

# SMITH PUBLICITY'S *POWERFUL*

*(and sometimes unusual!)*

## Book Marketing Tips and Insights

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## **Becoming a TED/TEDX Talk Presenter: Tips for Authors 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?**

According to their website:

- 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:

1. What is your ONE big idea?
2. What are you going to share that will SURPRISE your audience?
3. 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.

## **Your Book as Your Business Card: How to Gain a Marketing Advantage by Going Literary**

What is 6" by 9," usually weighs roughly one pound, and is giving an increasing number of business leaders an advantage over the competition? A book.

The use of 'the book as a business card' has added a new and powerful tool to marketing arsenals to build credibility and attract new business opportunities. Experts, consultants, speakers and professionals from various fields are putting their knowledge into professionally-published books—a calling card sure to make a bigger and more meaningful impression than the traditional business card.

Marketing—especially for businesspeople in consulting and service industries—is about credibility, and a book establishes a person as someone who has reached a level of expertise. It allows readers (potential clients) to learn more about their philosophies, thought process and successful case studies, much more so than a simple brochure. And, you don't have to be published by a major house to achieve and utilize this credibility. Authors are proving that it doesn't matter if a book is self-published -- the end result in terms of marketing benefits is the same.

Consider this true case study: A highly credentialed, successful consultant was asked by a corporation to prepare a proposal for an all day seminar. He was told his proposal looked great, but they ultimately decided to go with someone else simply because they were impressed the competitor was a “published author,” and one who charged a significantly higher fee. The only real difference was one had a book. This consultant is in now in the process of self-publishing a book as he sees the benefits and new opportunities this will bring his business.

Who can benefit from the book-as-business card?

- Consultants
- Service-providing business owners
- Self-help professionals, motivational speakers, etc.
- Non-profit organization leaders

Having a book, however, is but one element of the book-as-marketing-tool strategy. If an author/expert secures media attention, his or her credibility is enhanced even further. When a prospective customer visits a website or reads a company brochure showing TV or radio interviews, or features from newspapers and magazines, it showcases this person is a trustworthy expert in his or her field.

Businesspeople can announce to their prospective clients that they are important enough, credible enough, and interesting enough to have the media interview or feature them. This is marketing power in its purest form.

What makes all of this possible is the book. While non-authors can get media coverage, most of the people you hear on radio, see on TV, or read about in newspapers and magazines are in fact authors. The book, again, acts as the credibility attracting the media.

Websites, brochures and collateral materials *tell* prospective clients what you can do, a book *proves* you know what you're doing—and give you the space to explain your ideas. Add in the media coverage, and you then have other people (the media) proving you are an expert because they thought enough of you to interview or write about you.

So, bottom line: As the adage goes, “write about what you know.” Write about your business, your tradecraft; and teach others, via a book, the most essential elements of the service you provide. Put in the printed word that which you do best. When your book is printed and available for purchase, promote it, get media coverage; hand it out at presentations or talks; give it away, and customers will come. You can't be complacent, however. A book does nothing for you if you don't market it and make others aware of it. Use it, and get absolute maximum value from your marketing investment.

You've become an author. You've proven you are an expert. While the world won't fall at your feet because you've written a book, you will have created an invaluable advantage over your competition.



## **A Few Things a Kindergartener Can Teach You About Book Marketing**

You listen to all the experts, consult with professionals with decades of experience, watch every webinar you can on book marketing ... you absorb as much information from people who certainly know what they're talking about. But like many things, sometimes we over-complicate matters; in our efforts to provide the most cutting-edge strategies and new promotional ideas, we forget about some basics. It's important to return to the fundamentals at times, those principles and straightforward insights that come from surprising sources ... including kindergarteners.

### **Play nicely.**

In [book marketing](#) and book publicity in general, there's no tolerance for rude behavior or acting inappropriately when dealing or "playing" with the media. You received a bad book review? Deal with it, learn from it if you can, and respect the reviewer's opinion.

An editor or producer won't return your call or reply to your e-mail? Don't get mad at them. If they're not responding, you're not giving them what they want and need. It really is that simple.

### **Sharing is always good.**

Parents of young children teach sharing, and are thrilled when they see it in action. A child brings Star Wars action figure to school and lets his friend take it home and borrow it for awhile. The next day the child comes home with a different toy. The friend he shared with gave something back to him.

It's crucial in book marketing to understand the "giving principle." To get something you want, you first have to give something to others. Some times the best way to market a book is by giving it away. Do a radio interview and offer five free copies to callers. Why? Because when you give your books out, what happens? The person who gets the book will first of all be thrilled that he got a book for free, and secondly, because you've written a great book, he will tell others about it ... and those other people will buy your book!

