

MARKETING YOUR BOOK

As an author, you've spent months, maybe even years working on your novel, and finally after trudging through agents, publishers, rejection letters and pessimistic friends you're holding your finished book in your hands.

But don't bask in the glow of accomplishment for too long. The real work is just beginning.

We at POSEIDON BOOKS offer only limited marketing – so you need to be proactive to ensure the success of your book. And only you can do it. Some of these ideas will assist you to get your book out there.

Whatever path you choose for your book, no one will know about it unless you are ready to take the next step; marketing and promotion. Unless you have mega-bucks to hire your own publicist or marketing company, you will spend about 10 percent of your time writing and 110 percent working hard to achieve success in your quest.

Contrary to the opinion of professional PR firms, there are many low cost ways to promote yourself and your book. The easiest and least expensive is to make your own business cards using your home computer and printer. You might find a theme card that will work well with your promotional material as well as matching brochures, postcards and letterhead.

If you have children or grand children, they are an excellent source of free press and promotion. Buy some iron-on transfer paper and make your own t-shirts with a picture of the cover of your book on one side, your web site, or other information on how to buy your book on the back. Strongly suggest they wear it on "story telling days" at your local library or book store, especially if you're holding a book signing there. City events in the park, street fairs, parades, anywhere there are crowds, take the kiddies. PTA events, school and extracurricular activities all are excellent places to promote your book. Cute little kids make excellent billboards! The cost is low (maybe some ice cream) and the exposure is high. Of course this won't work if your children are pre-teen or teenagers. Unless your book is cool.

Your car is another excellent advertising tool. Traffic is a wonderful opportunity to promote your book. If your state has personalized license plates, find a way to put yourself or your book title on the plate. If you own a truck, you can have magnetic signs made of the cover and display your book right on your vehicle!

If you're in the business community, join the local Chamber of Commerce. Attend mixers, breakfast meetings, network to anyone and everyone. Do NOT be shy about your book, (but don't be obnoxious either!) People will be more inclined to buy books from authors they know, especially if you personally autograph their copy!

Make a list of the local bookstores in your area, and contact their community relations managers. And if you are invited to a store, don't forget to bring a gift for the person who made the booking. Hopefully, they will tell other CRM's of your generosity and will schedule an event for you just for the free gift!

Collect all promotional material written about you and your book. Make copies of all your interviews, reviews, articles, photos and create a full press kit for radio and local television stations. Try to get on your local cable shows that may have topics related to you or your book. Create a new angle to promote yourself. Radio and television interview shows are saturated with authors looking to talk about their books. Find a new approach, something captivating that will spark their interest.

Another excellent and inexpensive way to get your book into the hands of reviewers is send them disk versions of your work. Most authors write their novels on a PC, saving their files in a variety of formats. Once their book is published, getting it into the hands of reviewers can be a costly process, both in the cost of the books and in the postage. No longer. Adobe has created the perfect way to promote your entire novel in an easy and inexpensive way. Their site can save any file, up to three, for FREE! Once saved, it can be copied onto disks which can then be mailed to anyone with an Adobe program, which can also be downloaded from their site for FREE. This is an excellent way for authors to send out copies of their books, provided you send an email with instructions as to how to upload your file. You can also use this method to offer an "ebook" of your novel as a tease, or sell them at a fraction of the cost for those who are interested in this new and exciting format.

Most importantly, schedule your time. If possible, plan one or two days a week, to concentrate on the marketing aspect of your new career. Avoid unnecessary meetings, clubs and activities that take away from your main focus: to get your book and yourself noticed! Don't join a lot of writers' clubs. Those that can, write, those that can't go to meetings and those who attend meetings, very rarely buy or read other member's books!

At this stage of your writing career, there are only two things you should be doing in your spare time: writing and promoting your work.

Effectively Promoting Your Book

Here are some more promotion ideas to get you started. You will find that some of this has been covered by our marketing department – this will double the efforts if you do it too!

Online

The internet has changed the way in which books are sold and has become one of the most effective ways to market a self published book. In order for our customers to take full advantage of this potential, we now provide a personalized web page (at no additional charge) to those who produce their book with our company. These personalized web pages contain information about the book and the author as well as a large image of the book cover. These pages contain keywords relevant to your book and are created to appear at the top of every major search engine's results.

Book Signings

Call every bookstore and offer to do a book signing. Don't forget to tell our marketing people when you do this to ensure that stock is available. Retailers love to have promotional events and book signings are an easy way for them to generate excitement in the store. Make it as easy and logical for the retailer as possible. Ask if your book signing can be promoted through their internal mailing list. For some of the smaller independent bookstores, you can even offer to produce the mailer for them if they will pay for the postage. Remember, their primary concern is to sell books, so make it clear that you will be promoting your appearance also. Work with them as a partner.

Radio

Radio programming covers many topics, and chances are good that someone is interested in covering you. Finding that person may be difficult though. Mail or fax to as many stations as you can find. Collect information over the phone, or, if your topic is particularly well suited to talk-radio or a specific format, you may want to consider purchasing a mailing list of all the stations that cover that format. Community broadcasters can be a very effective way to reach your potential market. Your local library may have most of the information on mailing lists and radio stations.

Newspapers

Newspapers are another good target. Again, it's absolutely critical to send your press release to specific individuals rather than to "editor" or to no name at all. Don't assume the book review editor will be the only person interested. Most newspapers have editors for almost every subject they cover (science, health, sports, lifestyle, travel, etc.) so find the right person. Always bear in mind that these are busy people who are much sought after. Although they may be interested in your work, timing is critical. Don't be afraid to send a press release more than once.

