



JANICE THOMPSON, AUTHOR

Working with Your Publisher to Market Your Book

 0 Comments



We've all experienced the pain of rejection, but what a joy to finally sell your book. How thrilling! How blissful! We spent all those months (er, years) writing, writing, writing, and now someone wants to publish our work. All that's required of us now is to rest on our laurels and wait on the royalty checks to start rolling in.

Um, wrong. Did you know that novelists work even harder AFTER their book sells? It's true. Authors don't just have to be great writers. They must become skilled marketers. They have to learn how to "pitch" those books.

Oh, I can hear you now. "Wait a minute. Isn't the publisher going to take care of all that?" Not necessarily. Some of the larger publishing houses can afford to send you on publicity tours and book signings, but smaller houses often depend on the author doing a huge portion of the marketing personally.

So, how do you do that? How do you switch gears from "rejected" author to marketing guru? You hit the road running.

Marketing Your Book (The Basics)

Here are just a few of the things you might consider as you set out to market your new book:

Go Personal/Build Your Tribe: Do you have a support group? Friends and family members who encourage you at every turn? Turn them into your "tribe." Members of my "tribe" all receive a free copy of each book in exchange for their encouragement, love and support. I know they will "chat up" the book with their friends and on the web. Best of all, I know they'll be there for me, if anything goes wrong.

Go Local: Authors can create a splash in their hometown. Contact your local paper

and see if they will run an article on you/your book. Trust me when I say that local papers love these sorts of stories.

Go Statewide: If your book has a “state-friendly” appeal, then target regions of your state most likely to be interested.

Send Out Press Releases: A press release is a short, snappy one-page blurb about you and your book. Put together a list of media outlets that you would like to target, then send the press release via email. A press release has a specific format that always begins with the words FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. They can be sent to media outlets, as I mentioned, but can also be sent to a variety of online release services.

And speaking of Press Releases, let’s talk about PRESS KITS:

All published authors need a press kit (a folder loaded with information about you). A good press kit should include an author bio. It should be limited to one – two pages and should include your contact info, basic information about you, your publishing credits and any applicable affiliations.

Other things to include in your press kit:

Business Cards: Your contact information at a glance.

Your best form of advertising; Keep them on-hand at all times.

Speaking Topics Interview Questions:

List 10 questions interviewers can ask you.

Endorsements:

If you have acquired endorsements for your book, list them.

If your books have won any awards/contests, state it here.

Community Service Sheet:

List your involvement in the community, particularly if/as it relates to your book/topic.

We're talking about ways to help get the word out about your book. Why not consider a pre-pub offer? You might offer a special deal to folks who pre-buy your book. This could be done with fliers or even on the web.

And speaking of the Web, let's talk about how to make the best use of it when you have a book release:

The web is vital when you've got a book coming out. There's no better place to market. Websites, newsletters, blogs and chat groups are all wonderful places to begin. Spend some time perusing the web, and you will discover it's very author-friendly. Yes, whether you're currently published or one day hope to be, the World Wide Web is your best friend. And there's no better place to start than your own website.

Let's talk about things to add to your website:

On your opening (or index) page, include your photo, your tagline (a few words to describe who you are/what you do).

Make your main page easy on the eyes. Choose colors and texts that are easy to read in nice-sized fonts.

Include a brief blurb about yourself and an “about the author” sub-page link.

List your most current project, along with a photo of the book’s cover.

Add a shopping cart feature, so that readers can purchase your books directly from your website.

Include a newsletter sign-up link.

Place a “links” bar on the page leading to sub-pages.

Blogs & Social Networking: Blogs (or “weblogs”) have become quite popular in the last year or so. A blog is set up like a journal. There are dozens of companies that offer free weblogs. They’re fairly easy to set up and provide one more way to get your name “out there” on the WWW. The same is true with Facebook and Twitter. If you need help setting something up, just do a search on the web for instructions. One of the best ways to promote your freelance business is through a Facebook fan page. There, you are free to promote. Do your best to avoid becoming an annoyance, though. One fun thing I love to do on Facebook is to hold a drawing or contest as my new books release. That’s also fun to do on a blog.

Speaking of promoting your book through blogs, why not do a blog tour? Many publishers will even set this up for you.

If you have a book coming out soon, you might want to do a blog tour. Basically, it works like this: Put together an interview with/about yourself/your project. (You can see a sample of my interviews on a host of blogsites across the WWW. Just type in my name and browse until you find one.) Contact several friends (and/or review sites) that host blog tours and ask them to run your interview. Within weeks your name will be all over the web, promoting your book or project! Be willing to return the favor by running book reviews on your site. Another option with bloggers would be to

offer free review copies of the book, then ask the blogger to post a review. Sometimes the publishing house will provide the books (and even mail them to the bloggers).

Set up Speaking Engagements: Speaking engagements (with book-signings that follow) are bread and butter to the published author. They also give you great connections and a sure-fire way to increase your newsletter list. Most writers would be surprised to learn that they often must transform into public speakers when the books start coming out, but public speaking is an effective way to promote your book. And the possibilities for speaking engagements are unlimited – as long as you approach the project creatively. Your topics are key, (promoting your book/books) and should be tailored to the groups you're speaking to. Here are some local groups you can target:

Writing groups

Civic groups, Businesses

Reading clubs

Schools

Libraries

Historical societies Online chat classes Churches

Women's retreat groups

Book-signings:

Of course, the most logical thing an author can do to promote his/her books is a book- signing. Here are a few ways to have a great signing:

- Contact your local bookstores even before your book comes out.
- Give the store owner/manager a press kit and ask for a signing when the book

comes out.

- If possible, help the store promote your signing.
- On the day of the signing, arrive early and greet the store owner.
- Give away candy (or other "teasers") directly related to your signing. (When I do a signing for my book *Hurricane* I bring a container of salt-water taffy because there are two places in the book where the characters watch the taffy machines at work.)
- Have business cards available.
- Have brochures or postcards available (if your publisher doesn't provide these, you can make them yourself).
- Connect with patrons in the store, whether they buy your book or not.

ONE FINAL WORD

You will get used to writing about yourself in third-person after awhile. And though it might feel odd to list your credits, affiliations, etc. you will eventually discover that these things won't just encourage your potential readers – they will encourage you. And an encouraged author is a happy author!

Your publishing house will be thrilled to see that you're fully onboard, doing all you can to promote your book. And one final reminder...let your editor know during the proposal stage what you're willing and ready to do.

So, what are you waiting for? Get out there and market that book!

By JThompson

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Fiction Lessons, Marketing Lessons

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