

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE MARKETING PLAN

The three most important questions that everyone asks – from acquiring editor to sales representative to bookstore buyer and ultimately the consumer -- when making a buying decision are:

1. Who is the target market for this book?
2. How will this market hear about this book?
3. How is this book different from the others on the shelves?

For every title on your list the bookstore buyer will want to know what you are doing to inform the target consumer that this title exists and that will drive them into the stores. This information can most effectively be supplied by creating a "marketing plan".

Marketing plans are not just for the "big books" -- indeed every title should be carefully considered for its marketing potential. While entire courses are built around creating an effective marketing plan – you can create a simple and effective one-page document that lists everything you and the author will do to support your publication.

When to start:

Marketing plans should begin to take shape when you sign the title. What convinced you that there was a market for this book?

- Demographics
- How big is the market
- What do they read/where do they go to get the most up-to-date information
- Why is your author an authority
- What does your author do to interact with the target community
- Who are the movers and shakers in the industry
- Who is publishing competitive titles
- What are the sales of competitive titles

Where to start:

You need to create a laundry list of what you and the author are going to do to support the book. Much of this can be identified in a well-crafted author's questionnaire. One great industry tip is to think PENCILS - - you'll never go wrong:

P - Publications - Newspapers/magazines/newsletters

- Advertising
- Reviews
- Excerpts/serial rights
- Book will be excerpted in "x" publication, with a circulation of "Y" in "cover/date"
- Interviews

E – Endorsements

- Leaders in the field
- Fellow authors
- Other opinion makers within the field

N- News /tour

- Tour cities/ approximate dates
- Radio – particularly radio/phone interviews
- Television - "We've already had interest from..."
- Bookstore appearances

C - Community involvement

- Professional organizations – cities and dates of major conventions on or after publication date
- Alumni organizations
- Consumer organizations – cities and dates of major meetings on or after the publication date
- Community or other civic organizations

I - Internet

- Book website
- Author website
- On-line chats
- Blogs
- E-mail blasts
- On-line advertising

L – Lectures /events involving the author

- Conventions – subject specific
- Speaking engagements – author’s personal or professional lecture circuit
- Press parties

S - Social Responsibility - donating to a cause

Formatting the Marketing Plan:

Booksellers appreciate that your plan will change over time, but by giving them a well-reasoned and thoughtful document they will appreciate your commitment to your titles and your efforts directed at driving consumers into their stores.

1 page

- Jacket (postage stamp) and specs in the top right corner in case this gets separated from the book.
- Include Publication Month, ISBN and Price
- Publisher’s contact name for more information

Use bullet points not paragraphs

- Visual appeal
- Easy to locate specific information

Give as much specific information as possible

- "X has already expressed interest" as possible
- Releases to 400 top "X" radio stations

Delivering the Marketing Plan:

Your marketing plan should be presented at sales conference or with your seasonal sales conference materials.

- Engage your Account Manager early on for specific recommendations and review of the plan
- Provide updates to your Account Manager
- Keep your Account Manger informed of all confirmed appearances, reviews etc.

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