans. Readers are always looking for new book recommendations from sources they trust. A nod from a book blogger with an avid fan base interested in your genre is pure gold.

While you can hire professionals to help set up your book blog tour, you can do it alone. It takes time, planning, research, and patience!

Who to contact: research the best bloggers for you

You may already know your favorite or most influential bloggers in your genre. If not, research ones with professionally presented websites/blogs, recent posts, lively comments, and an active social media presence. Check how bloggers promote their visiting authors. The blog should also match your tone, book, and message. An erotica book, for example, is likely not a fit for a family friendly blog!

See where other authors in your genre have participated in blog tours. Ask your writing communities for recommendations and readers for book bloggers they follow. Here are some websites to find book bloggers:

<http://www.blogmetrics.org/books>

<http://www.blognation.com/blogs/book-reviews>

<http://bookbloggerlist.com>

<https://bookbloggerdirectory.wordpress.com/>

<http://yabookblogdirectory.blogspot.com/p/ya-book-blogger-list.html>

<http://www.theindieview.com/indie-reviewers/>

What to offer: be personal, creative, and targeted!

When you are on “tour,” you exclusively “visit” one blog per day and need to offer unique content to each blogger. You may have fans following you to each blog tour location so you will want to share something different at each stop. Also, duplicate content can significantly negatively affect SEO for websites

Plan your tour two months or so before the actual tour dates, ideally soon after the launch of your book so readers can easily buy it. Each book blog tour length is different, ranging from two weeks to six weeks.

Send each blogger unique ideas based on their audience. Research what they’ve done in the past and which authors have been the most popular. Have fun and be creative! Ideas for book blog content include author interviews, Q&A’s, and excerpts tailored to the blogger’s demographics. In addition, you can offer insights, observations, back-stories, personal observations, character interviews, related holiday/awareness month themes, advice, expert opinion or how to (especially for non-fiction, expert authors), or location/setting inspiration. The goal is to offer each blogger something different—an exclusive not found anywhere else.

When contacting a blogger, personalize your outreach. A generic template email will not endear you or entice them to participate. After reading each submission policy, your email should include:

- Something you like or notice about their blog (recent post, shared favorite author, etc.). A blogger will often delete generic emails.
- Your book title, genre, brief summary, publication date, and Amazon link.
- Your original idea(s) for their blog.
- Ideal date range for the tour.
- A short bio, website/blog, social media.
- An offer of a free review copy (in the format of their choice).
- Your plans to promote the potential tour.
- Your contact information.
- Don’t send any attachments, unless asked.
- Be genuinely kind. “Please” and “thank you” go far.

Making the most out of your book blog tour: setting yourself up for success

Once your book tour takes shape, follow through on promises. Work on all original content posts and answer Q&As. Meet deadlines for sharing your agreed upon content! Offer book bloggers your book cover and author photo.

Promote each leg of your blog tour through your newsletter, blog, website, social media, etc., sharing the dates and the unique value of each stop. Always include the blogger's social media and blog links in your promotion. Don't forget the value of your own friends, family, and network to help share the news and excitement of your book blog tour.

After the event, keep abreast of comments and activity—and respond positively and quickly to encourage additional interaction.

Thank the blogger both personally and publicly. After all, you will likely be contacting them again for your next book. If you are writing or planning on writing more than one book, the time and effort to compile thoughtful book blog lists and develop relationships will be well worth your effort. Once you have a relationship started with bloggers, continue with authentic interactions by commenting on their other posts, retweeting or sharing Facebook posts, etc.

Incorporating a book blog tour into your marketing plan can be an effective way to introduce your work to new audiences, especially ones who are fans of your genre. Bottom line: be personal and targeted in your outreach, carefully read the submission guidelines, get creative with your offerings, promote the blog tour before and after the date, and respond to posts and fan comments. Most of all, enjoy the interactions with this vibrant community as you continue to build your author brand.



4 Book Marketing Strategies That No Longer Work

Few industries have experienced such dramatic changes in the past ten to twenty years as book publishing. The digital revolution has transformed the industry, completely changing a landscape that had essentially remained the same the better part of a century. Previously, a few gatekeepers at major publishing houses determined what was worthy of publishing. However, digital technology essentially “democratized” publishing, spawning the explosion of self-publishing and enabling hundreds of thousands of books to reach the market every year. Like the music industry, “indie” publishing opened up a literary Wild West where virtually anyone could publish anything quickly and inexpensively.

The media has also changed. The internet, social media, and instant communication processes have radically streamlined the relaying of news and newsworthy information. A by-product of this is a leaner media corps; fewer producers and editors producing and creating more and more content.

Not surprisingly, these changes also prompted changes in the way in which books are promoted and marketed. Now, the competition for media attention isn’t just fierce, it can be overwhelming. Relatively simple book publicity tactics of the past no longer suffice. While some core elements remain the same, for the most part the process of “pitching” and disseminating information about a book, and the way information is presented to media is quite different.

Here are four examples of longstanding book marketing strategies that no longer work.

1. When reaching out to media, leading with: “I wrote a book.”

At one time, publishing a book was indeed a newsworthy and fairly rare event. Due to the evolution of the publishing industry and the boom in self-publishing, this is no longer the case. Today, according to Bowker, the official ISBN Agency, there are thousands of books published each week in the United States alone. To get the attention of editors, producers, bloggers, etc., you need to lead with why you and your book should be of interest or value to their audiences.

What makes it unique? What will readers get from it? What is newsworthy about your book, and/or what newsworthy information can you provide?

Here's an example of a publicist pitch. Notice that the book by itself is secondary to accentuating what makes it worthy of consideration. (Note: The author's name has been changed)

Dear Mr. Adams,

The television show I Am Cait raised awareness of issues transgender men and women face in the U.S.

But what's next?

Joan Smith was born in a boy's body and has been living for years as a woman after her sex reassignment surgery. She knows all too well the actual issues in front of men and women born in the wrong body.

In her new book, (book title), Smith gives us a glimpse of what's in store for transgender men and women who want to be accepted in their new bodies.

In an emotional and eye-opening interview, Smith is available to discuss the following:

- Can transgender men and women really live as who they were meant to be?
- Dating as a transgender: What happens when your date learns of the past?
- Why Caitlyn's fame can be frustrating for those living like this for years
- Her journey: from moving to NYC when she was 17, to living in the Middle East, to transitioning in her first year of law school to sex change in Thailand

Please let me know if you are interested in receiving a complimentary review copy of (book title,) or would like to connect with Smith for expert commentary and feature/profile interviews.

Many thanks for your consideration, Mr. Adams. I look forward to hearing from you.

2. Thinking Your Book is for Everyone.

Across the board and within genres—romance, self-help, personal finance or business—today's book buyers are more sophisticated than in the past, have many more tools to discover a book, and the number of sub-genres to search has skyrocketed. Book buyers know what they want and need. Finding and marketing to your niche audience is a powerful way to reach the right book buyer. Take a look at the Kindle categories for Romance. There are almost 300,000 Romance eBooks. Now, look at the sub-categories within Romance:

- African American (7,632)
- Collections & Anthologies (11,294)
- Contemporary (107,190)
- Fantasy (20,769)
- Gothic (1,061)
- Historical Romance (33,191)
- Holidays (6,551)
- Inspirational (18,114)
- LGBT (25,018)
- Military (7,098)
- Multicultural & Interracial (9,776)
- Mystery & Suspense (30,823)
- New Adult & College (13,232)
- Paranormal (36,329)
- Romantic Comedy (19,775)
- Science Fiction (7,059)
- Series (19,113)
- Sports (4,456)
- Time Travel (3,139)
- Westerns (9,476)

If your book matches a theme within Romance, make sure it is properly categorized or you could miss out on a large population of potential readers. Pay careful attention to your target market and position your book accordingly. When your book runs across multiple categories, switch them up (series, time travel, historical, and African American can describe the same book). This puts your book in front of a whole new set of eyes. Note: be honest about the book's sub-category or you risk disappointing readers.

Other ways to hit the right market for your book is to include keyword marketing. In social media descriptions and on websites, use very specific genre keyword phrases to enhance discoverability. Consider promoting special discounts to genre readers via platforms such as BookBub, place targeted ads on social network platforms, run contests on Goodreads, and/or set a reasonable budget and run very specific ads through Google Adwords. Also, take the extra time to find highly specific genre reviewers and bloggers. A mention about your Romance book on

<http://smartbitchestrashybooks.com/> will put a book in front of an active and powerful book community. Get to know yours. These key influencers get books noticed.

3. Sending Over-the-Top Press Kits to Media

“Back in the day,” super-slick, flashy, eye-catching printed media kits were common, and often effective at grabbing media attention. Without modern digital technology, printed publicity material often needed to be packaged in a way that made it stand out from the stack of other mailed press kits sitting on a producer or editor’s desk with accompanying books.

Now, websites and social media have made physical presentation much less important. It is now that single e-mail subject line, or the few opening sentences of an e-mailed pitch that make media take notice, prompt them to visit a website and/or social media platforms, and then ask for a copy of the book. Following up with interested media by mailing a professionally written printed press release and personalized letter with the book is typically all that is expected.

Examples of some subject lines for pitches that attracted significant media attention:

- Former Dwarf?
This simple subject line drew national TV interest and resulted in numerous interviews for our client. Aren’t you curious as to what it’s all about?
- Feature: 7 Most Romantic Spots in Bucks County
For a romance author seeking local media coverage
- Interview: Perfect for Father’s Day - How to Turn Your Wife into a Swinger
For author of a book about improving your golf swing.
- The Teen Years are Rough – Who Has it Better or Worse? Girls or Boys or Parents?
Neurologist, researcher and New York Times bestseller. Not leading with details about a study, but showing a specific and timely application of the study’s results.
- LOCAL INTERVIEW: Award Winning Seattle Filmmaker and Author Reveals Little-Known History of Pacific Northwest
Historical fiction author who took years to study and incorporate little known Pacific Northwest history into his trilogy.

