

# 10 Ways to Market Your Book

By Brian Jud

The list below briefly describes 10 effective ways to promote - and sell more of - your books. You'll find that these are not one-time activities, but instead require regular engagement and effort. Because of this, it's important to not expect immediate results, since long-term success is the result of creative and persistent promotion.

## 1. Social Networking

A social network facilitates regular communication between individuals who are connected by friendship or common interest. You can use these networks to enhance your writing, writing career, personal network, and sales. The key is to use all appropriate functions of a given social network for maximum benefit. For example, [Facebook](#) allows you to create a profile, join groups of people with similar interests, discuss your personal interests, and communicate with friends. Similar general-interest networks are [Twitter](#), [MySpace](#), and [YouTube](#), each with different functions and advantages. These channels thrive on authentic social interactions, so be careful not to overtly sell your content to avoid alienating the connections you make. For example, rather than posting multiple messages about your book being available for sale, try to contribute meaningful dialogue in conversations about relevant topics. This will help position you as an expert, which will help build your author brand. Write fiction? Try creating a [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) account for your protagonist and hold conversations in the voice of that character.

There are also networks designed to connect business professionals such as [LinkedIn](#), [Plaxo](#), [Ryze](#), and most recently, [BranchOut](#) (a Facebook/LinkedIn hybrid). You can target some networks based on the content of your book. For example, if you want to reach mothers, use [CafeMom](#). To communicate with other authors and/or avid readers, try [Shelfari](#) or [weRead](#) where you can rate, review, and discuss your book, as well as books by other authors. Use [Meetup](#) to find and join in-person groups united by a common interest such as politics, books, games, movies, health, pets, careers, or hobbies. Sites like [Pinterest](#), [Delicious](#) and [Digg](#) are social bookmarking services for storing, sharing, and discovering popular content. Find and use the best ones for your book and objectives.

## 2. Personal Networking

Networking is an organized method of creating links from the people you know to the people they know, allowing you to gain and use an ever-expanding base of contacts. It is the personal process of connecting with others to exchange information, advice, contacts, and support. Network at bookstore events, trade shows, conferences, writing groups, publishing association meetings, and anywhere you connect with people personally.

Your author biography may give you ideas of people to contact based on your networks, achievements, and interests. If you are not familiar with networking, start with people you know: friends, family, co-workers, alumni, and neighbors. Then move on to less-familiar people. Again, avoid overtly selling to people in your network; instead, ask them for referrals and to spread the word about your book. When personally networking, begin by introducing yourself and mentioning who referred you. Give your 30-second summary to provide an adequate frame of reference for the individual to give his or her recommendations. Ask pertinent questions, listen responsively and take notes. Once you have all the data you need, summarize the main points and find out how you may reciprocate. Be sure to ask whether or not you may use your contact person as a reference.

## 3. Create a Website that is Functional, Easy to Navigate and Active

Doing business in today's internet society requires a website. It is your online brochure describing you and your book in your terms, building your credibility as the author. Websites can and should be updated frequently, so it's a good idea to link your blog (see #8 below) to your site. Your website can also be your storefront through which you can sell your book 24/7. You can even link to your CreateSpace eStore so you don't have to fulfill orders on your own. A well-designed website instills confidence in your business as an independent author.

First, reserve a domain name that includes your name and/or the title of your book (sites like [GoDaddy.com](http://GoDaddy.com) will host and design your site for you). Design your site to build your credibility and sell your books; show your book's cover and describe how it will benefit readers. If you write fiction, be sure to describe your plot in compelling terms (Read [How to Write an Effective Book Description](#)). Your website should make it easy to buy your book by providing links to retail outlets. You may also choose to sell your book directly on your site and offer incentives such as free shipping, a limited-time offer or a special price for an autographed book. A website is also a great place to showcase your bio, reviews, endorsements, and testimonials.

#### **4. Basic Publicity**

Publicity - also known as public relations (PR) - entails informing people about you and your book and encouraging word-of-mouth promotions. When planning your outreach, think about your target readers. What media do they watch, listen to, or read? You can reach a large number of people in a short period of time through broadcast appearances on TV and radio shows, print, and online media. Publicity is typically free and targeted to journalists, editors, and producers at media outlets. Media personnel are always looking for a story, so you and your book could potentially provide them with story ideas, interviews, background information, and other material. Read [How to Give a Great Interview](#).

The basic element of publicity is the press release, a brief description that presents the most newsworthy aspect of your book - or the "hook" - in an interesting way. A good press release uses an attention-grabbing headline and lead paragraph. It is also free of overt commercialism. Subsequent paragraphs include background information, spokesperson quotations, and other information that helps put the newsworthiness of the story in perspective. Other forms of publicity include giving testimonials and endorsements; writing articles for print and online media and submitting letters to editors; sending a newsletter; and submitting your book for reviews.

#### **5. Advanced Media Relations**

After becoming comfortable with basic publicity, you can begin more concerted and targeted efforts to reach media. Create an informative press kit that has information about your book and why it is important to the outlet's audience. Include testimonials and a list of the topics you can discuss. When targeting press, it's often beneficial to start locally and then expand. For broadcast interviews, use the vocabulary of the audience. Avoid "ums" and telling the audience how they can benefit from your content by overtly selling your book. Second, project your voice at a steady volume and at a good pace, and enunciate properly. Finally, look the part of a successful author by dressing professionally and using body language and posture effectively.

