

## 10 Tips to Boost Holiday Book Sales

by Sandra Poirier Diaz

The holidays are a great time for authors to increase book sales. According to shopping data, 42% of shoppers buy books/DVDs/video games during the holidays. Here are some tips to help your book get noticed.

**1. Develop the elevator pitch for your book.** Capture the essence of your book in one or two short sentences. Think of your book in terms of a movie trailer. This description is essential for all marketing. Here are some examples for holiday movies of 2013:

*An affable underachiever finds out he's fathered 533 children through anonymous donations to a fertility clinic 20 years ago. Now he must decide whether or not to come forward when 142 of them file a lawsuit to reveal his identity. (Delivery Man)*

*Fearless optimist Anna teams up with Kristoff in an epic journey, encountering Everest-like conditions, and a hilarious snowman named Olaf in a race to find Anna's sister Elsa, whose icy powers have trapped the kingdom in eternal winter. (Frozen)*

*A chronicle of Nelson Mandela's life journey from his childhood in a rural village through to his inauguration as the first democratically elected president of South Africa. (Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom)*

**2. Gift Guides.** While magazine gift guides are busy collecting titles in late summer, there are still some great outlets closer to the holidays—especially online and newspaper outlets—to pitch your book. Research local media outlets which are always more inclined to cover a local author, and targeted online news outlets, and bloggers. Tip for bloggers—if your book is a great gift for a daughter to purchase for her dad, reach out to bloggers targeting the buyer (daughter) too. If you do not have a publicist with contacts/media lists, create your own list by visiting media outlets/blogs and collect contact names and email addresses.

**3. Contacting Media and Bloggers.** When presenting your book to others to consider for a holiday recommendation, start communication by email. Be short and sweet; bullet points work well. Do not send any attachments unless asked. In your email, present:

- a short sentence showing you know their blog, work as a professional writer or media outlet (personalizing it is great, i.e. “I enjoyed the reading your piece about veterans of World War II meeting for the first time this past Veteran’s Day. I recently published a book set in World War II...”),
- your elevator pitch,
- the perfect people to receive your book as a gift,
- price (especially if you are offering a holiday special price for your book),
- holiday specials or incentives—if you sell the book from your website, offer gift wrapping and signing a customizing note to the recipient
- formats available (hardcover, ebook, etc.)
- links to purchase your book from major retails sites (Amazon, Barnes & Noble),
- short author bio, condensed clips of reviews, testimonials, or awards, and your website,
- email address, telephone number and note (early in the email) if you are a local author,
- an offer to send a review copy or PDF of your book.

**4. Making it Personal.** On your website, and in any interactions with media or potential book buyers, offer to gift wrap and sign personalize copies for holiday gifts.

5. **Charity.** Over the holidays, choose a favorite charity and share a portion of your holiday sales. Let people know! Buyers will have an added reason to feel good about buying your book.

6. **Price.** In your “pitch” to media, bloggers, buyers, consider your price point: Great Gifts for Teens under \$20, for example.

7. **Limited-time.** With a deadline for holiday shopping, consider offering something along with your book available only during the holiday sale. If it’s a book for moms on dealing with stress, add a sampling of teas (be creative!).

8. **Ebooks.** If your book is available as an ebook, consider offering a discount for a limited time during the holidays.

9. **Social Media/Author Newsletter.** If you are active on Facebook, Goodreads, Twitter, or Google+, blog or have collected names for an author newsletter, show your holiday spirit with inspirational messages, especially as they relate to your topic/audience! Create a special holiday gift message on each platform, incorporating information from above (charity, special price, target audience, limited time offer, personalization, etc.). This may spark past buyers to purchase your book as a gift.

10. **Local Events.** Check your library, civic organizations, religious community, and schools to find relevant holiday events where you and your book would be a welcome addition. Offer to sign books in person with gift bags!