

Marketing your book

1. Start selling your book before you write it.

- a. Establish yourself as an authority and build up your author platform
- b. Build a network of people interested in buying your book and in publicizing your book.
 - i. Participate in groups or organizations that share similar goals, or whose subject is allied with your book's.
 1. In-person in your local community: local writers groups, civic organizations, special interest clubs. etc...
 2. Through regional or national organizations: trappers association, historical society, etc...
 3. Through on-line groups or forums
 - ii. Social and print media
 1. Blogging – blogging is all about regular posting to your blog. If you do not have the energy or will to routinely post, you might be better off setting up a static website.
 - a. Blog often about your subject. The more often you blog, the higher your blog visibility will be. The more quality material you post, the higher your blog authority will be, and hopefully, the more followers you can gain.
 - b. Perhaps you can be a guest blogger on someone else's blog
 2. Website – May increase your visibility and build up your author platform
 - a. More initial work to set up site, but less work maintaining and updating site.
 - b. The advantage of a blog over a static website is that people should hopefully want to return often to your blog to see what new material you have added.
 3. Facebook personal page
 - a. Have your blog posts automatically shared on Facebook
 - b. Get your friends to share your posts
 - c. Join groups with similar interests
 4. Twitter – Blogs can be set up to automatically generate twitter posts
 5. LinkedIn – You can develop a network of associates that might help you either in making decisions about your book, or that you can tap into for marketing.
 - a. You can also also participate in forums.
 6. E-mail and printed newsletters – By offering e-mail or print newsletters, you can develop mailing lists that can be utilized during your marketing campaign. Make sure that anyone who gives you their address also buys in to receiving other material from you besides the initial offering.
 7. Articles, editorials and letters-to-the-editor in newspaper and magazines can increase your perceived authority.
 - iii. Community events
 1. Talks – Do presentations at club meetings or the Pioneer Home
 2. Readings – Participate in reading groups, or perhaps reading times at a library
 3. Special events – Participate in community special events such as book fairs, spring festivals, etc... or stage your own event.

2. **Book Reviews – For the general book buying public, book reviews may sway a person already thinking of buying your book. But they probably will not influence people who have never heard of your book.**
- a. Plan ahead. Getting a book reviewed can take months.
 - b. Trade magazines such as **Kirkus Reviews** and **Publishers Weekly** are targeted at the library and bookstore market. Book reviews in publications such as these may influence libraries and book stores to obtain your book. You may be able to use parts of a review in your promotional literature.
 - i. Some of these publications provide reviews on books that go through a vetting process, without any charge.
 - ii. Some publications like Kirkus provide book reviews without charge. But they also allow authors to circumvent the vetting and pay for a review. Will cost 400 to 500 hundred dollars and a good review is not guaranteed. There is also no guarantee that a paid review will say anything significant.
 - c. Expert reviews. Use the contacts you established through social networking as sources for potential reviews.
 - i. These types of reviews will not lead buyers directly to your book, but the reviews can be used in marketing material.
 - d. Reader-oriented reviews. Sites like Goodreads and BookThing are book networking and cataloging sites that also offer the opportunity for average readers to post reviews of books. **Encourage your readers to register and post reviews.**
 - e. Amazon reviews. Amazon.com had problems for a while with bogus and paid reviews. Most sources I checked say that Amazon now tries to root out bogus reviews, and on the whole Amazon reviews are trustworthy. **If you are marketing on Amazon, get your readers to post reviews.**
 - f. *Daily News-Miner* reviews. The *News-Miner* book reviewer, Addley Fannin, told me she has between 20-40 books in her slush pile at any one time. You need to make your book stand out.
 - i. Her first priorities are books with upcoming release dates, and books by authors that have politely contacted her directly about reviewing a book.
 - ii. She says she is much more likely to pick up a well-designed, attractive book, but she will give all books a brief chance by reading cover blurb, promo material, and maybe the first chapter
 - iii. Her quote - "Good writing and editing trumps all, but a professional design goes a long way to getting your foot in the door."
 - g. When it comes down to it, word-of-mouth recommendations are probably more important than book reviews.
3. **Marketing for your book launch, and after publication**
- a. Develop a targeted marketing campaign. Do not use a scatter-gun approach—If you do so you may end up wasting most of your time and money. Your marketing plan needs to be based on your target audience, how much you can spend, and how much time you are willing to devote to it.
 - b. A book launch should be a months-long campaign that piques the curiosity of the book-buying public, builds interest, and then culminates in the release of the book.
 - i. Perhaps you can find partners with services or products that mesh with your book who will provide giveaways, or prizes for contests and drawings, or otherwise help.
 - ii. Host a book launch party: you could provide giveaways, have a prize drawing (during which you can collect e-mail addresses), etc...
 - 1. Make sure you have connected with your target audience. Nothing worse than having a launch party that no one comes to.