4. Waiting Until a Book is Published to Start Promotion.

Now more than ever, building an author brand takes time and persistence. Again, because of the sheer volume of new books coming out every day, if at all possible you need to start promotion early. A long-term strategy to attract fans, readers, and media to build authentic relationships works best. Whether 18, 12, or six months prior to a book's publication date, an author should consistently blog, Tweet, post, and engage. This develops a strong platform and more genuine author-reader connections when a book is available for purchase.

A bad strategy is creating a social media profile and then “friending” and following people and immediately suggesting they buy your book. This is book marketing suicide!

Example:

One of our clients was a business consultant writing her first book for on the topics of leadership and work/life balance. One year before publication date, she began a Twitter, newsletter, blog, video, and media outreach strategy. Specifically, she began by creating a series of short “how to” videos, blogging three times each week, starting conversations on key influencers' blogs, and capturing email addresses for a monthly newsletter. She started to follow key media on Twitter and engaged in authentic exchanges. When advance reader copies became available five months before the book's publication, we sent them to a highly targeted list of book review editors and long lead magazine editors (working on stories four to six months out), along with other pre-launch media outreach initiatives. We worked with her for several months after the publication date as well to reach print, broadcast and online media.

The result:

- We were able to direct media, potential book buyers, and potential clients to informative blog posts, videos, and newsletter articles.
- Her newsletter list grew from 1,500 to more than 25,000 names and Twitter followers increased from 250 followers to 4,500 followers (today, 18 months later, she has almost 23,000 followers). This gave her thousands of targeted consumers to share the news of the publication of her book!
- From a publicity perspective, beyond her professional credentials to position her as an expert, we could also point media and readers to an active thought leader offering relevant and valuable information.
- A small sampling of media placements included *Publisher's Weekly*, *Fast Company*, *Entrepreneur*, *Wall Street Journal*, *CNBC*, *Forbes*, *Women in Business*, and *HuffingtonPost.com*.
- Media placements gave her additional content to share on social media, continuing to build her credibility.
- She became a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestseller.

- Her business and speaking is thriving.

Is this methodology a guarantee? No. But starting early and having a well thought out plan prior to the publication date puts an author and book in an excellent position for attention. While so much has changed in book marketing tactics, keep in mind that if you focus your efforts on what others want and need, and give before hoping to receive, you can succeed. With some creativity and persistence, you can break through the crowd and attract media attention, develop a fan following through other promotional vehicles such as social media, and move books through innovative pricing strategies.

Treat your book and marketing efforts like a business. Don't shoot from the hip; do your homework and monitor what's happening in publishing, book publicity and social media. See what successful authors of competitive titles are doing. Ultimately, your book is your business, and businesses don't survive by employing marketing strategies of the past that no longer work, they stay ahead of the curve and focus on what works now.



Book Marketing Tip: Give Your Book Away

By Corrin Foster, [Greenleaf Book Group](#)

I'm often asked by authors for my top book marketing tip – what one thing should they be absolutely certain they do to support the launch of their book – and the answer never fails to horrify (authors) and delight (me, a book marketer).

Give your book away.

With nearly 8,000 books published every single day in an increasingly crowded market of experts, thought leaders, creative voices, and storytellers, the best way to get your book noticed by readers is to get your book into the hands of readers. You're never going to *run out* of new readers for your book – readers that will *buy* your book – so harness the power of enthusiastic early readers to reach buyers.

The Catch

There's always a catch, so let's start there to squelch any concerns about giving your book away. In order to receive a copy of your book, you should ask readers for something in return. Book launches are an exciting time and readers love being the first to read and share a promising new book so they are expecting one of the below requests and usually happy to oblige in exchange for a book.

- An email address
- A review on Amazon, Goodreads, or another retailer or book review website
- A social share

Why?

I know you're asking yourself, "Why on earth would you be giving books away when there are book sales to be had?" Giving books away is both a short-term and long-term marketing strategy used to:

- Grow your email list so that you can keep in touch with your community and active them in the future
- Grow your social network by connecting and conversing with your community
- Grow the social clout for the book with reviews which helps to convert future book browsers to book buyers
- Drive ratings, reviews, and site traffic to the Amazon book page in order to achieve Amazon bestseller status and trigger ongoing organic Amazon promotion

Who? How?

Hopefully you're starting to see the value of giving away your book and are starting to strategize in your head who you should give your book to and how. Start with:

- People in your close network who will commit to posting a review on the publication date
- People in your network with a large social following who will commit to sharing on social media on the publication date
- Active book reviewers, influencers, and bloggers who post to sites dedicated to book reviews or their own book-centric social media
- Active consumer book reviewers who post to retail sites

The logistics of getting books to be readers can be complicated, but there are several options depending on recipient, preference, and budget.

- Utilize NetGalley to distribute digital copies to book reviewers, influencers, and bloggers; book buyers, librarians, and media
- Host giveaways, both print and Kindle through, Goodreads to reach active consumer reviewers
- Mail physical books (and other swag – stickers, bookmarks, reading guides, pins, etc.) to more influential reviewers and people in your close network
- Provide a watermarked PDF to trusted individuals, such as mentors and media

Keep in Mind

- Remember to adhere to industry standards regarding reviews and request that anyone who receives a copy of your book disclose so when sharing their review.
- You can't force a reader to share a review but you can follow-up. Send an email a few weeks after they've received their book thanking them for their interest and letting them know how important reviews are to the success of your book and where they can be posted.
- You can't (and shouldn't) try and dictate the tone of any review. Encourage readers to share their *honest* review and more often than not, it'll be positive.
- People read at drastically different paces and likely have other books in their to-read pile. Realize that your book may not jump to the top of that list but that reviewed received at any time are valuable.

Getting your book into the hands of early readers and supporters is an integral part of any book launch strategy and can mean the difference between a splash or a ripple in the ocean of new books. Give away as many books as you feel comfortable and be strategic about who you give books to and what you ask of them and the risk will be well worth the reward.



How to Get the Most from Your Ghost: Tips and Tricks You Should Know *Before* Hiring a Ghostwriter

By Kevin Anderson, [Kevin Anderson & Associates](#)

Congratulations! You've made the monumental decision to collaborate with a ghostwriter. By doing so, you've chosen to bet on yourself and your book and made a tangible step toward becoming an author.

But before you sign that ghostwriting contract, be sure to properly prepare yourself—and your ghostwriter—for success.

Writing a book is a months-long process and hiring a ghostwriter is a big investment; I'm sure you've heard horror stories about writers failing to deliver what they promise, ghosts ghosting, or similar dream-crushing disasters. Sadly, many of those stories are true.

Over the past decade, as the CEO of a ghostwriting and publishing services firm, I've hired and fired literally *hundreds* of ghostwriters, but I've also overseen the successful development of *thousands* of successfully published books—many of which became huge bestsellers.

Based on that experience, here are just a few tips every author should consider to get the most from their ghost.

Prioritize the Planning Phase

You hired a ghostwriter in part to save you time—and, in the end, it definitely will—but if you want a powerful book that aligns with your vision, you need to invest heavily in the process *before* a single word is written.

You wouldn't start building your dream house without drafting a detailed blueprint, and your book is no different. Allocate 8–15 hours of Zoom or in-person meetings to discuss your project, your style, and publishing goals in depth.

By the end of your planning sessions, you should have established the following:

- The book's positioning (the book's angle, audience, and what makes it unique)
- The promise to the reader
- A detailed outline with chapter headings, subheadings, and content descriptions (3–10 pages long for most nonfiction titles, 10+ for narrative books)
- A strong sense of the primary themes and messages
- The approximate length of the book
- A project timeline and schedule for future meetings
- A general marketing and publicity strategy
- A plan for targeting agents and/or publishers

For fiction or memoir, you'll also want to cover:

- Plot, story arc, and character arcs
- Setting descriptions
- Point of view and tense
- Complete sketches of the main characters

In addition to covering these topics, you'll want to establish a clear plan and even an interview schedule for the coming months to ensure you both stay on track and are able to give each other the necessary time to do the work.

Do the Prep Work

Your book-planning sessions will be a lot more productive if you do a little preparation in advance.

Help your writer prepare for your meetings by doing the following homework. Be sure to deliver this information at least a week ahead of your first meeting.

1. **Establish an Agenda:** If you don't already have one, build one and share it with your writer or writing team so that you address all the topics noted above.
2. **Find Your Style and Voice:** Take a look at some of your favorite books. What style of writing most appeals to you? Provide your ghost with a list of books that come close to capturing your voice, style, sense of humor, etc.
3. **Gather Videos, Recordings, Writing Samples, and Other Related Materials:** Give your writer insights into your personality and help them capture your unique voice.
4. **Share Research Materials:** Be sure to share any books or articles that might help shed light on your subject matter. Your writer will want to be as informed on the subject as possible in advance of the planning meetings.

Meet with Your Writer in Person

While video conferences and phone meetings can suffice, meeting in person is by far the best way to connect with your writer and allow them to fully absorb your style and personality.

Choose your meeting location strategically. If you're writing a business or leadership book, a visit to your office may help the writer understand your corporate culture. If you're drafting a memoir or novel, visiting the book's setting may greatly enhance the writer's ability to capture a sense of the space. Some authors find it beneficial to have their writer "shadow" them over the course of weeks (or even months).

My firm has sent writers all over the world to ensure the ideal situation for producing the book, but keep in mind that travel expenses may not be covered by your ghostwriting contract. You'll want to ensure that the writer is comfortable with the arrangements, pay, and per diem for onsite visits.