Share. Give. Do this and you'll get much more in return.

**Show respect to your teachers, and those you are paying to help you.**

We all know a parent who is never satisfied with their child's teacher, as good as he or she may be. They e-mail, call, complain and incessantly hound the teacher.

Generally speaking, this isn't a good thing for parents to do, and in book marketing, it's a downright bad thing to do.

If you hire a publicist to promote your book, chances are you're spending a good bit of your hard earned money. You are paying someone to do what they are trained and experienced at doing ... book promotion and book marketing. You pay a book publicity agency to do what you know you can't do as well as a professional book publicist.

If you do your due diligence and hire a book publicity agency, you need to trust that the firm you selected will do a good job. Let your publicist do what she does best. Don't micro-manage. Don't insist on her spending an hour on the phone with you every day. Let her do what you paid for ... market your book to the media. Respect her talents and experience, those things you hired her for in the first place.

If you hire someone and want their best, give them a chance to do their best. If you hound your publicist with barrages of questions every day, they will spend a lot of their time answering your questions rather than promoting your book. Which do you prefer? Are you paying to have questions answered or to have a professional be an enthusiastic and passionate advocate for your book, working every day to get media coverage?

You should expect regular communication, and you should know what's going on in your book marketing campaign, but beyond that, let book publicists do what you pay them to do.

## 4 Must-Know Book Publicity Tips

- **Holiday Gift Guides** We've said it before...now is the time to start reaching out to long lead-time magazines as they are looking for items to feature for holiday issues. Look for your top priority outlets and research their submission guidelines. Visit the website, go to the editorial calendar to see future issues/deadlines, then to the "contact us" section to try to find the right person. In most cases, along with a copy of your book, you'll want to send a personalized cover letter, book release, and author biography. Make sure you follow the guidelines! Editors will not waste their time researching the required information on their own.
- **Attracting Speaking Engagements** Smith Publicity attended the National Speakers Association's annual meeting in Anaheim in July. One question we asked author/speakers is: What is your best way of getting speaking engagements? The number one answer was, "Picking up the phone and calling my own network." From a publicity perspective, make sure your bio states that you are available to speak and name your topics, and let your professional (and personal) circles know you are interested in speaking engagements.
- **Reaching the People Next Door** Local audiences are a great way to sell books, especially if the book storyline is set in your area. Introduce yourself to your local bookstores, both chain and independent; most have a local author's section. Ask the Store Manager to feature your book, and perhaps discuss doing an author event (talk to the Community Relations Manager at Barnes & Noble). Visit your local library. Offer to do a reading or brainstorm on how you can participate in an event where people can meet you. Your local media will be more apt to cover you and your book as their priority is featuring local people and news.
- **Follow Your Topic Using Google and Twitter Alerts** This is easy to set up and free of charge. You can find news, postings, discussions or listing of you, your book, your company or topic.

Link to set up Google Alert: <http://www.google.com/alerts>

Link to set up Twitter Alert (Using TweetBeep): <http://tweetbeep.com/>

## **Fictional Promotion:**

### **How to Get REAL Broadcast Publicity for Your Make-Believe Book**

Talk to any book publicist, and you'll hear the same thing: Getting broadcast publicity for a self-published or mid-list novel is at best challenging, and often nearly impossible. Unless your last name is Clancy, King, or Rowling, chances are slim a radio or TV program is going to want you on the air to talk about your book. The reason is simple: Good interviews are usually based on real-life topics, and fiction – by its very nature – is creation by imagination, not real life.

If getting on the air to promote your novel is important to you, however, there is a way to make it happen. In many cases, it's actually rather simple. But a word of caution: To do it, you'll have to set aside your desire to talk about your book, and think like both a publicist and a producer. In other words, you'll have to “play the game” that is broadcast publicity, and become a savvy self-promoter.

### **3 Steps for the Publicity Hungry Novelist**

- 1. *Forget about your book.* Yes, you read that line correctly. The book, alas, is not what will get you interviews. In fact, it could keep you from getting on the air if you don't play the game.**

To get interviews, you must present producers with topics or show ideas based on your experience, knowledge or credentials, or on real-life themes in your book. Remember: No one wants to interview a book; they want to interview a person. For non-fiction authors, it's relatively easy to extract helpful information or engaging topics from a book, and use the same expertise, which enabled them to write the book to become a great talk show guest.

For novelists, however, literary creativity and an active imagination usually don't add up to engaging interviews. But, most novelists base their stories on real-life experiences, sometimes without even knowing they did. That's why you should forget about your book, and think about what caused you to write on a specific subject, include certain characters or use certain locales. Then, look at your own personal history, work experiences and personal adventures.

