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Easy Ways to  
Promote Your Book Online

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## Introduction

You have just completed your literary masterpiece. Congratulations! But now what? How do you get people to actually buy your book? As many authors know, the greatest challenge is not in writing the book, but in marketing the finished product. How do you convince potential readers to part with their hard-earned cash to purchase it?

Promotion is essential whether your finished product is a printed book or an eBook. The fact of the matter is that, if you want to sell your book, you have to publicize it. Promoting the book is as important as writing it. If people do not know about your book, they will never buy it and read it.

Begin by creating a marketing plan. Commit to publicizing your book for at least two years after it comes off the press. First-time authors and publishers may find passive marketing attractive, such as paying for an advertisement or a mailing. However, it is probably a waste of money unless the author is famous or the advertisement quotes a

celebrity lauding the book as a “must read.” Book signings may not be worth the time and effort, either. The average number of copies sold at a big chain bookstore book signing event is 8 to 10.

Although it may be expensive to market your book in the “real world,” the Internet offers many opportunities for writers to promote their books for little or even nothing. In some cases, the only cost may be time and energy.

The Internet has another advantage over offline promotion: It can reach vast numbers of potential buyers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. While it may be difficult to get readers to come see you in person, it is easy for them to do so virtually on the Internet. According to Liate Stehlik, publisher of William Morrow and Avon Books, “Being an author has become much more of an ongoing relationship with your audience

through the Web... You have to be out there in the online world, talking and participating.”<sup>1</sup>

Authors should take advantage of the numerous opportunities the Internet provides to promote their books. Marketing a book online may be time consuming, but it is cost effective. As the Internet is an essential marketing tool for writers, establishing an internet presence is an important part of any book promotion plan. This book discusses five easy and effective ways to advertise your book online.

Be patient. Try not to be disappointed if the book does not sell well immediately upon publication. It takes time to get the word out. Sticking to a promotional plan and making consistent use of Internet marketing tools will pay off in the long run.

Good luck!

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<sup>1</sup> Tucker, Neely. “Novice Authors Must Promote Themselves, Since Publishers Won’t.” *washingtonpost.com*. N.p. 24 Sept. 2009. Web. 15 Dec. 2016. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/23/AR2009092304603.html>>.

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## Email Announcements

Email is a fast, effective, and inexpensive way to market a book. Email allows authors to contact readers directly to inform them about book releases, the author's public appearances, and other news and opportunities. A monthly newsletter falls under this rubric, and will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Before your book is even published, start an email list of everyone you know. This might include friends, family, clients, colleagues, fellow alumni, etc. Add to this list by allowing visitors to your website to subscribe.

Entice potential readers to sign up by offering premium content when they provide their email address and give you permission to contact them. If you have a speaking engagement or a book-signing event, make sure you provide an email sign-up

sheet for those attendees interested in receiving updates.

Another effective way to collect email addresses is to hold contests on your website. Contestants may enter to win prizes such as a signed copy of your book or perhaps an eBook viewer. Draw the winner's name from the list of your email subscribers (this will also encourage people to sign up). When visitors enter the contests, capture their email address. Inform them on your website that, when they enter the contest, they will be subscribed to your email list and agree to be contacted in the future.

Any time you are collecting emails, inform registrants of your privacy policy. Reassure readers that you will never sell or share email addresses with anyone. Only send promotional emails to those who have expressed an interest in receiving them. Sending unsolicited emails is spam. Good etiquette includes making it easy for people to unsubscribe from your email list.

As soon as your book is published, send an email to your distribution list announcing that your



book is available. Encourage them to buy it. Ask them to help spread the word by telling their friends, family, and acquaintances about your book. You can even ask them to forward the email to their own email distribution list. This method can be quite successful in producing sales.

Your announcement email does not have to be fancy. Here is a sample email to send to your distribution list:

Greetings! I hope you are doing well. I just wanted to let you know that I have published my book entitled “\_\_\_\_\_.” The book is about \_\_\_\_\_. Please check out an excerpt on my website at [www.authurname.com](http://www.authurname.com). You can buy a copy at your local bookstore, or online at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). I would love to hear what you think about it. Please spread the word. Thank you!

Be sure to provide a link directly to where your book can be purchased online. In this way, the email recipients can buy the book without having to work too hard. Driving sales to one online

merchant will yield the best results. This is because the more people who buy at one time, the higher your book's ranking will be on the bestseller list (Note: both Amazon and B&N.com report sales to a variety of bestseller lists, including the New York Times).

For ease of use, you may wish to create a professional signature in your email. This might include the book's title, your website, sales information such as its International Standard Book Number (ISBN), on-sale date, and link to the book's online product page. In this way, every email you send promotes the book without being spam-y or obnoxious. Here is a sample email signature:

Author's Name

Author of \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher

ISBN

Link to the book at online bookseller

Book's website address (URL)

The signature can also promote your online newsletter with a short sentence inviting them to sign up for the latest updates and a link to where they can register.

Any book marketing plan should include publishing a monthly newsletter. Use the newsletter to increase awareness about your book, create a market for future books, and establish yourself as an expert in your field. Your email newsletter should be sent regularly, perhaps once or twice a month.

In each newsletter, provide material pertinent to your book's subject matter that would be helpful or interesting to readers. This may include articles, commentary, press releases, book reviews, sneak-peeks at future releases, sample chapters, and website updates.

You can also write an article based on excerpts from your book and submit them for publication in other online newsletters. Make sure to include an author profile at the end that tells readers where they can purchase your book online.

Consider encouraging your email recipients to visit your website by offering them something of value. This may be a chance to download premium content (perhaps as a PDF file). Premium content is considered to be valuable, limited-distribution information that is not in the book and not on the website. Examples of premium content may include in-depth articles on topics related to your book, or your insights and reflections on your book. Receiving premium content makes the reader feel special, like he or she has insider information. Offering premium content will help you create a rapport with your visitors.

Respond to readers' emails as soon as possible. If their comments are critical, start a dialog and try to understand any criticism from their point of view.

Besides email, you will need a website. At the minimum, your website will function as an online brochure for your book. However, it can also be an engaging, interactive tool. Creating an effective website to be used for marketing will be discussed in the next chapter.