Stay on Topic and Keep It Professional

Authors are sometimes surprised at how well they get to know their ghostwriter during the book-writing process, and it can be easy to digress into friendly conversations on various topics. But it's important to maintain professional boundaries so you don't unintentionally take advantage of your writer's time. While it's important to get to know one another and build a healthy bond, spending too much time off-topic will stall the process and might frustrate your ghostwriter, especially if they're being paid a contract rate and not by the hour.

Dangle a Carrot—Credit, Testimonials, and Backend

Most ghostwriters' work is entirely confidential, which can make it challenging for them to build their list or reputation. While incognito writer relationships are perfectly acceptable, offering a testimonial, cover credit, acknowledgement, small percentage of the publisher's advance or royalties, or similar recognition is incredibly valuable and will encourage the writer to go the extra mile.

If you're not comfortable with revealing that you hired a ghostwriter, perhaps you can acknowledge them for some other contribution, such as "book consultation," "editing," or simply "help with the book." Let the ghostwriter know from the very beginning that you intend to provide such a carrot at the end of the project. You may even wish to use it as a negotiation piece to get a better deal for everyone involved.

Do Not Review by Committee

Yes, we know it's tempting to have your mother's friend's third-cousin's author friend review and give her "professional" opinion on your book, along with input from all your friends and coworkers. But be aware that engaging haphazard community review process will pull your editorial process in a million different directions and almost always end in disaster.

When we do beta testing for full-length manuscripts, we often get 20 *completely* different takes on the same manuscript, but then we have a single editor review, assess, and consolidate the feedback into a unified assessment based on the reviewers' combined feedback. A similar approach is needed for giving feedback to your ghostwriter. Whether you're a group of C-suite executives coauthoring the book together, or you're a single author looking for feedback from your 20 closest friends, elect a single point person to review and consolidate everyone's input.

Always Be Kind

My final suggestion, and perhaps the most important, is to simply be kind to your writer. Be patient with the process—it's hard to capture someone else's voice and style, and it can take time. Ghostwriting is a difficult and often thankless job, and most ghosts are working long hours toiling over simple word choices in an effort to please you. Yes, you've hired them to do a job, but creating art isn't always straightforward, and being kind and understanding will not only give the writer the confidence to push forward, but it will build respect and motivate them to do great work for you.

Ghostwriting a book is a long and often complex process, but hopefully these tips will ensure that it's also a rewarding journey that helps you realize your dream of becoming an author.



So You Want to Write A Book? 4 Top Tips for Creating a Marketable Manuscript

By Brian Clifflen, [FriesenPress, Inc.](#)

Do you have a book within you that's just waiting to get out? Whether you're just starting to dip your pen in the ink or are dotting the final i's on your completed manuscript, every author's path toward publishing is unique. Some will find the words just pour out of them, fully formed on the page. For the rest of us mortals, we can use all the help we can get.

As a publishing services provider with over 11 years' experience, we've helped guide thousands of writers along their writing and publishing journeys. Here are 4 of our top tips for not only getting your first draft finished, but creating a marketable manuscript that you'll be proud to sign for your readers after it's been published.

1. Harness the focusing power of a book proposal

Great books start with a great [book proposal](#). If you've ever wondered why so many authors seeking a publishing deal agonize over creating the perfect proposal, it's because traditional publishers won't give them the time of day without one.

What makes book proposals so powerful? They get you thinking about your target audience *before* you write—what's in it for your readers? How are you going to find them? How are you going to make them want your book?

You don't need to have all the answers if you're just starting to write, nor do you need to worry over the questions. But the earlier you begin to consider your book's building blocks and your marketing strategy, the better off you'll be down the road. A thorough book proposal functions as a summary of your book's most marketable features — something you'll want to share with a publicist like Smith, if and when you decide to enlist their services.

2. Outline the path ahead

A book outline is the book proposal's cousin. An outline is a way to organize your ideas and develop them into a clear roadmap, from the opening of your book through to its end. Depending on your creative inclinations, your outline could be incredibly simple or Swiss-watch complicated. In either instance, an outline will make it easier to wrangle your thoughts in order to write your book.

Some writers might say they don't feel they need an outline, that it restricts the creative possibilities, but everyone has somewhere they're headed and steps they want to take to get there. Readjust as you go, if that suits you. Whether you write it down or not, you will have a plan in your mind. To have it on paper is just a productive way to focus your efforts — it's still mutable.

A good outline will function as the framework for your book with a main premise, protagonist, characters, setting, plot points, pivotal scenes, and/or anything that serves to keep your writing on track. It can also be a

great way to stimulate brainstorming by breaking things down and leading you to latch onto that little thing that inspires you to write madly about a character or setting or concept.

3. Identify your writing support team

The trope of the solitary writer holed up in a cabin, bashing away at their typewriter, is a well-worn cliché for a reason. But the truth is: behind every great book is a great team — and we’re not just talking editors, illustrators, and book designers here. Those specialized professionals certainly play an integral role in bringing a book to market, but there are a host of people you can (and should) turn to during the writing process.

Writers at the beginning stages of drafting a book may benefit from connecting with a writing buddy. A writing buddy is a peer, often with a similar level of experience as yourself who is also working on a writing project. The benefits of keeping in touch with a writing buddy are myriad. They’re someone you can talk to about all things writing. In doing so, you may learn new approaches you hadn’t considered, encouragement and accountability to keep going, and advice for overcoming obstacles that had you stumped.

Over time, a writing buddy can evolve into a critique partner (or CP) — someone who will read over your content with the aim of providing constructive feedback. Most writers will want their CP to be a writer in their genre (or at least someone well read in your genre). These exchanges are usually done on the basis of a trade, either chapter by chapter, or book for book. The goal of this process is improving the content of the book, rather than the mechanics of the writing.

Last but certainly not least, a beta reader is someone (possibly a writer, or a voracious reader) who reviews your manuscript (in part or whole) to provide you feedback. Beta readers are usually approaching the text from a more holistic and less mechanical level. Generally speaking, you want your book to be interesting and enjoyable to read. That’s why you want your beta reader to be as close to your target audience as possible — they’ll be able to provide notes on what they loved about your book and areas that need more attention.

Ask yourself: who do I know that could be my writing buddy, critique partner, or beta readers?

4. Know when it’s time to move forward

When working on a project as intensely personal as writing a book, it can be very tough to know when to shift out of “writing” and into “publishing” mode. Even if your book isn’t autobiographical, it’s still generated *by you*, and the temptation to exist in the safe in-between space of endless revisions is all too real — especially when it means no one else reads something you deem to be “not ready.”

Many writers assume that their manuscript must be absolutely perfect before they can move ahead with publishing it. But in fact your job as a writer is *not* to make the perfect manuscript. Your job is to make the best manuscript that you can on your own. Once you have your best manuscript, it’s time to work with professionals who will help bring your writing to its fullest potential before publication. As Oscar Wilde told his editors, “I’ll leave you to tidy up the woulds and shoulds, wills and shalls, thats and whichs, etc.” (Although editors can do much, much more than correct spelling and grammar... but that’s another topic altogether.)

“This is the best I can do” isn’t cause for despair; it’s something to celebrate! When the epic journey of writing is complete, you can begin to determine which publishing path is right for you and your book.



4 Habits to Increase Your Output During the Writing Process

By Amber Gray, [Trusty Oak](#)

As an author, carving out regular perfect moments to write may seem like a dream, and even reading the phrase “perfect moments to write” may make you LOL in a scoff. Life, in general, can be hectic and 2020 has even the most focused personality types struggling to tap into that creative flow.

You may already realize the writing process isn’t linear which can contribute to a lack of focus at times, plus you don’t always feel like writing. These challenges can feel overwhelming especially with looming book deadlines and added pressure from your publisher to build your online presence and social media following.

The good news is within less than an hour of effort, you can set yourself up to protect your time, energy, and focus.

These tips are designed to help you develop four new habits and employ some simple automation tools to increase your output during the writing process.

1. Sign Up for a Free Trello Account

If you notice you work well under a little pressure mixed with some accountability, this tip is especially for you. I have found Trello to be the simplest and most visual project management tool, making it a favorite among those who don’t consider themselves to be a “techie” and only need a way to capture ideas and keep up with tasks and deadlines.

Trello consists of three main parts:

- Boards - think of Boards as projects. You really just need one board for a single book project.
- Lists - I recommend labeling these broadly in categories such as “Research and Resources,” “To-Dos,” “In Progress,” and “Completed.”
- Cards - create Cards for each specific task to be completed

Capture Ideas, Track Deadlines, and Stay Organized

So much goes into writing and publishing your book and an incredible amount of your success rests on your ability as the author to manage your time and keep tabs on deadlines. In hundreds of conversations that I’ve had with business owners, authors, and leaders exploring the option to work with a [virtual assistant](#) for their business or book launch, the majority feel overwhelmed and disorganized. They frequently worry about how that will impact their relationships with their VA as well as their overall results. Sometimes they even say “I want to be a good client” and they admit that they may be a “hot mess.” Trello can help you be a good client for your book writing coach, your publisher, your marketing team, your virtual assistant, and anyone else that touches your project.

Research and Resources List

- Writing your book may require you to conduct interviews, research, or gather information for reference throughout the writing process. Keep track of this data on Cards in Trello by linking to articles or uploading files.
- As concepts come to mind, create a Card to capture the idea and jot down notes, upload images, and even set the due date to remind you to revisit the Card.

To-Dos, In Progress, and Completed Lists

- Document tasks and milestones such as submitting your manuscript to alpha and beta readers, give feedback on book cover designs or write a blog post to test out material.
- Set due dates for these tasks and move them from one list to the next as you make progress.
- Invite other team members to join the Board, assign tasks to others, and communicate in the comments on individual cards.