Secondly, look at themes in your book – the storyline, setting, and characters. What is the basis or “topic” of the book? Does it involve controversial characters or interesting themes? What kind of research did you complete to accurately write the story and add depth to characters?

What you’ll find, most likely, is that there is a “topic” in your novel, whether from your own personal experiences or the story itself. Almost every work of fiction is based upon something “real.” Discover what it is.

## **2. *Go angling.* Based on what you came up with from Step 1, find an interesting angle.**

Let’s say, for example, you wrote a novel about the adventures of a group of senior citizens who move out of a retirement center and into a private home together. Perhaps you came up with the idea after caring for your own parent, and seeing problems with senior care. You did a little research for your story, and discovered that very few seniors live together like many younger people do, and a little more research made you realize that there are really not many reasons why this is so.

You’ve discovered a topic: “Senior Group Living.” To jump-start your publicity campaign, you start a “movement” to launch awareness of senior group living. Now, you have something the media might find interesting. The market for this topic wouldn’t just be older people, but also Baby Boomers and anyone who cares for an older parent.

You’ve turned fiction into reality.

## **3. *Give ‘em what they want.***

Based on your idea of “senior group living,” you now need to develop a news release to get producers interested. Think about what you hear on the radio or see on TV when the host announces what will be coming after a break. Segues such as, “*After the break, find out why shacking up may not be just for young people any more.*” That line is designed to keep you tuned into a program, and that’s exactly the type of effect your trying to achieve with a news release ... getting the producer interested.

Important: Don't write a press release the way *you* want to present it, but the way *producers* want to see it. Mastering this concept can make a world of difference.

Using the above example, you might try a question headline:

*“Out of the Retirement Community and into Homes: Is Senior Group Living the Next Big Craze?”*

Or, something controversial:

*“Selling Grandma Short? The Cold, Hard Truth About Senior Citizen Living Options”*

Perhaps you have a website to promote your book. Why not conduct a survey of seniors, which assesses their preferences for living options? You might find that a very high percentage would be interested in living in private homes together. Since the media *loves* statistics and surveys, you might have created an excellent angle for print exposure:

*“Survey Finds That 95% of Senior Citizens Would Prefer Living in Private Homes With Other Seniors.”*

After you have the headline, the rest is relatively easy. Write a short, snappy one page release in typical “inverted pyramid” journalism style. Lay out the problem, give an example, and then introduce the solution or the angle of your release. Include 4 or 5 bullet points which can serve as talking points for producers and hosts, trying to make it so that that each bulleted item could stand on its own as a headline. Use the last paragraph to summarize your credentials and promote your book.

In three steps, you've turned what appeared to be a potentially impossible book to use as a means of getting on radio or TV, into a viable and interesting topic. If you can get the release into the right hands at shows, you'll likely get calls for interviews, and opportunities to promote your book. Even if the topic is only tangentially related to your book, you will be introduced as “Joe

Jones, the author of the novel \_\_\_\_\_,” and hosts (at least the good ones) will give you plugs for the book.

### ***Case Study in Successful Fictional Promotion***

In the very early days of print-on-demand (POD) publishing, a self-published, first-time author came to Smith Publicity for promotion of his novel, a classic Mafia story in the tradition of *Goodfellas*. He had no name recognition and limited distribution – so getting the word out was essential.

After in-depth discussion, we learned the author had a near encyclopedic knowledge of the Mafia, its history and operation, so we decided to position him as a Mafia expert, and developed a short release titled:

*“From Buckwheats Hits and Empty Suits to Vigs and Little Joes:  
Give Your Audience the Ultimate Mafia Trivia and Lingo Quiz.”*

The author went on to do more than 50 radio interviews and was featured in the *New York Times*. Fiction to reality!

### **A few last tips for promoting fiction titles:**

- Refer to your novel as a “book” in the press release. Some producers are turned off by novelist-guests, and even if they call and discover it’s a novel when they speak to you, you’re still in a great position to sell them on the topic anyway.
- Don’t compare yourself to well-known authors. Create your own identity. Trying too hard to build yourself up often isn’t as effective as presenting yourself professionally.
- Develop a catch phrase for yourself. If you refer to yourself as an “expert” in something, people will begin to refer to you as that when you’re introduced. In book promotion, the bashful perish and the confident prevail!

- Learn the soft sell. Producers and hosts hate nothing more than a guest who refers to their book every other sentence. Let the interview come to you, and let the host do his or her job.
- Never say never. Do *every* interview you can, regardless of wattage or location. Talk shows will drive book sales, but it will not happen overnight. Be patient, persistent ... and have fun!



