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Your Book Promotion Foundation

by Dan Poynter

Because many smaller and newer book publishers are short of time and money, they must concentrate their resources in the most productive promotion areas. The mission is to tell the maximum number of opinion molders and potential buyers about your book at the least possible cost while expending the least possible amount of time. For most nonfiction books, publishers should follow a five-step plan. The first four steps will assure all the basic areas are covered and the fifth is where book marketing becomes creative and fun.

Whether you sell out to a publisher or publish yourself, the author must do the promotion. Publishers do not promote books. So, this advice is important to you whether you have a publisher or have self-published.

Customer/Reader.

First, sell directly to the user by promoting the book with book reviews, news releases, articles and by alerting your friends, relatives and associates with email. Book reviews are the least expensive and most effective promotion you can do for your book. If you are not sending out 300–500 review copies, you are not exploiting this form of free publicity. News releases and articles are a way to keep your issue, name and book before the public after the book is out. If you are not sending out a news releases to all the magazines in your book's subject every month, you are missing out on a lot of free publicity. Naturally, book reviews and news releases will generate interest from wholesalers, bookstores, libraries and book clubs too. See

http://www.pma-online.org/coopcats_bfr.cfm

and

<http://parapub.com/getpage.cfm?file=/bookprom.html>

Spend your money on your book's cover and your creative energy on review copies, news releases and articles.

Tell the ultimate buyers of your new book with a pre-publication mailing offering them a copy hot off the press and tell them you will pay the shipping if they order now. Later, make periodic offers to small, highly targeted lists.

Bookstores.

Second. Get a distributor. Distributors have sales reps to visit the stores and get the orders, See

<http://parapub.com/getpage.cfm?file=resource/promote.html>

and

<http://www.pma-online.org/benefits/tradedistribution.cfm>

Bookstores are best contacted through cooperative bookstore mailings, targeted mailings to specialized bookstores, through special editions of appropriate magazines and the American Booksellers Association's *Single Title Order Plan* (STOP). See

<http://www.pma-online.org/programs.cfm>

Libraries.

Third. Since libraries are good pay but only order one book each, publishers cannot afford to spend a great deal of time and money pursuing them. It is best to use this seven-step library plan and move on to other areas of promotion.

Offer your book to Quality Books prior to printing. They will often take 200 copies or more directly from your printer. Other library wholesalers will order in dribs and drabs while Quality will give you a large early order. The secret is to let Quality know about your new book early enough. Fill out their *New Book Information* form and send it with a brochure, description, manuscript or galley well before you go to press.

Become a *stock publisher* with Baker & Taylor and get your book listed on their database. Notify all the library wholesalers about your book. Pursue reviews in the library review magazines such as *Library Journal* and *ALA Booklist*. Acquisition librarians read and believe reviews. Take part in the Publishers Marketing Association mailing to libraries. Make highly targeted mailings to appropriate special libraries and libraries with special collections. Finally, take part in special editions of appropriate book-trade magazines. <http://www.pma-online.org/library.cfm>

Subsidiary rights.

The **fourth** area of book promotion is subsidiary rights. Most rights contacts can be handled via email and most should be pursued before the book goes to press. Some subsidiary rights are: periodical rights, condensation rights, anthology rights, book club rights, performing rights, translation rights, mass market reprint rights, and merchandising rights.

Nontraditional markets.

Fifth. Now that the basics are covered, you may (almost) forget about bookstores, libraries and subsidiary rights and concentrate your time, money and resources on the more lucrative nontraditional areas. Some of these non-book trade outlets are: specialty shops, local shops, catalogs, premiums, fund raisers, associations, the export market, and selling to the U.S. Government/military.

The nice things about specialty shops are that most buy in large quantities, pay in 30 days, feel a 40% discount is very generous and have never heard of returns. For example, Para Publishing's books on parachutes and skydiving are sold to parachute lofts (stores), skydiving schools, parachute catalog houses and to the U.S. Parachute Association for resale to its members.

Bookstores are not the only place to sell books—They aren't even a *good* place to sell books—In fact, bookstores are a *lousy* place to sell books.

Sales to catalogs, for fund raising and to premiums buyers can take more time but the orders are much larger. They are worth the effort.

Don't miss marketing opportunities.

Many newer and smaller publishers come into this unique marketing arena with years of experience in other fields. While they are initially mystified by some of the book promotion basics that are required, they offer refreshing marketing creativity to the field. If you are new, cover the basics first, step-by-step, before you get creative.

With a pre-publication mailing to readers, some wholesaler orders, an order from Quality Books and some subsidiary rights (book club?) interest, you should sell enough books to exceed your print bill. Certainly, this is a nice target to aim for.

Publishing and promoting books is creative, invigorating and fun particularly when you are organized and have a plan to follow.

 **Writing periodicals:**

Dan Poynter does not want you to die with a book still inside you. You have the ingredients and he has your recipe. Dan has written more than 100 books since 1969 including *Writing Nonfiction* and *The Self-Publishing Manual*. For more help on book writing, see <http://ParaPub.com>.

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