2. Utilize Accountability and Delegation

[Trello's value](#) multiplies when you invite others to your Board. If you are working with a book writing coach, inviting them to your Board provides a layer of accountability that helps you stay on track with deadlines and general follow-through. You can also discuss ideas and get feedback right on the Cards.

Additionally, if you are working with a virtual assistant or another team member, Trello makes it easy to delegate parts of the prep work needed for you to focus on writing.

A few tasks to consider delegating:

- Researching topic areas or historical information
- Gathering data
- Conducting interviews with subject experts, or interviewing people for character development
- Creating and publishing social media content to keep your brand active online
- Creating an email newsletter to share updates on upcoming events or your latest blog post, or to drive pre-order sales

Establish Boundaries and Protect Your Time

In this new work-from-home era, the lines between work life and home life may be blurry or even non-existent in some cases. It takes some effort to protect our time and more importantly, it takes a commitment in order to create space in your day for writing.

3. Time-Block and Time-Track

I have been practicing time-blocking techniques for almost five years now and this discipline has had a very positive impact on my productivity and focus. At first blush, a calendar with time-blocks for walking the dog, workouts, lunch breaks, and even free time may be viewed as too rigid and restricting. However, I've found it to be the opposite.

Blocking time for anything I want to accomplish—including leisure activities—has given me a better understanding of how I spend my time. Even just improving my [perception of time](#) has reduced how much stress I feel and how much time I spend feeling overwhelmed.

- Sit down with your calendar once per week and plan the week ahead. Block time for everything you want to accomplish including self-care routines and free time.
- Try tracking your time using time-tracking software or a notepad. Keeping track of how you spend your time each day most likely will help you see where you are wasting too much time on unimportant activities and allow you to reallocate that time to write or do something else contributing to your goals.

4. Set Your Email Auto-Responder or Delegate Your Inbox

I have been working as a virtual assistant with best-selling author and speaker, [Jenni Schaefer](#) since early 2016. Jenni has released three books and last year she signed a new book deal with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. While she has been focusing on hitting her book-writing deadlines, she turned on an automatic email response letting people know that she is focusing on writing and that she would not be checking email as often. She added a line letting recipients know that if it was time-sensitive, they could email me, her assistant, instead. She equipped me with responses to common inquiries and I touched base with her as needed with a summary of questions requiring her input. I became a buffer for Jenni allowing her the deep focus-time to write without worrying about something important falling through the cracks.

Another option to help you block out interruptions is to [delegate your inbox](#) altogether. If you use Gmail or Outlook, it's possible to set up a delegated inbox allowing your virtual assistant to check your email without giving over your main login information. Your delegatee can flag important messages for you, delete junk mail, and file away emails that don't need your attention.

Habits, of course, take a little time to develop but with the systems in place to support you during the writing process, you can focus on doing the work you love and achieve big goals. These small changes can reduce the time you spend juggling tasks or feeling buried in your inbox and give you back that time for writing instead.

We'd love for you to join the conversation! What habits help you increase your output during the writing process? What digital tools help you focus on your best work?



You CAN Judge a Book by Its Cover:

5 Ways to Make a Book Cover Stand Out

By Gwyn Flowers, [GKS Creative](#)

In these modern times, the old adage “Don’t judge a book by its cover” is rarely followed. What makes a consumer click or move on? In today’s war of thumbnail covers, get noticed by using core visual elements to create a thoughtful design that stands apart from the competition.

Increase sales and boost visibility by applying these tips to your next cover design:

1. First impressions matter.

Whether a book is thrilling, romantic, or reassuring, it should contain visual cues associated with the book genre. Self-help books should look and make readers feel much different than a romance or thriller novel. By researching other books in your genre, you will gain insight and cues on how to design a book cover that has all the right “feels” for the category and the readers’ expectations. It’s okay to be unique or different, but don’t stray too far from your target demographic. Catching the eye of the right audience and enticing them to read more will increase sales—the ultimate goal of any author.

2. Layouts beckon.

The composition of the core elements comprises the layout. A balanced and ordered layout leads the eye through the core elements of the cover design, which should be eye-catching even at thumbnail size. Establish a visual focus that conveys what the book is about by choosing either typography or imagery to lead the way—using both could dilute visual impact. One visual focus is key. Using images in a more subtle role supports the impact of typography and vice versa. Be careful not to overwhelm the reader with too many design elements; empty space is just as important and improves readability.

3. Images compel.

Draw attention to your cover with a compelling and memorable image that captures the essence of the book at a glance. Great illustrations, graphics, photography, or typography are just a few clicks away. Stock libraries are a great place to start. Be sure to research copyright and licensing requirements for all royalty-free, rights-managed, or free images. Get creative. Blend photos together or use them in unusual ways. Quality, attention-getting, memorable images may cost you, but the visual impact will be more polished and professional.

4. Typography feels.

Typefaces generate feelings. Some feel antique or modern, feminine or masculine, sweet or salty. They also improve visibility, tell the readers a great deal about the content of a book, and create visual impact alongside the competition. Appropriate typography is essential to a cover design, and it should support the overall theme of the cover and the genre. Carefully consider the size, weight, and style of each typographic element. Unless the author is well known, the book title should be the largest typography element on the front cover. Avoid using more than two fonts, and always choose readability over fancy fonts or effects.

5. Color conveys emotion.

Color conveys emotion, sets the mood, and can quickly communicate a message to the potential reader. The message depends on the color. Thriller novels often use red to convey urgency or danger, purple hints at spirituality or magic, and sunny yellow feels like a summer beach read. Color has the power to direct our eye and shows us where to look, what to do, and how to interpret something. The psychology of color usually depends on context. That “thriller novel red” could also mean love or romance when used in a different way. Make sure your colors represent the mood and genre of your book by doing a little research.

Book cover design requires all of these elements to work together to create a cohesive and compelling design with the message *Pick me up and read me*. You put significant time, thought, and work into your manuscript, and it deserves to be noticed. If you’d like help creating a brilliant cover for your book, consider hiring a cover designer.



Using SEO as Part of Your Author Marketing Strategy

By Jeniffer Thompson, [Monkey C Media](#)

Did you recently write a book that you're super excited about, but find that your sales numbers are a bit lackluster and disappointing? Or maybe you have a blog and it's just not getting the traffic you want? Well, there's something you can do about it. Among the most significant of those things is incorporating search engine optimization (SEO) into your author marketing strategy. I'll tell you how you can do that below.

A Quick SEO Primer for Beginners

When you incorporate well-researched and strategically placed metadata and keywords into your website content, that content is then optimized and more likely to appear in search results when someone (your readers) looks for a book or service like yours. It makes you discoverable, even if they've never heard of you or your book before.

How SEO Works

When someone uses a search engine like Google, Bing and Yandex to search the web, that search engine tries to deliver the most relevant website results. Simple right? For the sake of simplicity, I'll reference Google moving forward, it is the most popular search engine after all.

So how does Google know which sites to reveal in a SERP (search engine results page)? Content! Yep, content is still king, friends. Even more so today than ever before, because Google now scans your website for tangentially related content. This means Google basically scans your content and indexes it for overall relevance. If your content is good (we'll just assume that it is) and you've done your [keyword research](#), then your search ranking will improve. When your search ranking improves, your audience is more likely to find you when they're searching your topic.

What Can SEO Do for You as an Author?

So, what does all this mean for you? So many good things! When it's easier to find you, it makes it easier to grow your audience, build your brand and following, and sell your book.

It Can Make Your Book More Discoverable

In the same way that your audience may discover your website, keywords will make your book more discoverable. And not just in Google searches, but on Amazon and Goodreads too. Plus, there are sites like BookBub and even Reddit that can help. The more visibility and links you have leading people to your website, the more relevant you become!

An example: Let's say you write Historical Fiction. You want your audience to find your book on Amazon or your website. It's important that the keyphrase "Historical Fiction" appears in more than just the description of your book, and, even more critical is that you get uber specific with your keyphrase, tags, categories, and descriptions. Say, "1960's New York Historical Fiction" for instance, or "Vietnam Era Counterculture in New York, Historical Fiction." The more you can distill your keyphrase down to something that specifically speaks to your book's content, the more likely you will rank well in that space.

It Can Help Build Your Following

By increasing your search ranking, you become more visible. Which, of course, means that it's even easier for your audience to find you. The thing is, with search engine algorithms, the more views a page gets, the more likely it is to come up in a search, and therefore more likely to be seen. Popularity matters when it comes to SEO. Seems a bit like a catch 22, doesn't it? But if you produce consistent, fresh, quality content, the audience that views it will stick around, and come back for more—and you'll begin to move the needle on your search ranking. Some of your audience may even become fans, or superfans!

Where Authors Should Be Using SEO Strategy

As an author, you'll basically want to use keywords on all platforms, as I mentioned above. You want to increase your search ranking wherever you can so you're more likely to come up in search results on multiple platforms.

On Your Website and Blog

I already mentioned that content is king. And that content needs to be fresh. So, even if you only concentrate on writing relevant content that provides value to your audience, and don't even worry about the metadata part, you'll still be way ahead of your competition. This is one of the reasons that blogs are still useful—the more often you add fresh content to your website, the more likely Google is to rank and weigh that content as relevant. If your website content gets stale, the search engines lose interest (just like your audience). No one wants that!

On Your Profiles

Any online profile you have is an opportunity to provide relevant content and powerful key phrases. Take a look at those profile descriptions to see if your content includes your genre and the specific value of your book and message (why should people read your book?). Try not to be coy when you are writing online content—be obvious, speak clearly about the value you offer so your audience gets it (the search engines will get it too).

