

Why is marketing important to self publishers?

As a self publisher, the next step of your journey is to make book sales – to get your book out there in the world and encourage others to read it and buy it. Even if the motivating factors sitting behind the creation of your self published masterpiece were not financially driven, almost all authors want to have their work read by someone at some point. And so this is where marketing comes in. To introduce people to your book, to encourage them to spend the time reading your book and to ultimately sell your book, you need to get your published writing out there in the public domain. It needs to be visual and accessible to your chosen audience. You therefore need to market your book at individuals who are likely to need to read your book, or have a desire to read your book. We'll call this group of people your 'targeted audience'.

Your targeted audience will be made up of a range of individuals who have a particular interest in the genre of book that you have written, or in the subject matter about which you have written. Let's look at an example to illustrate this.

Say you have written a non-fiction book on World War II. Who would be your targeted audience?

- Friends and family, people who you know personally and who want your book to do well
- Your local community who like to read books written by others who live nearby
- World War II veterans
- Families of World War II veterans
- Historians
- History teachers
- Literary students who are focusing on texts compiled during or about this period
- History or humanity students
- Others with a general interest in history
- Members of history or World War II related societies or groups
- The local press

And no doubt there are many more.

These are the groups of people that you want to market your book at, as they are more likely to go on and read or purchase your book than, say, someone who has a real, keen interest in gardening, but who isn't particularly interested in historical events. In the next few sections of this chapter we'll look at ways in which you can market your book to your targeted audience.

Marketing is an important role that all writers have to undertake when it comes to promoting a book. For authors who have secured a traditional publishing deal, there may be some support in completing marketing exercises from an in-house marketing team, but for the valiant self publisher, this is often a task that has to be completed single-handedly. It is also traditionally harder for a self published book to get exposure in magazines, newspapers and literary publications through book reviews or adverts, and so the role of marketing in promoting a self published book becomes even more important. Marketing your book can however be the most exciting part of your publication journey! It involves talking about your book, celebrating its arrival into the literary world, and sharing it with others – all of which are enlightening and fulfilling activities (even if they seem somewhat daunting at times).

How to market your book

There are so many ways to market a book, particularly when it comes to marketing your book to smaller or local audiences.

Your first considerations need to be time and resource availability. Promoting your book is going to involve a reasonable amount of time commitment on your part, and almost all of the activities will involve some financial investment and/or resource investment from others around you. The beauty of book promotion however is that because there are so many different ways to market your book, you can always find a way that best suits you.

As an author marketing your book, you have the freedom and flexibility to choose which marketing ideas you want to implement and which just aren't right for you. That's the beauty of self publishing! Remember that you can choose to undertake as many or as little marketing activities that suit your lifestyle and your book promotion ambitions.

A lot of authors choose to incorporate the writing and circulation of press releases, the distribution of review copies, the undertaking of book signings and the completion of book readings into their marketing plans. They also look to throw some sort of a book launch – whether that be tied into a book signing event, or independently organised.