

Helping Sell Your Book: Ideas To Try Yourself

As the author, or contributor to a book you are in a unique position to generate interest in your work, and to utilise all possible marketing opportunities.

Many authors don't realise that chances exist on an everyday level to promote their book, without necessarily making lots of extra work for themselves. Here we give some ideas to help our authors identify and use such opportunities to promote their own book. Remember that for the majority of self published authors, the more you put into the marketing yourself, the more rewards you can reap.

Day-to-day networking

Opportunities to promote your book often exist throughout the day in conversations with friends, acquaintances and colleagues and even with complete strangers whom you may get chatting too. Get into the habit of carrying some information about the book so that if people do express an interest to find out more you can provide it instantly, rather than relying on strangers to look your book up later. Many authors carry around a copy of their book as well, once printed, to events and meetings where they feel there will be some interest.

Authors previously have also taken some information on their book on holiday, or on a cruise, or to parties they get invited to and have generated lots of interest amongst fellow travellers or party-goers that way. Other authors set up book signings at their offices in their lunch hour and do amazingly well! There are no hard and fast rules, but the more you mention your book to people, the more awareness will be raised.

In addition, a taskforce of friends and family can distribute more information about the book wither by pinning information up at work or on social club notice boards, handing out leaflets, or simply by word of mouth.

Clubs/associations and professional bodies

Many authors are also members of social or professional organisation/clubs/associations, and these can provide a great opportunity at which to publicise your book as well. Most clubs/associations and societies have a web page, a newsletter and list of members. Find out if you can get a snippet placed in the newsletter (often, newsletter editors are desperate for content, and the offer of providing some information is usually gratefully received).

Can you link to your author web page from the clubs/association web page? If you are a member of a club, can you arrange an evening to discuss your book and do a signing? Can you donate copies for a competition prize in exchange for some publicity? If you are a member of a professional society – and your book covers topics relevant to that society – can you garner interest and publicity that way?

Think about any associations or clubs you are involved with, and see what contacts you can use to get some publicity. Several authors have done some dinner speaking, talking about their book at social club events. Others have arranged seminars and used their books as a "class text". Authors also regularly visit primary schools to read and talk about their books (by arrangement with head teachers).

Email

Circulate information via email to friends and colleagues, or people that you know will be interested. (Please make yourself aware of the Data Protection Act before doing to avoid inadvertently breaking the guidelines – these can be found online if you are worried). You could circulate an email on the launch date announcing the new book and request that people send it on to interested parties.

Add a line to the bottom of your “email signature” (usually easy to set up in your email). For instance, you could add a line with information about your book and a web link to your author page.

For example, “the exhilarating new thriller by Malcolm Noble is out now, go to http://www.troubador.co.uk/book_ifo.asp?bookid=281

Book singings/book launches/book readings

Local (usually independent, but branches of larger chains can be helpful) bookshops are usually happy to host book launches, in return for some publicity. If you are confident you can get “rent a crowd” together, then approach local bookshops, speak to manager and ask about holding a launch. Most managers are very positive about such events, especially if it will bring new customers into their store. They will usually publicise the event within the shop a swell, and we have had many instances where they have also provided refreshments free of charge!

Book launches can take place anywhere, and are not limited to book stores. For example garden centres, in the office, in local shops, etc can all be used. Think of the places which may attract you target audience, and see if you can arrange launches during busy periods (Saturday morning is the best time).

Think Local

What about contacting local parish magazines or community newsletters? Try cultivating a relationship with local libraries. Are they able to help by placing information on a notice board, in the window or by arranging a reading event? Contact local writers’ or readers’ groups and offer to speak about your experiences of writing and publishing. Offer the book as a recommendation for readers’ groups and go along to talk about it (this can be valuable process for you as an author as well, receiving feedback on your work). What about putting yourself forward as an after dinner speaking?

Finally...

Many people who self publish find that the marketing is also quite fulfilling in itself, simply because they get to meet many new people and they can talk about their book, often receiving positive feedback. For many others, though, the opportunities don’t exist in the same way, or they find this kind of activity daunting.

The choice really is for the individual, but in our experience, the more active the author is in promoting their book, the better the results. Also, remember that many contacts you cultivate for this book may become invaluable should you wish to publish again in the future, so (with their permission) collect contact details for future projects.