You'll want to have profiles on multiple platforms and use keywords and phrases to optimize all your profiles. For example:

- [Goodreads](#)
- Amazon
- Social Media
- YouTube
- CreateSpace

Your SEO Strategy Beyond Keywords

Keyword usage is incredibly important. It's also the easiest and most obvious part of SEO. But there are some other important SEO tactics you'll want to use as well. Because, besides the body of your page content, you'll be using SEO strategy in things like your bio, book description, and even your images, such as your headshot. Your SEO strategy shouldn't leave out important tools like alt tags, metadata, backlinks and plugins.

Alt Tags

Alt tags are used to increase visibility and optimize images on your profiles, blogs and website. They used to be one of my best kept secrets, but these days it's pretty commonly used. An alt tag is "alternative text" assigned to images on your website. Alt tags were originally created to help improve the experience of visually impaired searchers. The alt tag describes the image so that a screen reader will then read the description to the visually impaired person "viewing" your website. Imagine how frustrating it must have been for our blind friends looking at image heavy websites that didn't bother describing those images—just a bunch of dead ends.

Bonus: Google still indexes those alt tag descriptions so that your site is further ranked for content that appears in those alt tags.

A word to the wise: Always write to your audience. Never write for the search engines. It will backfire. Always write alt tags with your blind friends in mind. Please don't stuff keywords in there unless they are actually relevant. Otherwise you might get flagged for spamming, not to mention how rude it would be to any blind person trying to enjoy your website and get valuable information.

Metadata

The term metadata sounds scary. It's not. Simply put, metadata is a set of data that describes and gives information about other data. So, the alt tag I described earlier is a type of metadata, as is a caption, or an image description tag. Any time you have an opportunity to design something or describe it from the backend of your website—do it. The Yoast plugin, which I mention below will help to automate this process.

Backlinks

A back link is just how it sounds. It's a link that brings the reader back to your website. And, in all things you do—always link back to your website. Always. Also, any time someone interviews you, or reviews your book, ask them to link back to your website too. The more incoming links (or backlinks) you get to your site, the more popular it will appear to Google. And as I said before, popularity counts in the world of SEO.

SEO Plugins

If you have a WordPress website and want to take your SEO efforts a step farther, I recommend installing the WordPress SEO plugin by [Yoast](#). Start with the free version. It's a great way to get your site ranking with metadata and automated description tags.

Hopefully, in reading this, you've realized how SEO can be a powerful and integral part of your author marketing strategy. It can seem a bit overwhelming, I know. But now you understand how SEO works. So, start implementing those keywords and other SEO tools in your online content! When you start seeing the results, you'll be happy you put the time in.



Author Branding is the Key to Successful Book Marketing

By Jeniffer Thompson, [Monkey C Media](#)

Personal branding is not a revolutionary concept, but it's relatively new to authors. A personal brand will establish your authority, improve your online visibility, and solidify your reputation as a known quantity.

Here's a little secret, most entrepreneurs and authors promote their books and services, but they fail to promote themselves. Create a strong personal brand and one-time customers become loyal followers, and dare I say, fans. By branding you, you build a lasting fan base.

Consider your favorite brands for a moment, brands like Nike, Coca Cola, and Starbucks. The brand is not only the product—it's the experience. More importantly, it's the promise. We trust these brands because we know what to expect.

Starbucks, for example, sells coffee. Pretty expensive coffee for that matter, and yet their success allows them to open stores across the street from other Starbucks. Their brand offers a promise. You've come to expect a Starbucks on every corner, free Wi-Fi, and a comfortable place to sit and work. It's not really about the coffee. Starbucks makes good on their promise and we appreciate that promise. Why? Because we know what to expect and we trust it.

What's your personal promise? How do you want people to describe you? What do you want to be known for? What experience or feeling do you want your readers to have when they read your books? What do you want them to do? Answering these questions before you begin your brand development will help you ensure that the language of your brand reflects your true passion and your goals, while also reaching your ideal reader.

What's Revolutionary?

As a writer, the fact that you can deliver your message to the people who need it most, and you *can* do it from the comfort of your own home (or Starbucks) is not just critical, it's revolutionary, and it's leveling the playing field. What I'm talking about is how the internet has changed the way we communicate. Getting the word out is no longer about how much money you have to spend on radio adverts and billboard signs, it's about how well you know your audience and then consistently offering them valuable content. If your message is packaged in a professional way, even better, your audience is more likely to recognize your brand and trust it. Then, not only do they remember you, but they tell others about you—they become invested in you.

Authors often ask me how to sell more. The answer?

- Know your audience,
- connect with them in a meaningful and memorable way, then,
- stay connected.

And in today's marketplace all of that is within your control. Defining your own personal style so that you resonate with your audience and developing your online presence so that others sit up and take notice are now highly do-able.

Push You Out of Your Comfort Zone

When I think of all the writers who have accomplished great things and who've had the most impact on our world, I think of the attribute they must all have in common: Courage. I want you to consider your courage as you uncover and shape your personal brand.

It takes a lot of courage to believe in yourself, to step out of your comfort zone and disrupt the norm. It takes courage to shout your truth to the world and *trust* that what you have to say is not only worthy, but important, critical even.

Dream Bigger than You Did Yesterday

Throw out any self-doubt or negative talk that tells you that don't need a brand, or that you can't do it, and then, dream big! Even if you think, "Oh, I could never do that," dream it anyway. Give yourself permission to be creative and ask for what you want—if you have the courage to dream it, you are that much closer to making it happen.

The number-one thing I hear from my branding clients is: "Who am I to have a brand? What makes me special?"

Here's the deal. You are special. You have a superpower, a gift that makes you singular and unique. The key is to identify your superpower and then have the courage to build upon it and shout your message to the world.

Do you want to be famous, make a difference, make money? You gotta be honest with yourself. It takes courage to say: "Yes, I want to be famous!" Know your truth before you begin the journey. Are you willing to put in the work? It takes time, commitment, and sacrifice to make it big. You have to be willing to fail, and willing to begin again, and again. Be realistic. Simply throwing money at a situation won't make it work. It might help short-term, but the long-tail of success requires the kind of passion and drive where you never take no for an answer. Not from you, not from anyone.

It takes courage to get out of bed every day and believe that you are worthy, capable, and unique.

Are You Ready? The Ten Steps to Personal Branding

Even if you have doubt, that's okay, you can still take steps and begin the journey toward your goal. Trust that you will build confidence and courage along the way. It's the doing part that counts, ignoring the fear and doing it anyway. Self-doubt is common and perhaps even necessary, it helps us stay on top of our game, to try harder, to always learn and improve. Just don't let it stop you from moving forward.

Having a brand can provide you with a roadmap that keeps you going, even when you feel like your self-confidence is waning. I have noticed time and time again that the momentum of your brand will keep rolling and will begin to take on a life of its own.

A personal brand gives you the ability to continually build upon even the smallest of achievements, to capitalize upon on all of your successes, to stay relevant, and to continually strive to improve, to be better—to be great.

1. Imagine Your Success Line to Help Illuminate Your Goals

I'd like you to take a moment and imagine your success line, that is, the line that begins right here, right now, and runs into the place in time where you have achieved success.

What does your success look like? Where do you live? How are you making an impact? What do you look like? More importantly, how does the world view this successful you? Are you famous? What do you get up in the morning and dedicate your life to accomplishing? How do you feel?

Once you have a clear picture of what success looks and feels like, I want you to work backward along your success line and visualize the milestones that you will need to meet in order to achieve that success. What items might be on your roadmap? Things like: publishing your book, speaking at industry conferences, contributing articles to well-known magazines in your field, giving a TED Talk, appearing on well-known podcasts, building a mailing list of fans ... your roadmap items will be unique to you. These are your tangible goals, and even if they seem lofty, I encourage you to let them take shape. This is the making of your roadmap, your success plan, and it's all part of creating your personal brand.

2. Discover What You Are Willing to Invest and Create a Budget

Your budget is not just about money, it's about your time, and most importantly, it's about your emotional bandwidth.

When it comes to Money:

How much money can you comfortably invest? Get acquainted with both the low budget and the higher budget investments. Once you have a dollar amount in mind, you can budget for the things that will help build your brand in stages. You don't have to do it all right now, but you need a plan to get it all done at a comfortable pace.

When it comes to Time and Emotional Bandwidth:

How much time do you have to invest? How much bandwidth? Ask yourself how you want to spend your time. How comfortable are you with performing, or learning about the various tools available to you: blogging, social networking, podcasting, writing, video, speaking? In other words, uncover what gets you excited and brings you joy.

Contrary to popular opinion, you do not need to do it all. In fact, if you choose to employ methods that exhaust you, then those methods, and the time you spend doing them, will ensure that you never reach your end-goal because you'll end up broke, fatigued, and burned out.

Know all aspects of your budget, and stick to what is comfortable—remember, this is a long-term plan. It won't happen overnight.

3. Claim Your Unique Voice

Please don't worry about whether or not there are other people out there doing what you do. Demand for your type of ability is a good thing. It tells you that there's an audience for your message. And no matter how many of "them" there are out there, there is only one you.

Here's the key: what about your message is unique? Maybe you're funny, or lyrical, or well-researched.

If this is hard for you:

- I encourage you to sit down with friends or colleagues. Ask them to describe who you are at work. Ask them what they consider your super power to be. Ask them what you are good at, and conversely what you're not so good at. This exercise may require some serious self-analysis. It requires you to be open and honest with yourself and capable of hearing constructive feedback.
- I encourage you to develop a list of core values. Core values are the fundamental beliefs that drive your actions and decisions. These are the basis for what will make you unique and help you remain consistent and true to your brand. For larger companies, core values are handed down among the ranks as a barometer for how to act and how to treat others, used as a guide to ensure that the company is on track. For you, it's a reminder of why you do what you do and how you do it.
- What do you disagree with? Study your competitors and look for things that you disagree with. This may be the thing that sets you apart and ensures that you stand out.