## 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 2013 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 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, 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.
- **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.
- **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.

- **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.

## **Pay-Per-Placement Versus Retainer Based Book Publicity: An Assessment**

# 1: “Pay nothing unless we produce.” It’s a compelling, seemingly perfect arrangement. An author pays nothing unless a book publicity agency secures media coverage. A no-brainer. A “why would you do anything else” proposition. Pay-per-placement (PPP) seems perfect.

#2: “No guarantees of any coverage, but we have a carefully developed plan and a track record.” Wait, wait, wait ... nothing guaranteed? A retainer based (RB) publicity firm or publicist takes thousands of your dollars each month and guarantees nothing? Why would an author choose this?

The debate over RB book marketing and PPP is an old one, and to be sure and fair, there’s no definitive “right” answer. There are inherent advantages and disadvantages to both. Education is key for any author considering a book marketing campaign. In fact, the idea of a “campaign” is one of the key differences. It’s also a matter, either way, of being careful what you ask for.

### **Defining Pay-Per-Placement and Retainer-Based Book Marketing Campaigns**

PPP can appear simple in concept. An author typically pays nothing upfront, and only pays when actual coverage is secured. Fees can range from \$100 per placement to over \$10,000. If nothing happens and no coverage is secured, nothing is paid. A poor performing firm is not rewarded for lack of effectiveness. Similar in concept to the attorney who works on your behalf but only gets paid if he gets you money, it’s an instinctively powerful selling proposition.

RB publicists charge anywhere from \$2,500 to \$8,000 per month, or more, and offer no guarantees of coverage. Contracts can range from two months to a year. A strategic plan is prepared, and the publicist or agency will tout their track record, offer testimonials and references, and generally show off their body of work. The bottom line, however, remains: Nothing is guaranteed. An author can ostensibly pay for months and receive no coverage. What the book marketing agency has done for other clients doesn’t guarantee the same will happen for an author.



## Case Studies

Here are some snippets from an actual sample rate sheet from a pay-per-placement publicity firm:

### PRINT

Type of outlet:

Magazine circ. to 49,999 Newspaper circ. to 99,999

Trade Publications circ. to 4,999

Magazine circ. to 49,999

Newspaper circ. to 99,999

Trade Publications circ. to 4,999

Costs:

--Feature \$1,800

--Focus Coverage \$1,450

--Mention \$800

--Including client URL add \$450

Magazine circ. 500,000+

Newspaper circ. 800,000

Trade Publications circ. 15,000+

--Feature \$5,000

--Focus Coverage \$4,500

--Mention \$3,400

--Including client URL Add \$700

### BUSINESS WEB MEDIA

**Visitors/month to 49,999**

Feature \$2,250

Focus \$1,800

Mention \$1,000

Including Client URL – add \$350

**Visitors/month 50,000 – 199,000**

Feature \$3,450

Focus \$2,500

Mention \$1,380

Including Client URL- add \$550

**Visitors/month 200,000 – 499,000**

Feature \$3,330

Focus \$2,800

Mention \$1,500

Including Client URL – Add \$650

**Visitors/month 500,000+**

Feature \$5,000

Focus \$4,000

Mention \$3,400

Including Client URL – add \$700

**MEDIA**

**Streaming Video for above**

Add 50%

Let's put PPP versus RB to the test in two case studies:

Here is actual client update for a print publicity campaign carried out by a book marketing firm for a business book author:

*By-line articles, reviews, print interviews, mentions, or feature stories ran in the following publications:*

- 2/2/11: Wiglaf Journal: Book review
- 3/2: Manufacturing & Technology
- 3/10: Business Life Magazine
- 3/11: TMCnet.com
- 3/15: Senior Market Advisor
- 3/21: Creative Leisure News
- 3/21: Inside Business Magazine
- 3/21: BusinessNH Magazine
- 3/22: Senior Market Advisor (Part 2)
- 3/23: Dynamic Business magazine
- 3/23: Top-Consultant.com
- 3/24: TheHR Director
- 3/25: eHotelier.com
- 3/28: FreshBusinessThinking.com
- 3/29: Business Spectator
- 3/29: Customer Think
- 3/30: CustomerAnalyticsOne
- 4/1: Canadian Professional Sales Association
- 4/1: DentistryIQ
- 4/3: ConnectIT
- 4/3: eChannelLine
- 4/3: The Drum (online)
- 4/24: Florida Times Union
- 4/27: Repertoire Magazine Blog:
- 4/29: Central Florida Christian Chamber Blog
- May 2011 Jacksonville Business Journal
- May 2011 Advantages Magazine
- May 2011 Mworld (American Management Association's newsletter)
- May 2011 Marketing Sherpa

