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How To Promote A Book

By Nithya K

How To Promote A Book

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Nowadays its no longer a matter of whether or not an author should promote his or her book, but how aggressively one should go about it. The sad truth is that publishers often fail to promote books, and if we, the authors, don't promote your own book then it may be destined to a lifespan between that of butter and yogurt, to paraphrase Calvin Trillan. The author's extra efforts may make all the difference between a book becoming a long-lived seller, and being recycled so that some other author can take advantage of the paper.

What to do then? One cannot concoct a general rule for promoting books. This method obviously has drawbacks, because every book is different and requires its own special approach. So, the primary thing to do is consider your target audience.

And that's a good place to start—your audience. Presumably, your book is aimed at a particular market or markets. Perhaps it is nutrition, parenting, health, travel, mystery fans, or nature. The first thing you should do is to track down the magazines that are read by the people who will be reading your book.

But before sending a press release to the publication, take time out to find the editor who reviews books or who covers the subject that you've written about.

Here are some ways to self-promote your book: Create Your Website Arranging for an Author Interview Trade Shows Teaching Email Newsletters Consulting/Training Reviewers Magazine Articles Discussion Groups/NewsGroups Other PR Resources

A large part of promoting your book is promoting yourself and making sure your name is recognizable to your target audience. While you may not reach cult status, you can go a long way to establish yourself as an expert on your subject matter by becoming heavily involved in the community for which you write. To Brand yourself and your work do the following:

How To Promote A Book

Create Your Website

Websites have become crucial marketing tools for authors and are a great calling card. Create a website that provides value to your audience and lets them get to know you and your work. Give people extra tips and tricks they won't find in the book, update any outdated information and provide news and reviews of your books and news that you know of in the community. If you are really ambitious you can create your own community around your website.

Arranging for an Author Interview

Many publishers have done marketing studies showing that authors who provide comments on their books or participates in author interviews on the online bookstores sell more books online. This is a no-brainer as it doesn't take much of your time and is perceived as an added value for your reader. Large websites, such as Borders.com, make a practice of interviewing authors.

Trade Shows

Trade Shows are a fantastic place to promote your book. Every attendee and speaker is a possible book-buyer. Try to arrange with your publisher to do a book signing either at their booth or at the trade show bookstore. Many authors sell thousands of their books at a single trade show. If you can find a chance to speak at a trade show or are invited to speak on one of the panels, the best bet to opt for. Aside from being great book publicity, it's another way to get your name out there in the community.

Teaching

Teaching is a great way to develop your pedagogy. It's also a great way to understand how people learn the technology, what their frequently asked questions are, and how you can best improve your books so that they are most easily understood. If you are not interested in teaching at the local university or community college, you might want to consider teaching online courses. There are numerous online education companies looking for authors to help teach their courses. Most authors find online teaching to be enjoyable, lucrative, and something that can be done almost simultaneously with writing books.

Email Newsletters

Email newsletters are a great direct marketing tool. Though a lot of work, if done right they can lead to huge name recognition and royalty checks from book sales. Several authors have had tremendous success with their email newsletters to the tune of thousands of subscribers. A good example is the Kabalarian Philosophy Electronic Newsletter.

Consulting/Training

Many publishers look first for trainers or consultants to author books on certain topics. To become known as an expert in the community, you need to stay abreast with what is latest in the technology field. It's good to diversify if you can — if you concentrate only on writing books you can become out of

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touch with the latest advances. Consulting will keep you on the cutting edge. Also, if you're lucky, the company or companies for which you consult will want to buy a copy of your book for the entire staff.

Reviewers

Positive book reviews are always a great way to sell books. Keep an eye out for bylines of reviewers in magazines and journals particular to your book topic and coordinate with your publisher to make sure that the reviewer receives an early copy of your book. Trumped up reviews on Amazon are easily seen through and don't do much for an author's reputation, but if you get a genuine email from a reader with positive specific comments you might want to ask him or her to post their comments on Amazon.

Magazine Articles

Article bylines have long been good book promoters. Research the major trade journals on your subject matter both in print and online and pitch article ideas tangential to your book topic. Also, you should consider writing for some major websites that serve your topic area. You can often attach excerpts from your books (ask your publisher for permission) to contribute to popular sites, which promotes your book at the same time.

Discussion Groups & Newsgroups

Discussion Groups are a huge part of any community these days. By participating online you are getting your name out in the community, staying current with all of the latest developments, and making crucial contacts that can include book reviewers, magazine editors, book editors and the real gurus of technology.

Newsgroups on the Web, including chat and message forums on proprietary services like AOL and Compuserve, are great places to make yourself known and promote your books, your website, and your career. Many authors have gained prominence on the newsgroups, particularly in the web scripting and programming area. It's important to be helpful, answer questions, and make yourself available without pushing your books too obviously or obnoxiously. If you spam the newsgroups or forums it won't serve you in the long run.