4. Know Your Audience

Your brand is ultimately your promise to your target audience.

Where is your audience? What social platforms do they hang out on? What magazines do they read? Where do they get their news? Knowing your target audience means understanding their needs and desires. Identify what your audience needs and how you can serve them. If you know what they need right now, you can provide value for the long-term.

The most common answer to the question, "Who is your audience?" is all too often, and unfortunately, "Everyone." Believe me when I tell you that your audience cannot be everyone.

"Everyone" is a tough target to hit. And if you try to reach everyone, you'll reach no one. This isn't as much about demographics as it is about targeting the one person who you'll enjoy working with the most. I recommend that you identify a persona, or avatar, to serve as your ideal reader/client. Give this person a name and a history and then think about how you can serve this one person. Write a letter to your ideal reader to help connect with this person. By thinking about how you can help this person, you will be more likely to connect emotionally.

5. Know Who Influences Your Audience

I'm talking about your competition and the people who influence your buyers—these are the people who currently live and work in the space where your audience exists. They are fellow writers, authors, speakers, and thought leaders. These are the people you will learn the most from, the people you need to get close to. Ultimately, you only need to identify one influencer to find them all.

The internet is a glorious place for research. If you're not comfortable using search engines like Google, then you need to change that. And the only way to better navigate Google is to start navigating Google. Start by searching the name of one influencer. Google will then give you recommendations on the right side of your search results screen, it's called: "People also search for..." which is followed by a list of possible influencers you can research.

Pay attention to how you search and which searches are most effective. Note the places where your influencer appears online, where she writes, the comments on her articles, what social platforms she's active on (and which ones get the most engagement), who follows her and engages with her content, where she speaks (and the other speakers and influencers who speak there), how her bio reads, who she follows (because you will follow them too)—note it all, this is a great way to fill in those milestones for your roadmap.

Follow your influencers on social and subscribe to their newsletters. Comment on, and share their posts. Also, pay attention to ways in which you can help this person. What is missing from his/her narrative that you can add to? Do you see possible partnerships or collaboration opportunities? And, lastly, what is she/he doing that you can do better?

Set a plan in place to get close to your influencers and become known to them.

6. Research and Collect Data

As you research, be sure to track it all—do not do this later. Create a tracking system that works for you (spreadsheets, Google Drive, a physical notebook that you carry in your purse, an App on your phone, etc.).

Every time you are inspired by a conversation, a podcast, an article, or you just randomly have a good idea—write it down. And, here's the key, check in on your ideas once a week and create a system for putting these good ideas to work. Every ah-ha moment is another building block in the foundation of your brand's success. That foundation must be content-driven, and this habit of collecting ideas will pay off in spades.

7. Create Your Personal Roadmap

Remember your success line? Now it's time to build the roadmap that will guide you to the end of the line. Create a plan to meet those milestones and schedule them out for the next year. Things like content creation, networking, article submissions, speaking, and social media. Remember your budget. Don't over commit, or your plan will not be sustainable.

Even just a rough idea of where you are going helps you get there eventually, but a solid plan (a roadmap) ensures that you not only get there, but that you get there on time and on budget. Plus, a solid roadmap ensures that nothing slips through the cracks.

Go back to your success line and visualize each goal in your mind's eye, ask, *What do I need to do to get there?* Let's say for example you want to appear on a TED stage. You'll need a talk, a speaker sheet, a speaker page on your website, and a plan to get to the decision makers who will invite you to give that TED Talk.

Reverse engineer your success plan to build notoriety and credibility. Begin with a list of speaker goals: how much money will you be paid to speak, where will you speak, how frequently will you speak, and what will you speak on? Research the people who are already speaking at that level. What do their brands look like? Where do they contribute content? Who endorses them? Who follows them? And so on, and so on.

8. Make Sure Rich Content Is Part of Your Plan

Your roadmap will be unique to you, your industry, your audience, and your personal goals, but the one thing that every successful roadmap has in common is rich content. All of your content matters. Whether it's on your website, in an article you wrote, or in your marketing materials—content is king. Content is the only way to communicate your message, engage your audience, and get Google to rank you, and your website, as relevant.

Your website will be your home base for everything you do. The content on your website allows you to control the narrative of your brand and the actions of your readers. People will find you in a variety of ways, but they will, hopefully, all end up in the same place—your website.

Develop a content plan. It's okay to have a loose idea of what you will write about, and it's totally okay to introduce new concepts, but it's critical that you do this in a strategic and mindful way. Begin by developing a list of concepts that you will write about. Play with new concepts and pay attention to what resonates with you (your joy) *and* your audience.

Plan on how you will release content and create a schedule to keep yourself on track. Recycled versions of your content will appear in myriad places on the internet as you contribute to blogs, periodicals, and books, as well as in social posts, comments, videos, podcasts, media interviews, and more. Every little thing you do counts, it bolsters your credibility and leads people back to your website. Speaking of, always ask for a link back to your website when you contribute content. Also, link out to mentions of you online and thank the influencers who helped you publish your works elsewhere. Link to those influencers, share their content and they will do the same for you. This, my friends, is just the beginning of your visibility; it's the basis for your plan.

9. Make it Pretty

We have reached the part of the branding process that everyone expects to talk about—the visuals. Usually, the first thing people think about is the logo, but I'd like you to think beyond the logo. A successful brand is more than a logo—it's a signature color, a typeface, a style, an attitude; your brand needs a consistent look and feel that will appear on your website, business card, email signature, customized social media accounts, one-sheets, and more.

What's your look? How will people recognize you in every aspect of your brand? Are you edgy, soft, mysterious, professional, flippant, controversial, progressive, outrageous, cautious, or funny?

Keep in mind that the look you create needs to embody the feeling and tone of your voice—they support one another. From your logo and headshot to the way you dress, your products, giveaways, and even your social media posts, everything you create needs to follow a set of style guides that you establish from the beginning.

A cohesive look will tie it all together. A polished and professional brand instills trust in your audience. If you take yourself serious enough to create a polished brand, your audience will take you serious too, they'll pay attention, and, they will remember you and tell others about you. Bingo.

Branding is about resonating on every level possible and continuing to resonate as often as possible.

10. Connect the Dots

All of your products and marketing collateral must support the brand. It's time to review your assets to see if they fit, or need an overhaul. Every piece in the chain must connect the dots of your brand. Each mention, product, piece of marketing collateral, talk, appearance, and even your email signature matters.

Check in often. This will be part of the plan. It's easy to put it off 'till later, but if later never comes, then your roadmap will fall apart. Think about it, when you take a road trip, you need to account for heavy traffic, construction, and roadblocks. If you plan ahead and check in, you can account for these minor inconveniences and adjust your plan. The same is true in business.

Tracking your ROI (return on investment) is the most obvious form of checking in, but there are so many little ways to check in that will help bolster that ROI. Things like following your audience engagement (what content attracts the most comments, shares, likes, and click-throughs?) as well as tracking and understanding the impact of your website traffic, are just as critical as knowing the number of book sales in a given month. What happened on the day you sold twice as many e-books as usual? Which article converted into a higher subscriber rate? What can you do to duplicate that success? How can you work that into your future plan?

You'll find that some of your efforts are ineffective. Knowing this allows you to adjust and spend your time more wisely. Time is perhaps the most precious part of your budget, you have a finite amount of time and chasing your tail ensures chaos, not success.

I recommend that you set aside a specific day each week, or month, or quarter, and check in on the critical elements of your brand. You may decide to check in on some items more frequently, in order to stay connected to your plan.

Here are some examples of items to include on your checklist:

- Website traffic: learn how to effectively track your unique visitors, most popular- and unpopular- pages, bounce rate, and more, using Google analytics
- Content theme and website message (does it still ring true?)
- Social engagement: shares, likes, comments, click-throughs
- Blog categories: are they in line with your brand mission and core values, do they offer value to your audience, do they bring you joy?
- Posting calendar: create an annual calendar to guide you in your content development and posting strategy. Track which posts get the most engagement and adjust your calendar as needed.
- Website resources and tips: add value to your content regularly, schedule new resources and tips quarterly so that your content does not grow stale.
- Credibility: add endorsements, testimonials, case studies, published works, speaker topics, appearances to your bio, and website often. Every little achievement must become part of the overall narrative.
- Public Profiles: every time you create an online profile, track it in a spreadsheet so that you will remember to keep it up-to-date, otherwise you might forget about it and it could turn into an anchor that holds you back.
- Bio versions: create several versions of your bio that you will use for different purposes including a professional bio, a casual bio, a version for your book jacket, for social media, a speaker bio, and a media bio. Track where these are posted and check-in often to ensure that they don't get stale. Also, make sure to update them with your latest successes (impressive appearances, awards, associations, and more). Your bio is your introduction to your potential audience, make sure it represents you in the best way possible.

Begin!

Are you committed to you? It's time to stake your claim, establish your authority, build your online identity, and develop a personal style that is not only memorable, but also trustworthy. It's time to create a personal brand that will legitimize your presence in your industry and turn one-time readers into loyal followers.

Dream it. Believe it. Commit.

Commit to the daily grind. Commit to picking yourself up and starting over again, and again. Commit to the inevitable course correction that's needed to reach your goals, because no plan is ever perfect or static—just remember to keep your eye on your future success and you will get there. I promise.