- June 2011 Proofs Magazine
- March/April 2011 Business Excellence Online Magazine
- 5/25 TheHill.com
- 5/25 Customer Think
- 5/31 *Financial Post*
- 6/1 *Agency Sales Magazine*
- 6/2 China Watch Blog
- 6/2 ECM Plus (online)
- 6/3 Dentistry IQ (online)
- 6/7 *Australian Financial Review*
- 6/16 *The People Bulletin* (online)
- 6/20 *Sales & Marketing Management* (online)
- 6/21 *Contact Magazine*
- 6/22 RealBusiness (online)
- 6/22 Premier Business Centres
- 6/24 Dynamic Business (online)
- 6/25 The Drum (online)
- 7/8 SmartBlog on Leadership
- 7/20 BNET
- 7/28 Top-Consultants
- August 2011 *Construction Executive Magazine*
- 8/9 MyCustomer.com
- 8/12 *BizIndia*
- 8/18 *Wide Format Magazine*
- 8/19 Direct Marketing International (online)
- 8/22 Top-Consultants (online)
- 8/22 AccomNews (online)
- 8/24 WABusinessNews (online)
- 8/25 *Anthill Magazine*
- August 2011 e.manager newsletter
- September 2011 Furniture News

- 9/*Investor's Business Daily* (print & online):
- 9/19 Looking Fit (online)
- 9/30 *Orange County Register*
- 10/10 Social Enterprise Live
- 10/11 Social Tech Pop
- 10/12 *CRN Magazine*
- 10/13 WTN News (online)
- 10/15 *BusinessReview USA* (online):
- 10/20 Bernama (online):
- 10/26 *US Daily Review* (online):
- November 2011 Furniture News
- 10/26 Top-Consultant (online)
- 11/1 SmartBusiness Florida (online)
- 11/11 Express TravelWorld (online)
- 12/2 *Quality Digest*
- 12/5 *Globe and Mail*
- 12/6 *International Business Times*
- 12/14 SmartPros
- 12/15 CustomerThink
- SmartBrief on Small Business (online)
- 1/9/12 *Recruiter*
- 1/10/12 Reeves College (online)
- Jan 2012 *Sales and Service Excellence*

Using the PPP rates at the absolute lowest cost of \$1,000 for a “mention,” (most of the above coverage types were full articles, reviews, and feature stories), the author would have paid a PPP firm over \$80,000. Taking just two months, March and April, the author would have paid the PPP firm over \$30,000.

This author paid a retainer of \$3,200 a month. In two months, she paid \$6,400. Over the course of the entire campaign, she paid \$35,200.

Summary:

PPP for two months = \$30,000

PPP for full campaign: over \$80,000

RB for two months = \$6,400

RB for full campaign = \$35,200

### **Here's another example:**

An author paid a RB firm \$2,800 per month to secure both print and broadcast coverage. His partial update revealed the following, with associated PPP fees for each type of coverage from the sample rate sheet in parentheses.

*Note: For radio, depending on the market size, the pay-per-placement firm charges between \$1900 for a "segment/feature" at a top ranked market radio show, and \$800 for a "Sound Byte/Brief Appearance" on a small market radio show. The estimated charges below are based on an average of \$1,200 per show.*

- "The Kim Pagano" show - (\$1,200)
- Parent Talk" on KWMR (\$1,200)
- Berkeley radio - 40 minutes including questions/comments from callers. (\$1,200)
- FOX TV San Diego. (\$2,600)
- LA KSRW 92.5 (\$1,200)
- *Orange County Register*, feature, (\$4,000)
- *Your Teen Magazine*, feature, (\$1,800)
- *Jewish Magazine*, feature, (\$1,800)
- KTTH (\$1,200)
- *Press Democrat* – feature, (\$3,000)
- KIRO Seattle's Morning News. (\$3,000)
- KUOW Radio (\$1,200)
- ABC-KOMO (\$1,200)
- *Bay Area Parent* magazine. (\$1,800)

- KOMO TV. Interview, (\$2,000)
- *All YOU* magazine, feature, (\$1,800)
- *People* magazine, 2 page feature, (\$5,700)
- “Woman Talk Radio” (\$1,200)
- *KPNW* (\$1,200)

Summary:

PPP cost = \$37,000

RB cost: \$8,400

### **The Price of Success**

The above case studies reflect campaigns that, admittedly, went well in retainer based campaigns. There are certainly campaigns that do not go as well, and even some that produce limited results.