Amazon Corrections

If you have a book listed on Amazon.com and wish to correct erroneous information on their site, here is the person to contact. They respond quickly to author requests to correct information.

Albert Rodriguez, Catalog Department: catalog-dept@amazon.com

Other PR Resources

You can find more information about marketing and promoting your book from John Kremer's Book Market website. John is the author of 1001 Ways to Promote Your Book.

How To Promote A Book

A great resource for adding advertising to online publications is Art.com. They offer free banners and you can add them to your site. Advertisers pay per click, and you receive a percentage of what the advertiser pays. It's an excellent way to create extra income from your out-of-print books or supplementary material on your site.

An interesting way to promote your book is to put your website in search engines like Yahoo! Yahoo generally takes a day to update newly added sites, but there is no absolute surety that your site would be listed.

You can also sign up as an Expert in About.com, which provides a wonderful way to promote your work.

Last but not the least, become a bit philanthropic and with a large heart give away your books for free among critics, friends and family. Also add your website URL in all your outgoing e-mails and correspondence. More mails obviously means more views for your book!

Nithya K is a India-based writer who specializes in writing fiction and has tremendous interest in writing non-fiction related to science, technology and other genre. She is also experienced in creating technical documentation. Basically a BE graduate with an MBA degree, her main focus is still writing.

Nithya is also interested in Ghost writing of books and articles in the areas of business writing, technical writing, science and technology writing and fiction.

The author can be contacted at

and also invites readers to visit her webpage at

4 Questions to Answer Before Contacting a Book Agent

By Roger C. Parker

Obtaining agency representation is your first step toward getting profitably published. Most publishers won't even look at unsolicited manuscripts.

But, before approaching an agent to represent you, you should finalize the presentation of your book.

Agents don't have time to waste dealing with publishing `wannabees' who don't have, and may never have, a concrete project to represent. To busy agents, dreams don't make it.

If you approach an agent before you're prepared, you may never be able to contact them again. They'll consider you a `dreamer' and disregard you emails and phone calls.

Elevator Speech

How To Promote A Book

Before approaching an agent, prepare an 'elevator speech' describing your project in the less than thirty-seconds it takes for an average elevator ride. If you can't, your project probably isn't ready for prime time.

Your elevator speech must answer four major questions: What is your book about? Who is going to buy it? How does it differ from existing books on the subject? How are you going to promote it?

1. What is your book about?

Finalize your book's title and contents before contacting an agent.

The title is crucial to your book's success. It must attract the attention of acquisition editors, book reviewers, bookstore managers, web surfers and readers. The title is often your one - and only - chance to make a sale.

Finalize your book's table of contents and prepare a brief description of the contents of each chapter. You should also know how long your book is going to be and the number of illustrations, graphics or worksheet

Prepare two - three, if you're a first-time author - sample chapters and hire a professional editor to fine-tune them. It's better to show three perfect chapters than a finished manuscript filled with spelling errors.

You don't have to write your whole book before approaching agents. And your sample chapters don't have to begin with the first chapter, nor do they have to be in sequence. But, they must represent your writing at its best.

2. Who's going to buy your book?

Next, show that there is a reachable market for your book.

Strive for urgency. Describe the market intrigued by, or frustrated by, your book's topic. What symptoms does your book help solve? How many people share the problem? What are the consequences of the problem your book addresses?

Quantify your book's market in terms of buying power, willingness to buy books and ability to be reached through associations or publications.

3. How will your book be different?

Next, position your book relative to existing books on the topic. Existing books on the same topic are a plus, not a minus. They prove there is a market for books on the subject. What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing books? Why will readers choose your book over existing books?

This section offers you an opportunity to describe your background and how it contributes to your book.

4. How will you promote your book?

Promotion is your responsibility, not the publisher's. Your ability to promote your book is as important as your ability to write your book.

Start by identifying book reviewers and editorial contacts who can help promote your book. List publications that might run an extract from your book. Research producers who book guests for radio and TV interviews.

Discuss your speaking experience and willingness to travel to support your book. Describe how you will promote your book on your web site.

List authorities in your field who have offered to write a foreword or provide you with cover testimonials.

Agents are busy. To the extent you can sell your book idea as a realistic possibility in thirty seconds and can support your answers with research and strong sample chapters, you are well on your way to success.

After you've been successfully published, you may be able to sell a book on just the basis of an email. But for now, you must be fully prepared.

Roger C. Parker is the \$32,000,000 author with over 1.6 million copies in print. Do you make these marketing and design mistakes? Find out at

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