You Are Worthy of Loyal Followers

My favorite side effect of a well-developed brand is the aphrodisiac of confidence building. A personal brand is the best confidence builder I've ever witnessed. As your message and your brand begin to take shape and "it" begins to feel real, you will feel a sense of validation and pride that is absolutely contagious. Trust that you are worthy of speaking your truth, and trust that your truth is valuable and needed. Like all other skill sets, it's okay to take one step at a time. You are worthy of this time investment. Start small, but know you can grow your author power into a powerful, life-changing, earth-shaking brand.

Trust, my beautiful friend, trust.



110 Book Marketing Ideas to Sell Your Book In 2022

There are virtually limitless ways to do market your book, garner media attention, and use social media and other platforms to spread the word about your book. Beyond professional media outreach, there are so many tips, ideas, and even tricks and “insider” tactics. Below you will find many ideas and tips, but we urge you to push the limits, get outside your comfort zone as it relates to promoting your book. Remember, all of these ideas are only a starting point!

[Click here](#) to watch a video about our company culture, philosophy, marketing services & team approach.

Author Websites

Yes, you DO need a website for book promotion! They don’t have to be expensive or fancy. A clean, professional, and easy-to-navigate website is all you need. “Bells and whistles” were perhaps popular at some times, but they are a distraction to most visitors. Just like when pitching media, give visitors what they need in as easy a manner as possible. Websites remain the easiest way for media, readers and valuable connections to get the information they need.

1. Create an author website for your fans if you don’t already have one. If you have a WordPress website, get the WordPress Plug-in called MyBookTable to help you sell more books and earn money through affiliates.
2. You’ll want to utilize SEO techniques while building your website to make it as visible as possible. Don’t forget to stick to Google’s guidelines to avoid penalties for your site.
3. Write a professional and interesting author bio.
4. Add a ‘Store’ page to your website; essentially a compelling advertisement for your book.
5. Make your book available to purchase at your online store.
6. Come up with ideas for merchandise related to your book(s).
7. Host contests where your fans can submit entries for merchandise designs.
8. Have pages on your author’s website for book reviews, FAQs, and testimonials.
9. Make a ‘Discussion’ page on your website specifically for questions, comments, visitor-posted ideas, and promotional strategies authors have employed.
10. Write an advice column on your website for aspiring authors.
11. Add buttons to your website to take viewers straight to your social media sites.
12. Keep your website clean and easy to navigate (like we try to do with [SmithPublicity.com](#)); bells and whistles can be distracting. This applies whether you’ve written non-fiction or a novel; simpler is almost always better.

General Online Ideas

It’s no secret that much of where we work, connect, shop, and even gather socially occurs online; therefore, it’s not surprising that you will want a strong online presence! By maximizing your online footprint and growing your virtual platform, you will make yourself visible in a crowded space. Consider all of the resources and options available to make the absolute most of your marketing efforts.

13. Have an online book tour and plan a cost-effective online campaign.

14. Write a press release and distribute it to online outlets.
15. Create monthly newsletters and ask fans to sign up for them.
16. Consider if pay-per-click advertising on Google etc. might be appropriate for your book.
17. Submit your website to any related group, company, or organization website that has a website directory.
18. Start link building by creating valuable resources and building relationships with site owners that would find those resources to be worth sharing.
19. Research your competitors to find out what they're doing to be successful that you're not.

Blogging Tips

Simple rule: Blogging rules! Posting regularly to a blog – which should be easy to find via your website – is a great way for *any* author to stay connected and active online. Blogs lend an educational component to your platform, as they are an ideal way to share your knowledge with others. They are also imperative for effective SEO, as they increase your search visibility through a variety of key words and phrases related to your expertise.

20. Create a blog on your website and update it regularly with new, interesting content. Comment on anything that will interest visitors, and cover diverse topics including developments in the publishing industry. Here's our blog!
21. Respond to comments and questions on your blog promptly, and welcome any type of ideas offered in comments.
22. Once you've been blogging for a while, search your archives for your best blog posts and sell them as a collection (preferably as a low-cost eBook).
23. Add keywords to your blog posts and follow a DIY SEO plan.
24. Guest blog on other popular blogs as a published author promoting one's book. This can be particularly effective for novel promotion when you guest blog on special interest genre blogs.
25. Allow guest bloggers on your blog as a way to reciprocate your book promotion efforts.
26. Create an RSS Feed if you don't already have one, and burn it on Feedburner.com. This will allow you to obtain statistics about your readers.
27. Submit your blog to blog directories related to being an author, your genre, etc.

Forums

Forums are often an underappreciated, yet equally important, place to connect with fellow authors, others in your industry, and potential readers. There are many forums to be found online, and joining one – and remaining active in participating in it through comments, answering questions, asking questions, etc. – could mean a valuable new group with which to network. If you can't find the exact forum you're looking for... create one!

28. Create/join a forum (it doesn't have to be specifically related to books or publishing) and actively participate in its community.

Facebook

Yes, Facebook is still relevant and remains an important tool for promoting authors. Having a Facebook page for your author brand is beneficial because it lends legitimacy to your book/yourself as a professional and also serves as another way to promote your book and everything that goes along with it: events, giveaways, future projects, and more. It's important to remain as authentic as possible on Facebook and to engage with your followers – the more you can interact, the better!

29. Create a Facebook page geared toward you as an author – not your personal life.
30. Give fans the option to post their book reviews, testimonials, comments, and questions to your Facebook page.

Twitter

If you have the time to do it right, Twitter can be your most powerful social media tool. Hashtags, particularly, reign supreme on Twitter and are a great way to find potential readers and others to network with, and also to be found. As with other social media platforms, Twitter helps you connect with your community and lends legitimacy to your brand.

31. Create a Twitter account to tweet updates about new books, book tours, book trailers, media coverage of you and your book, etc. For example, here's our Twitter page.
32. Provide fans with a hashtag for promoting your new book.
33. Use Twitter hashtags for events, news, promotions, etc.
34. Use Tweetables:
 - I just got 101 Tips on How to Market a Book for free from @SmithPublicity. – Click to tweet.
 - Keep your eyes peeled for offers on my new book. I'm going to try some new tips to market my book from @SmithPublicity. – Click to tweet.
 - 101 Marketing Tips that will help you sell more books! – Click to tweet.
 - Have you tried any of these book tips from @SmithPublicity? There are so many! – Click to tweet.
 - Where am I going to find marketing ideas? Oh yeah, @SmithPublicity has 101 of them.– Click to tweet.
 - These marketing strategies from @SmithPublicity really helped me as a new author. – Click to tweet.
 - Need to expand your repertoire of techniques? These should inspire you! – Click to tweet.

Create a LinkedIn Author Page

35. Create a LinkedIn page to connect to other authors and professionals in the writing world and related industries. LinkedIn has increasingly become the most popular professional networking platform. Remember that LinkedIn is searchable, so incorporate keywords people might search for on your main page. And, post regularly, more is better, but once a week is fine. View our LinkedIn page here.

Promote Your Book on YouTube

YouTube is one of the most powerful search engines on the Internet, and it's incredibly easy to create video content. Like your website, your videos don't need to be slickly produced; today, most smartphones can produce nice looking videos that will work fine. As a general rule, keep your videos short – no more than a few minutes. Obviously, if you're posting a video of a book event you had or a speech you gave, these much longer videos are fine. Like other platforms, YouTube is keyword driven, so make sure you use the video description section to incorporate keywords that people may use to find an author or book like yours.

36. Create a YouTube account. Here's what our YouTube channel looks like.
37. Describe your channel and videos. Also create playlists of your videos so that the algorithm can understand it better.
38. Link your YouTube videos on your Facebook and Twitter accounts.
39. Compile a series of short videos of you discussing topics related to your book. Make them informational, not promotional, and employ them in all marketing services and activities.

Sell Your Book on Amazon

Love it or hate it, every author needs Amazon! Some authors dislike the way Amazon can discount prices, but remember, people want to buy books from sources they trust. You may not make as much from each book sale on Amazon as compared to directly selling them from your website, but you'll end up making more money because more people will buy from Amazon, and few will likely buy from your website.

40. Go to Amazon and register as an author. Be sure to create a compelling and robust author central page.
41. Sell your books on Amazon; follow the wealth of information and advice Amazon offers and incorporate ideas into your plan.
42. Try to get fans to post their book reviews and testimonials on Amazon.
43. Join Amazon's affiliate program.

Networking

Networking, whether the old-fashioned meet and greets or the cyber type, the principle remains the same – make authentic connections with people – the type of people you want to know about you! Networking can lead to a wide variety of opportunities, beyond just spreading word about your book.

44. Attend book publishing events and writers' conferences and distribute information about your book, business cards, etc.
45. Offer to speak to your local chamber of commerce about a topic related to your book.
46. Check for meet-up groups that relate to your book topic.
47. Go to local and regional general networking groups – most areas have professional networking events for a wide variety of businesses, interests, hobbies, etc
48. Check for local activity clubs. You might be surprised how many there are, and these can be great places to potentially offer to speak to the group on a topic related to your group.

Goodreads

Goodreads boasts the world's largest community of book lovers – so of course, you'll want to be a part of it! Users of Goodreads can generate reading lists, review books, keep track of the books they've read, and more. By having your book available on Goodreads, you will reach a larger audience of book lovers. Think of Goodreads as the virtual "word of mouth" for books; if one user reads and recommends your book, word can spread like wildfire.

49. Go to Goodreads and register as an author.
50. Develop your profile page by adding a photo and bio.
51. Add the Goodreads Author widget to your website.
52. Publicize events.
53. Promote your books.
54. Post videos.
55. Do even more with Goodreads.