Television

Television can be the most powerful friend a writer has. Never assume you're too small for a national program. Contact the major networks and find the producers for shows such as A Current Affair, Today Tonight, The Morning Show, and send them a press release. You never know what's out there, so it's worth checking out everything. With all forms of media, it's important to pursue both the local and national shows as well as both community and private broadcasters. Local media is always happy to put the spotlight on a local author. **There is more chance of getting on television if you are famous or an expert in your field – find a hook – for example, is your subject the topic of the moment?**

Web Casting

Web casting is a fairly new and fast evolving technology. Basically, it's radio broadcasting over the world wide web. In many cities, the radio dial can only hold a limited number of stations. But there's virtually no limit on the web, so there are thousands of webcasts happening at any one time. There are two types of webcasts. Many large commercial stations simply simulcast their signal on the web, while others exist as internet only stations. The Internet only stations range in programming from very narrow formats to very broad ones. There are a lot out there and more signing on every day, so chances are good that there is one suited to your genre. The beauty of webcasting is that it's possible to broadcast to a very small niche that may be geographically spread out. Seek out the webcasts that cater to your audience and make them aware of your book.

Social networking

You're probably already a member of Facebook or My Space. Update these regularly with info on how to buy your book. Do the same thing on Twitter and other sites you are a member of. There is even a book marketing network started by guru John Kremer. The site can be found at <http://thebookmarketingnetwork.com/> You can promote yourself and your book and link up with people who have all sorts of new ideas on marketing your book.

Blogs and Websites

At Poseidon we give you a dedicated page on our website but we can also link to one you have set up yourself. If you don't want to go to the cost of your own website why not try one of the blogging sites available. Wordpress and Blogger have user-friendly sign up features so you can be posting blogs in no time. You can have a profile page and info about yourself and your book and also download the cover image and much more. Many blog sites receive huge traffic and you can add advertising features as well as widgets. Most writers have a blog of some sort and they are quickly becoming a part of a writer's press kit.

Magazines

Your book is, or should be directed to a target market. Is it a book on parenting? A murder mystery? A self-help title? No matter what your topic is, there's probably a magazine that targets the same audience. Seek out any magazine that targets the same market as your book and contact the people there. Don't send your press release until you find out which editor or editors review books or cover the subject that you've written about. If your press release doesn't hit the right person's desk, it's practically guaranteed to be thrown away. Getting reviewed in a niche publication is well worth the effort because people who read that magazine are predisposed to buy your book.

Email Signature

How many emails do you write on a typical day? How many in a week? A month? Your email signature is a great way to promote your book to as wide of an audience as possible...without really trying. All it takes is a few minutes to set up your email signature, include a link to your book, and you're all set. Try something subtle like "Check out my new book" with a link to your book. For a stronger approach, consider taking a 10-word excerpt from one of your reviews, then link to your book.

Are you too Busy?

So, you say you're too busy to market your book? Well, welcome to the club. A lot of our authors work day jobs and try to cram in as much marketing as they can after they come home from an exhausting day at the office.

Working this way can be completely overwhelming. It's no wonder most authors only market their books for 90 days. Who could stand to keep up this pace any longer than that? *There are so many things authors need to do and most simply don't know where to start.*

Enter the one minute marketer.

As tempting as it is, we can't do everything. It's just not realistic. Instead, try doing just three things a day.

We find that authors are not only more focused this way but tend to be a hundred times more effective. If you're marketing your own book and you're becoming overwhelmed by the magnitude of the work ahead of you, try doing just three things a day. Some of these will only take you a minute and in one week alone you'll have promoted your book in 15 new ways. And remember, your three things don't have to be earth shattering, they can be as simple as sending a thank you note.

Here are a few ideas you can implement today:

1. Call your local library and sign up to do a talk. You won't get paid for this, but they will let you sell your book (for a 10% commission back to the library).
2. Want to drive more attention to your book? How about creating a contest! Contests are great promotional tools. Design one around the topic of your book.
3. Pitch your story to a local radio and/or TV station.
4. How's your website these days? Remember, it's your 24/7 marketing tool so make sure it's up to date.
5. And while you're updating your website, why not list it on search engines like Google, or Bing. Or go over to <http://www.addme.com> and let them do it for you...for free!

6. Have you thought about submitting an article to a topic-related ezine? Ezine publishers are always looking for content! If you currently subscribe to an email newsletter that you'd like to contribute to, email the editor and ask them what their guidelines are.

7. Have you started calling bookstores for signings? Why not start that today? If you have a publisher, it is best for them to contact the bookstores as it looks more professional.

8. Send out thank you notes! Whether it's to a news person who did a feature on you or to the book store manager who recently hosted your book signing, saying "thank you" is a great marketing tool!

9. Magazine articles are a great way to get exposure. Why not submit an article (or book excerpt) to a topic-related magazine today?

10. Are you a member of all the pertinent organizations in your field of writing? If not, you should be. For example, if you wrote a mystery novel you should think about joining a mystery writing group in your area. Not only will you be able to promote your book at meetings but most groups are always looking for speakers.

Happy Marketing!

Remember, overnight success takes about 10 years. You will become very educated, very tired, and very satisfied when you see all your hard work pay off.