- c. Mobilizing your army. Your family, friends, and contacts you have made while building up your author platform can be your foot soldiers. Do not abuse them by pushing too many duties on them, or by assuming that they will help you. Offer them encouragement, special perks, etc.
- a. Social Media
 1. Be careful in using social media. It may be fine to announce on your blog or Facebook page that your fantastic novel has just been published and that everyone should go out and buy it. However, if you want to promote through your LinkedIn network, or an on-line forum, your approach needs to be more nuanced. You do not want to be viewed as a mere huckster.
 2. Through sites such as Facebook and your blog you can offer discounts on your books, contests to generate sales, etc.
 3. Set up a Facebook business page. You should probably do this in the lead-up to your book launch
 - a. Business pages can collect likes **and** fans. You can urge all your friends to like your book page.
 - b. You can run events such as contests to garner interest in your book
 - c. You can run targeted Facebook ad campaigns
 4. Sites such as Smashwords can also offer promotional services such as discount codes.
 5. In addition to the social media already mentioned, here are a few other possibilities
 1. On-line book marketing websites. Sites such as BookBuzz and BookWhizz offer paid market programs.
 - a. BookBuzz and numerous other websites are focused on e-book promotion, offering short-term promotional services for discounted and free e-books.
 - i. BookWhiz is one of the few sites I've seen that offers services for print books as well
 - b. Audio podcast of sections of your book (podcasts), through your blog or website, or through YouTube.
- b. Publicity Kit – The following are the essentials
 1. News Release – This can be used to alert media about your book launch.
 1. Some publishers will offer to develop this for you for a price. You can probably get a better job done locally for less money.
 2. There are free and paid services that will distribute your release to thousands of sites. Most of those sites will probably ignore your submission. There is no guarantee that the lists these services use are current, or that the services will actually do anything. If a service is advertised as free there may be little risk, however the results will probably be negligible. Be wary of “free” services that want to up-sell you to paid services.
 - a. You would probably be better off compiling your own contact list of media in your area from phone books and on-line information, and targeting your release to specific individuals within a media organization.
 3. Releases should contain all the information a good news story would have: who, what, where, when, why. And they should read like a good news story. Here is a list of what a release should contain:
 - a. Headline – with a “hook” to catch the reader’s attention. A subheading is optional.
 - b. Dateline – city, state, and date of press release
 - c. Introduction – A paragraph or two introducing the book and building interest. Maybe include an author quote.
 - d. Main body – A paragraph or two fleshing out the book and demonstrating why reader should be interested
 - e. Author bio – a paragraph or two about the author
 - f. Contact information – If you are e-mailing the news release include links.

2. Head shot
 3. Image of cover
 4. Reprints of reviews if you have any
- c. Sales kit – These are items to send out to possible sales venues, or to hand out to prospective buyers
1. Book marks – Small cards that can be used as book marks. On one side would be an illustration of the book cover and title. On the other side with be a short pithy description (bulleted lists work well), plus price and ISBN.
 2. Sales sheet – This is the single or double-sided sheet sent out with sales letters.
 1. Use color and include an image of your book cover.
 2. Should contain the same basic information as the news release except the dateline.
 3. Should include the book’s metadata
 - a. Book name, author, publisher and ISBN
 - b. Book binding, dimensions and page number
 - c. Book category and price
- d. Contact/ mailing lists
1. Develop your own lists by combing phone book, doing web searches, searching the State of Alaska business license database, etc.
 2. Mailing lists can be bought from information brokers. Do a web search for Alaska mailing lists. Lists will probably cost several hundred dollars, will most-likely be outdated, and will probably contain information you can gather yourself if you have the time.
 3. Organizations and clubs may allow you to use their mailing lists. Contact an organization before using any contact list you may have access to. DO NOT SPAM!
- e. Book signings
1. Bookstores
 2. Libraries
 3. Venues related to your subject matter
 4. If you have the time and can afford it, take your book on the road
- f. Radio and TV Interviews – probably not realistic in the local area but worth a try.
- g. Online sales
1. If you have a blog or website, make sure there is a way to buy your book, either directly from you, or through a reseller.
 1. Who do you want to do order fulfillment?
 2. Take advantage of storefronts if your POD publisher offers one. Items you will need are:
 1. Head shot
 2. Image of cover
 3. Author bio
 4. Book description
- h. Farmer's Market, Christmas bazaars, special events like Arts Walk at Creamer’s Field

- i. Co-op marketing – You might be able to split costs with other authors for events such as:
 - 1. Carlson Center Holiday Marketplace
 - 2. State fairs
 - 3. Anchorage Wholesale Gift Show

4. Always carry promotional material and a box of books in your car.

5. **Book Distributors/book wholesalers.** Book distributors will warehouse books for you and sell them wholesale to stores and institutions.
- j. Book distributors are not really set up for one-title publishers but they will consider providing services to them.
 - k. Have wider access to sales possibilities
 - l. Probably knows the market better than you
 - m. Handle all the details of selling and fulfillment
 - n. Will usually require exclusive distribution rights
 - 1. Sometimes will allow non-exclusivity for increased percentage of profits
 - o. Will generally not do any marketing for a book unless you pay extra
 - p. If you do marketing and promotion of your book, you will have to turn over any leads to the distributor for the actual sales.
 - q. Charge between 60% to 70% of the retail price of the book for services
 - 1. Cost for services makes arrangement marginal for self-publishers
 - 2. Publishers need to weigh possibility of increased sales against decreased profit per book
 - r. Other fees that may be charged
 - 1. One-time set-up fee to enter book into distribution system
 - 2. Periodic stocking fees to maintain book in inventory
 - 3. Special reports on sales (periodic reports such as quarterly reports listing number of copies sold usually supplied at no charge.
 - 4. Shipping
 - s. Hidden fees
 - 1. Distributor may not pay you for books damaged during the normal course of business, either during storage or shipment.
 - 2. Distributor will not pay you for books used for promotional purposes or sent out as review copies.
 - 3. Books in Distributor's possession may be under-insured for loss from fire or other disasters.
 - t. Publishers must provide multiple copies of book for Distributor to keep in stock, and agree to supply additional copies to Distributor on a timely basis.
 - 1. Number of books for Distributor to keep in stock may be negotiable.
 - 2. Publisher may be required to keep certain number of books in stock to met Distributor's needs.
 - u. Publisher paid quarterly
 - v. Because of fees charged publisher may end up owing distributor on receipt of quarterly statements