Offline Marketing Tips

The Internet is everywhere and affects everything, but believe it or not, there *is* life outside of the Web! In person connections and conversations are still highly valued, and there are many ways you can make the most of face-to-face time and other marketing collateral in the "real world." Just as there's no replacement for turning the pages of a physical book, offline marketing opportunities are not to be underestimated.

56. Organize a team for your book launch.
57. Contact a local bookstore or other venues about hosting a book release party.
58. Go on a book tour.
59. Design merchandise for your books and consider a targeted advertisement.
60. Make business cards with your photo and addresses to your author's website and social media profile pages.
61. Speak at book clubs about writing in your genre – book genre marketing can be a surprisingly effective addition to your promotional campaign.
62. Have book readings for your new book. Some possible venues:
 - Retirement homes
 - Elementary, junior high, or high schools depending on your target age group
 - Coffee shops
 - Community colleges
 - Nearby universities
 - Locally owned bookstores
 - Rehab centers
 - Hospitals
 - Libraries
 - Google+ Hangout
 - Churches
 - The setting (town, city) of your book.
 - Community events (i.e. fairs, picnics, festivals)
63. Have book signings for your new book.
64. Contact your local paper and ask them if they'd be interested in interviewing you.
65. Contact the local paper of the town your book is set in about interviewing you.
66. Contact your local radio station and ask them if they'd be interested in having you on their show. (These tips can help if you get the interview.)
67. Contact the local radio station of the town your book is set in about having you on their show.
68. Create an affiliate program.
69. Join an affiliate program.
70. Partner with organizations, clubs, and other groups that support a cause similar to the one that your book addresses.

Book Publicity for the Fans – Ideas and Strategies

Fans can be your evangelists ... spreading the word about your book far and wide! You want to create authentic relationships and cater to your fanbase, because they are the most important asset you have.

71. Offer your devoted fans sneak previews of your new book.
72. Offer your devoted fans advance copies of your new book.
73. Have a page on your website for short stories, and add a new one every week or month depending on your schedule.
74. Promote each weekly short story on Facebook and Twitter.
75. Host a contest for topic suggestions for your weekly short story.
76. Host a contest for the best short story where the winner will have their story featured on your website.

77. Link to the winner's story on your social media pages.
78. Have free book give-away contests for your fans and website visitors.
79. Celebrate your fans by featuring a Fan of the Month on your website and social media profiles.
80. Host a contest for the best illustration of a scene from one of your books where the winner will have his/her illustration featured on your website.
81. Link to the winner's illustration on your social media pages.
82. Host a contest for the best book trailer where the winner will have his/her trailer featured on your website.
83. Link to the winner's book trailer on your social media pages.
84. Host a contest where your fans can submit a movie of them acting their favorite scene in one of your books and feature the winner on your website.
85. Link to the winner's movie on your social media pages.
86. Host a costume contest around Halloween for the best costume of one of your major characters where the winner will be featured on your website.
87. Link to the winner's picture of him/her in the costume on your social profiles.
88. Create fan pages for the main characters in your book.
89. Ask fans to post pictures of them reading your book.
90. Get to know your fans even better by polling them on their likes, dislikes, and opinions on your ideas for books or promotions.
91. Write a book specifically for your fans.
92. Write a book that your fans can customize by picking what happens next.

Go the Extra Mile

Marketing a book is more a marathon than a sprint; it takes time, persistent effort, and dedication. Even if you hire a professional book publicist, you still need to be involved and helping promotion with your own activities. Sustained, well-planned and diverse book promotion will almost always lead to positive things.

93. Make a book trailer, or hire a professional to make one.
94. Offer to write articles for a magazine related to your genre.
95. Host a seminar for aspiring writers.
96. Host a webinar.
97. Advertise on a low-cost billboard.
98. Become a featured content writer for some websites related to your genre, being an author, writing your first book, etc.
99. Donate your books to places where your target audience is located:
 - Elementary, junior high, or high schools
 - Daycare centers
 - Libraries
 - Libraries in the town where your book is set in
 - Camps
 - Community centers
 - YMCAs
 - Senior centers
 - Retirement communities
 - Homeless shelters

- Prisons
- Local colleges
- Colleges in the town where your book is set in
- Children's hospitals

100. Utilize publicity services like Help A Reporter Out (HARO)

Podcasts

Podcasts are booming in popularity! They represent a great opportunity for authors because they allow for long-form, uninterrupted interviews and casual conversation. They are also becoming a popular tool for authors who create their own podcasts.

101. Do some basic Google searches to find podcasts that pertain to your book, then reach out and offer yourself as a guest. Keep in mind that popular podcasts book guests months in advance, so contact them early.
102. Listen to educational podcasts that will help you learn about books and marketing, such as [“All Things Book Marketing”](#)
103. Check out authors in your genre who have podcasts
104. Start your own podcast! It's not as hard as you think. For an example of this, check out Spreaker.
105. Invest in some low-cost editing software for podcasts such as Wavepad.

Some Tricks of the Trade

As professional book publicists, the experts at Smith Publicity have developed many creative ways to get attention for a book. Remember to think outside the box and expand your comfort level.

106. Send your book to a producer or editor via Fed Ex or UPS – it is much more likely to be opened.
107. If you're pitching to be on a radio or TV show and your book is fiction, lead with why you'd be a great interview, and don't announce that you've written a novel. Broadcasts outlets are more inclined to interview non-fiction authors, so make them love your pitch and not focus on the kind of book you've written.
108. When sending a book to a media contact, print or write “requested material” on the envelope.
109. Leave a copy of your book on a train or bus, and put a sticker on it that says “Free book, please pass along when done.”
110. Listen to talk radio, watch TV interview shows, read magazines and newspapers, review online news sites ... and see how other authors are being featured!

Your mind is now hopefully opened to alternative, unique and fun ways to promote a book. You can take any of the above ideas and use them as starting points on how to sell a book and develop even more. Successful authors don't rely on one way to market themselves. They don't rely on just the traditional; they explore, innovate, and most importantly, take chances and have fun in the process.

Book Marketing Facts

The seven facts we offer about book marketing and publicity come from our experience working on more than 4,000 books since our founding in 1997.

First, we know authors can sometimes become hung up on the size of a media audience, and believe national media is always the best way to sell books. But for many non-fiction books, a small, niche outlet that covers the topic of a book can have a huge impact on sales.

Second, the media need authors as much as authors need media. For example, as much as 50-percent of a newspaper article often comes from a press release. The releases come from PR people and authors — without them, many print outlets wouldn't exist.

Third, book promotion is more a marathon than a sprint. It takes time to fully promote a book. Whether on your own or with a professional publicist, expect to be promoting your book in some way for at least four months.

Fourth, podcasts are becoming a staple of book publicity campaigns because their audiences are exploding and they focus on specific topics. The long-form, free-flowing interviews on podcasts are excellent for authors.

Fifth, authors and publishers have choices for book promotion. Publicity firms come in various sizes and offer different pricing options. Thoroughly investigate all of your options and take your time deciding what's right for you.

Sixth, except for book publicity services based on specific numbers of media placements, be wary if you hear a guarantee from a prospective publicist. The reality is there are very few guarantees in book publicity. Don't be scared away — but be aware.

Seventh, publicists need authors too. During publicity campaigns, authors need to be involved, available, and accessible.

No two books and authors are alike and everyone needs to follow a unique approach to publicity and promotion. But with the vast number of potential campaign tactics, you can find success marketing yourself as an author. Creativity and proactiveness are best. Always push your limits and go beyond your comfort zone to successfully market your book.



About Smith Publicity, Inc.

Smith Publicity has forged a reputation as one of the most creative publicity and public relations agencies worldwide. Since 1997, we've promoted thousands of authors from *New York Times*® best sellers to first time independently published books, publishers, businesses, organizations, and entrepreneurs. Our clients have appeared on nearly every major media outlet in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and abroad. Smith Publicity was honored by being named in PR News' "Agency Elite Top 100" list for 2022 and 2023. In 2022, we celebrated 25 years in business!

Our talented, veteran team of publicists are passionate about books and thrive on creating wonderful opportunities for our authors. Over the years, our team of diverse publicists have come from backgrounds as television producers, newspaper reporters, corporate communications and PR executives, publicists with long careers with publishers, on-air camera personalities, book bloggers/reviewers, independent bookstore managers, academia and music, food, lifestyle and personality cultivation publicists. We love to celebrate our camaraderie, client successes and exciting times with parties, retreats and happy hours, and we love to give back to the community through various charitable volunteer events. Our team collaborates to brainstorm and share ideas for all our clients giving each author the combined strategy, experience and talent from dozens of industry professionals. We are passionate about treating one another with kindness and support, and strive to foster a culture of professional learning and growth opportunities. We are members of many organizations including Independent Book Publishers Association and Public Relations Society of America.

Since our inception twenty-five years ago, we have cultivated unique skills to position authors and their work to the media. We have our own strategic "secrets" that separate us from the competition, and we have been at the public forefront—and ahead of—major book marketing and publishing industry changes. Smith Publicity has a history of giving back to literary and local causes. Examples include our college scholarship, now in its eighth year, to foster students with a passion for writing, donating to organizations and causes that support underserved voices including the Center for Black Literature, donating thousands of books to Vietnam Veterans of America over the past decade, team volunteering days with local organizations, pro-bono work for worthy/non-profit book projects, and our newest effort where each month, team members select personal passion charities for Smith Publicity to donate.

We've developed an extensive list of personal media contacts, and we subscribe to a state-of-the-art professional database of more than 1.6 million media contacts, media outlets, bloggers, and analysts as well as publicity opportunities such as editorial calendars. Our publicists closely monitor media opportunities through HARO and ProfNet, and we proactively receive requests from our vast network of media contacts looking for authors and experts on a daily basis. We are able to combine these resources so our clients have access to an unparalleled level of contacts.