Every author goes into a campaign wanting to secure as much media coverage as possible. Ironically, good pay-pay-placement services mean an author pays for the success, generally at a rate much higher than a retainer-based campaign. The logic, therefore, goes like this: You can hire a PPP firm and hope they succeed, and you will pay much more than if you paid a retainer; or, hire a PPP firm and hope they don’t do as well so you don’t pay too much. The third scenario: Hire a retainer-based firm, with no guarantees, and trust they will implement a successful campaign for which you know exactly what you will pay.

### **Campaigns Versus Hired Guns and Snipers**

A PPP publicist has one objective, pitch, pitch, and pitch to get the highest quantity and quality of hits and media runs to charge the most money. Period. While an author certainly can dictate the type of media he wants, there is only one plan: Get as much as possible. Fire away, with one goal: Make as much money as possible.

A RB publicity campaign is multi-tiered, diverse, and carefully developed based on a strategy designed to meet an author’s goals. Pitching is rolled out in a logical manner, i.e. long-lead

magazines are contacted first, then a baseline of radio interviews is secured, and newspaper and online media pitching is rolled out. It is an actual “campaign,” with alternative pitching plans if there is weak response, flexibility, and customized pitching based on media type.

Additionally, authors have different goals. Many of course want coverage so they sell books, while others are endeavoring to enhance their credibility and use their book and publicity coverage as a marketing tool for their business. In a RB campaign, the precise type of outlets that could achieve the desired results can be targeted. Moreover, the type of coverage pitched can be changed accordingly.

In PPP, it may be difficult to have the firm implement such a nuanced and customized service. Their rates are their rates and many will get whatever they can for an author.

Also, it’s important to look at PPP from the publicist’s perspective. Imagine you are a publicist for a PPP firm, with several books to promote. You inevitably would gravitate toward putting the most effort into the book you think has the most potential, leaving other books for a lower level of service. It makes business sense.

In a RB program, every book gets the same level of attention based on a detailed proposal commensurate with the author’s goals.

It is planning, strategizing, and cohesive book marketing plan versus fire-away and again, make as much money as possible.

### **To Be Fair ...**

Lest this be perceived as a “hit piece” against PPP, it’s important to understand that PPP campaigns can work well for the right author. There are excellent PPP firms in the industry. The key for an author is to understand exactly what she is asking for. Suggestions include putting a cap on what you will spend, and agree to a very defined time limit.



Keep in mind:

- 
- An author should clearly understand what constitutes “coverage.”
  - As you can see from the above PPP example, the lines between different types of coverage can be subject to interpretation.
  - What exactly is a “feature story,” a “focus,” an actual TV “interview,” or a “mention” in a print outlet?
  - What if you get placed on a national daytime talk show, and are only on screen for 30 seconds giving an expert opinion?
  - What if your book isn’t mentioned? Your website?
- 

What if a radio or TV interview is taped but never runs?

In a RB relationship, you must rely on a firm’s history, performance, experience, references, and reputation. If a RB agency has a very strong track record, especially with your type of book, chances are they will perform well for you.

If you want only “home runs,” i.e. national TV and national magazines, and have no other interest in any other type of coverage, you should consider a reputable PPP firm. If they strike out, you don’t pay. Just understand that if they hit some grand slams, you will pay a lot for all the runs they drive in.

## 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.

## **Whip Your Book Marketing Into Shape: 5 Things Authors Can Learn from *Fifty Shades of Grey***

Some people don't realize that *Fifty Shades of Grey* was originally a self-published piece of *Twilight* fan fiction, released by a small Australian virtual publisher, [The Writers' Coffee Shop](#) (a long-time previous [Smith Publicity](#) client, by the way). With a tight book marketing budget, the publisher mostly relied on book blogs, and then word-of-mouth started happening. From there, the first book went viral and at one point accounted for 25% of all book sales.

While the success of *Fifty Shades of Grey* is rare, there are lessons authors can learn from its success, both in terms of book marketing and the book itself.

- **Respect the power of bloggers and online reviewers.**

The Internet is a limitless platform full of people who love books, love to review them, and love to tell others about them.

*Lesson learned* - If we could reverse engineer the *Fifty Shades* path to success, we would find that it all started with one person, one blogger or one online book reviewer. Think about that for a minute ...

- **Make it easy for readers to freely enjoy your book.**

One reason *Fifty Shades* caught fire is because it was in originally in eBook format. This enabled readers to openly read the book and enjoy some guilty pleasures in public, on trains, in Starbucks ... anywhere, without others knowing what they were reading.

*Lesson learned* - You should, if at all possible, have your book in both print and eBook formats. Readers may not have reason to hide your book while reading it, but eBooks provide another way for people to easily find and enjoy your book.