Print and online media exposure is equally important, particularly if you do not like on-air performances. This includes newspapers, magazine, ezines, newsletters, and trade journals, most of which have well-trafficked websites. Approach journalists the same as you would approach producers with a press kit written to the needs of their readers. Contact them to review your book, suggest a story or interview on you and your book, or offer to contribute content to them. Use a targeted approach, starting with the media most likely to reach your key buyers. Follow up consistently and professionally.

#### **6. Direct Marketing**

Direct marketing is a form of communication that reaches a targeted audience directly through one or more channels. Examples include email, direct mail, catalogs, and promotional letters. Postcards and bookmarks can also be effective since the message is seen immediately without opening an envelope or email. In all cases, direct marketing materials can be sent to a targeted list of potential buyers, and responses can be measured.

In both email and postal-direct marketing, target audiences are a key factor. You can purchase a targeted list for postal mail and an opt-in (meaning the recipient has agreed to have the email sent) list for email marketing. Or build your own list by asking people on your site to sign-up to receive a newsletter or special promotions from you. It's important to make sure your direct marketing pieces stand out and grab the recipient's attention. In email, the subject line is critical. Similarly, you can write a teaser on an envelope to entice the recipient to open the envelope. In postal mail, send a cover letter, sales piece, and

some means for the recipient to respond such as a business reply card (BRC). Make some offer that will get the recipient to act quickly, such as directing them to your website to see a sample chapter or offering a free gift or autographed copy with a response by a certain date. The options are unlimited, so you can test lots of different ideas to see which ones receive the best response.

## **7. Personal Marketing**

When you have a highly targeted audience, you can reach them through personal communication. The major benefit of personal marketing is that you get immediate feedback as to how well your message is getting through. It will also give you an opportunity to answer questions and close sales. When you're selling your books, you're also selling yourself as an author, so personal marketing is a great way to build your authentic author brand with face-to-face communications. Examples of personal marketing initiatives are bookstore events, launch parties, direct selling, book tours, speaking events, and personal presentations at libraries.

Many of the same techniques for live publicity events apply to speaking events. Practice projecting your words and using your body language. While you'd use professional selling techniques when direct selling, be sure not to come off too "commercial" during other speaking events, book tours, or bookstore appearances. At these, you should discuss how your content can help and/or entertain the people in the audience.

## **8. Blogging**

A blog (short for web log) is an online form of regular commentary maintained by an individual on a particular topic or cause. Most blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments. A typical blog is usually a text post, but they often contain images, embedded video, podcast installments, and links to other blogs or websites. There are several different forms of blogging, including microblogging, which consists of very short posts (ex. Twitter's 140-character posts), podcasts (audio blogs), and vlogs (video blogs). Read [Why You Need an Author Blog](#).

You can use your blog to build your platform, exposure, and credibility as an expert on your topic. Keep it authentic, post to it regularly and respond to visitor comments quickly and professionally. If you cannot commit to writing a regular blog, consider creating occasional content for other blogs which pertain to the topic of your book. Reach out to similar bloggers for guest blog opportunities, and invite them to be a guest on your blog, as well. To get started blogging, consider using a template provided by services like [Wordpress](#) or [Blogger](#), and feature your blog on your website.

## **9. Awards**

There are many award competitions for most kinds of books. Awards can focus on your book's design, content, marketing, production quality, and even editing. There are awards for a variety of genres, including business, inspirational, fiction, and children's books. Winning (or being nominated for) an award has many benefits, such as increased exposure, greater credibility, and potential for testimonials and sales. An element of personal satisfaction comes with getting awards, too.

When you win an award, make the most out of it! Feature the awards in your literature, email signature, business cards, postcards, website, and letterhead. Describe your awards in your press kits and include them in press releases or any display materials for in-person events. Even if you don't win, you can always highlight that you were nominated or achieved another level of acknowledgment from the organization distributing the award.

## **10. Trade Shows/Fairs/Events**

A trade show or fair is an event where sellers display their products to a group of corresponding buyers over a period of several days. They can be local, regional, national, or international events. One of the biggest in the U.S. publishing industry is [Book Expo America \(BEA\)](#), usually held mid-year in New York City, but you might consider attending a show targeted at your book's specific subject (for example, if your book is about automotive repair, consider attending a car show). Your town also probably has local events that would be appropriate for certain types of books. For a book on careers, you could attend a job

fair, or a book on crafts or cooking might be appropriate to display at a local country fair or farmer's market. Trade shows and fairs give you the chance to network with people in the industry or potential readers, generate sales leads, close sales, research trends, build relationships, examine direct sales opportunities, generate publicity, and/or launch a new title.

When you find the best shows or fairs in which to participate, attend them first as a visitor before you commit the time and money to exhibit. For trade shows, if you decide to purchase floor space and display, get the exhibitor's manual and follow its guidelines carefully. Create an exhibit that will make attendees stop and look, with professionally produced graphics in a single, consistent theme. Try a raffle or a game to draw participation and attention to your display. After the event, follow up with the contacts you made and send all the samples and literature that you promised to send. Whether you're attending or exhibiting, you'll need some help getting the word out and managing your presence, so consider enlisting the assistance of a friend or family member.

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