

Mini Guide to Sales & Marketing

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If you want your book to be a commercial success you have to get totally behind it and think of the entire book production process as a business – from your initial research, through the writing and printing stages to completing your tax returns at the end of the year, after you have received your royalty payments.

In business, marketing is everything. In every interaction we have with other people we are engaged in a transaction of some kind – we are selling *something* even if cash doesn't change hands.

In conversations we are swapping ideas and opinions. We are trying to encourage another person to take on board our concepts and agree with or understand our point of view. In an interview situation, we are trying to 'sell' ourselves to a potential employer. At the same time, the employer is trying to sell their company to us. Without realising it we are engaging in marketing. That's why we dress in our smartest clothes before an interview – we are trying to impress the interviewer and convince them that we are a good fit with their company and that they will benefit from employing us above all of the other candidates. It is also why we smile and make eye contact with people we are having conversations with. We are trying to make a connection and establish an emotional engagement. We want people to like us and subconsciously we believe that if we behave in a warm and friendly manner, the other person will respond in the same way. We are marketing ourselves.

Marketing your book is critical to its commercial success. There is no right or wrong way to market your book – every book is different. What works for one book may not work for another, each book requires a different

tactic and approach, although there is one common requirement: hard work.

Marketing is not easy. For any book marketing campaign to be successful it requires the author to be 100% behind their work. Authors have to live, dream and breathe their book. If you were expecting the hard work to come to an end when you had positioned your final full-stop at the end of your last sentence, you're wrong. If you thought that you might have the opportunity to take a break while your book is being printed, you are wrong again. It's hard work all the way.

However, before you throw your hands up in despair, hold on. Within all this doom and gloom there is a shining light... Marketing can be fun! This is your opportunity to show the world what you have created and tell everyone how wonderful it is. It has no doubt taken a lot of energy to get to this point, now you should shout about it. A huge number of people think they can write a book; some even go as far as saying that they are going to write a book. In reality, very few do. This makes you special. It sets you apart. Now it's time to shout that message from the rooftops!

There are many ways to market your book. Some authors are lucky enough to have a team of people behind them who are prepared to act as a marketing firm; others are less fortunate. Regardless of what support you may have, there are still a number of actions you can take to promote your book, even if you are working on your own.

But first things first. You need to develop a plan.

Simple 5-Step Marketing Plan

1. Decide on your campaign

- What is it you are trying to achieve and why?
- Remember you are trying to gain interest, raise awareness and ultimately secure sales.

2. Who is your campaign directed at?

- Who are you marketing to and why?
- Understanding your market place will help you direct your campaign according to your market's interests.

3. When?

- This is crucial. A lot of people get this wrong and start marketing their book too late. You should begin marketing your book, or at least thinking about it, while you are still writing.

4. How?

- What methods are you going to use and why?

5. Where?

- Consider where the best places to market your books are. You need to be where your market is.

Once you have developed your marketing plan, it is time to take action.

Marketing Methods Menu

There are lots of ways to market your book, regardless of how much money you have to spend on the process. Here is a menu of ideas to help you get started.

- Word of mouth – tell as many people as you can. Tell them to tell as many people as they can.
- Press releases and articles – contact your local newspaper and ask if they would be interested in running an article or story about you.
- Media releases – press releases; advances copies; reviews. It may be costly to send out copies of your books, but the more you send out, the more chance you have of a reviewer writing about it.
- Freebies, incentives and competitions – give away as many copies of your book as you can afford. Offer your books as competition prizes, or give a 25% discount to people who buy your book by a certain date.
- Media outlets – magazines, radio and TV stations. Contact all your local media outlets and send them a free copy.

- Internet – advertise your book on line; set up a web page for your book. If your book has an ISBN number it can be sold anywhere. Use Internet book selling sites such as Booktopia and Amazon.
- Direct marketing campaigns – send emails and letters to targeted audiences, and to all your friends.
- Accessories – consider accessorising your book with bookmarks, business cards, postcards, posters, flyers, order forms, magnets – the list is endless.
- Advance copies – send advance copies to media outlets and book stores.
- Market stalls – set up a stall at your local market or car boot sale.
- Bookshops – if your book is being sold in bookshops why not see if the staff would be interested in reviewing your book as a ‘staff pick’ or ‘staff choice’ or writing about it in one of their e-zines or newsletters.
- Book signings – why not approach your local bookstore and ask if they would be interested in hosting a book signing.
- Libraries – many libraries run lunchtime talks. Why not speak to the coordinator and offer to be involved in their program.
- eBay – some authors have been successful through selling their books on eBay and other Internet auction sites.
- Social networking – try setting up a Facebook fan page or MySpace page for your book.
Make a short video about your book.
Publicity stunts – the list is endless.

Put on your creative thinking cap and get going!

Caroline Webber is the publishing manager at Longueville Media. She has over ten years experience of working in the public and private sector in research, analysis and writing. She has a doctorate in English Literature and is currently writing the introduction to a critical edition of *The Romance of the Forest* for Valancourt Books.

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