- **Take punishing reviews in stride.**

At Smith Publicity, we sometimes secure book reviews that are not favorable, and some that are downright vicious. It's going to happen; someone isn't going to like your book. *Fifty Shades* received many brutal reviews, and still does.

*Lesson Learned* – Develop thick skin. Understand that even bad reviews are proof that someone took the time to read your entire book and then took the time to write a review. You got their attention. If you see books on [Amazon](#) with nothing but positive reviews, something's not right – some of the reviews aren't legitimate. Negative book reviews are part of this business.

- **Be an exhibitionist.**

You want your book to be as public as possible, and to be as discoverable as possible. Make it happen with services like [NetGalley](#), something we at Smith Publicity both sell to authors and incorporate into book publicity campaigns.

*Lesson Learned* – Find as many forums as possible to make your book available for review. Let your book loose.

- **Let go of your inhibitions.**

To effectively promote a book, most authors need to try things they aren't initially comfortable with. If you dread the thought of being on radio or TV, for example, fight the fear head on ... you might just end up liking it.

*Lesson Learned* – Let go. Be free. Give your book every possible chance for success.

## 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.

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.

## Social Media Versus Traditional Book Marketing

Social media, it seems, is everywhere and part of everything. You can't get away from it even if you try. It's no different when it comes to book marketing; social media is all the buzz in the publicity trade. Experts will tell authors they must engage in a robust social media program to promote a book, and still others will say that social media is the only way to promote a book effectively.

But let's slow down and take a brief look at the reality of book publicity and social media.

Social networking is a terrific way to spark grassroots buzz about a book and to establish an online presence that builds a fan base. A coordinated, planned cultivation of your presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and special interest social media platforms can indeed spread the word and spark book sales. As we've all heard, authors can even "go viral" and reach that magical tipping point at which it seems everyone knows about their book.

So does this mean "old school" traditional book marketing is a dying art?

To begin the answer to this question, I'll tell you that: You can't Tweet credibility, and 5,000 friends on Facebook might actually be worth nothing when it comes to your book. Like life, it depends on who these friends are and how much they really care about you.

Anyone can build a Facebook page and develop a presence on any social media site. There are no gatekeepers. It's the Wild West where anything goes.

Traditional book publicity via media outreach, on the other hand, is very different. Publicity is all about getting others (media) to think enough of you and/or your book to write about it or put you on the air for an interview. When this happens, an author acquires credibility – the single most important element book promotion. Social media is about getting as many people as possible to know about your book. Publicity, on the other hand, is about getting people of influence – editors and producers – to take interest in you and your book.

Facebook "friends" are often superficial. We want to show that many people actually like us, and ostensibly really care about what we do, sometimes to the point of reporting the most mundane of activities. Social networking, ultimately, is a supremely narcissistic endeavor (not that there's

anything wrong with that!). Publicity is about getting the right people to actually take a true interest in you and your book, and then from their position of influence, tell others about it.

You can see, there's quite a difference between the two.

But don't think for a second that I believe social media isn't a great tool as it relates to book marketing. It is. It can be powerful. It can be very, very effective.

Most importantly, in my view, social networking is the perfect compliment to a promotional campaign. I recommend every author establish a social media platform. Traditional publicity and social media can work amazingly well together. Publicity can get you credibility and provide you with the perfect material to populate your social media sites.

Someone posting on Facebook that they just saw a good book might spark some interest in readers of the post. However, think of the power of a link to a TV interview or newspaper article about a person/author in a Tweet or on Facebook. It makes that person interesting. It makes you possibly want to buy their book.

Social media is certainly here to stay and traditional book publicity isn't going anywhere – it will always be effective.

Instead of choosing one over the other, bring social media and traditional book publicity together, and you have a perfect promotional marriage.

Now go and post a link about this article on Facebook and send a Tweet out about it ...

## Book Editor Tips for Authors

Here are some 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:
  - **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.

- **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.
  - **Copy/line editor**—Ensures that the manuscript meets style standards and corrects grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Copy editors also do basic fact checking.
6. 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](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.
7. 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/>

One of our favorite author resources: [www.Writerswin.com](http://www.Writerswin.com)

It's always a bonus when the book blogger reviews your book as well. Offer free review copies (yes, for free). This is often a prerequisite for agreeing to a blog tour, especially for a new author. They often cross post reviews to valuable places like Amazon and Goodreads.

When researching, reading the Submission or Review policy is an essential step to learning if your book is a good fit. Here is one from [Luxury Reading](#):

#### **Blog Tours/Guest Posts**

I love to participate in blog tours and welcome guest posts from authors.

For blog tours, books must be received at least 3 weeks prior to the tour date. If I do not receive the book within this time frame, I will reach out to you to reschedule the tour date. Please keep in mind that this may result in the tour date being pushed to the following month.

I must receive guest posts 1 week prior to the posting date. If the guest post is not received within this time frame, you will forfeit your posting date. I generally have a very busy posting schedule, and may not be able to reschedule guest posts.

All guest posts have to be original, and not be posted anywhere else.

Remember, just because a blogger is “popular” does not mean it's the right fit for your book. A wildly influential chic-lit blog is not an appropriate fit for your sci-fi project. Also, if you are



self-published, check the Submission or Review Policy to see if self-published books are accepted.

Beyond traditional book bloggers, ones who write about a topic related to your book can also be excellent places to contact. For example, if your novel has themes about cooking, wine, fashion, southern living, boating, the Civil War, time travel, etc. contacting subject matter bloggers can provide excellent coverage opportunities to reach your target audience. For non-fiction books, this type of blogger is especially ideal.

### **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.

Also ...

- 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.

# 101 Book Marketing Ideas to Promote Your Book

## AUTHOR WEBSITE

1. Create an author website for your fans if you don't already have one.
2. Use the latest search engine optimization techniques while building your website, and be sure to adhere to Google's webmaster guidelines.
3. Write a professional and interesting author bio.
4. Add a 'Store' page to your website.
5. Make your book available to purchase on 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 website for book reviews, FAQs, and testimonials.
9. Make a 'Discussion' page on your website specifically for questions and comments.
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.

## GENERAL ONLINE BOOK MARKETING

13. Have an online book tour.
14. Write a press release and distribute 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's 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**

20. Create a blog on your website and update it regularly with new, interesting content. [Here's our blog!](#)
21. Respond to comments and questions on your blog in a timely manner.
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.
24. Guest blog on other popular blogs.
25. Allow guest bloggers on your blog.
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**

28. Create/join a forum and actively participate in its community.

## **FACEBOOK**

29. Create a Facebook page geared toward you as an author – not your personal life. [Take a look at ours here.](#)
30. Give fans the option to post their book reviews, testimonials, comments, and questions to your Facebook page.

## **TWITTER**

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 hash tag for your new book.
33. Use Twitter hash tags for events, news, promotions, etc.
34. Use Tweetables:
  - I just got 101 Book Marketing Tips for free from @SmithPublicity. – [click to tweet.](#)

- Keep your eyes peeled for offers on my new book. I'm going to try some new book marketing tips from @SmithPublicity. – [click to tweet](#).
- 101 Book Marketing Tips that will help you sell more books! – [click to tweet](#).
- Have you tried any of these book marketing tips from @SmithPublicity? There are so many! – [click to tweet](#).
- Where am I going to find book marketing ideas? Oh yeah, @SmithPublicity has 101 of them. – [click to tweet](#).
- These book marketing tips from @SmithPublicity really helped me as a new author. – [click to tweet](#).
- Need to expand your repertoire of book marketing techniques? These should inspire you! – [click to tweet](#).

## **LINKEDIN**

35. Create a LinkedIn page to connect to other authors and professionals in the writing world and related industries. View our [LinkedIn](#) page here.

## **GOOGLE+**

36. Create a Google+ page. (Be sure to add [Smith Publicity](#) to your circles!)
37. Add your devoted fans and other authors you connect with to your circles.
38. Link your Google+ profile content to Google Authorship.
39. Host a Google Hangout with your fans.
40. Host a Google Hangout with other authors.

## **YOUTUBE**

41. Create a YouTube account. Here's what [our YouTube channel](#) looks like.
42. Post your Google Hangouts to YouTube.
43. Link to your YouTube videos on your Facebook and Twitter accounts.
44. Compile a series of short videos of you discussing topics related to your book. Make them informational, not promotional.

## **AMAZON**

45. Go to Amazon and register as an author.
46. Sell your books on Amazon.
47. Try to get fans to post their book reviews and testimonials on Amazon.
48. Join Amazon's affiliate program.

## **GOODREADS**

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. Posts videos.
55. Do even more with Goodreads.

## **OFFLINE BOOK MARKETING**

56. Organize a team for your book launch.
57. Contact a local bookstore or other venue about hosting a book release party.
58. Go on a book tour.
59. Design merchandise for your books (like these Harry Potter t-shirts).
60. Make business cards with your photo and addresses to your author website and social media profile pages.
61. Speak at book clubs about writing in your genre.
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 MARKETING FOR THE FANS**

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, Google+, 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 his/her 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 best sellers, especially those in your series.
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**

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).

101. If you have a WordPress website, get the WordPress Plug-in called MyBookTable to help you sell more books and earn money through affiliates.