



Tips for Promoting Your Book

Promotional Materials

- Four-colour bookmarks with a detail of your book cover on the front and information and a quoted review on the back.
- Copies of your book cover printed on card stock at postcard size
- A 20" x 30" poster of your book cover
- A 13" x 20" poster of your book cover mounted on a stiff backing (e.g. styrofoam) for hanging by fishing line or for propping up on a table where your books are displayed
- A flyer (a folded 8½" x 11" sheet or two) with the book cover, a brief description of the book (or back cover blurb), first chapter or other excerpt(s) from the book, your bio, the publisher's website, your e-mail address, and URL of your book trailer. Stick on a label with the bookstore's name and phone number if you're doing an event or signing at a bookstore.
- Have a T-shirt made with your book cover on it to wear to a book signing. You can print the cover art onto an iron-on decal to affix to a blank T-shirt if your budget is tight.

Strategies

- Partner with other authors whenever possible so that you can vicariously benefit from others' exposure and promotion opportunities.
- Get out in the community and get to know organizers of events in your region.
- Introduce yourself to owners of independent bookstores and community relations representatives of local big book chain stores
- Partner with local academics or lecturers who are experts in a field related to your book. Readers who are interested in a subject may buy a novel on the same topic and vice versa. If a teacher likes your book, they may put it on a course list.
- If you travel for your job, bring flyers, book cover postcards, or bookmarks with you to hand out or leave as you go. Invite people you meet to attend any events or book signings you have planned.
- Include bookmarks in every piece of correspondence that leaves your hands. When paying bills, slip in several of your bookmarks along with your cheque. They send stuffers with their statement; why not reciprocate by sending them one?

- When you get junk mail, keep the postage-paid envelope and enclose a flyer or folded half-sheet (i.e. 5½" x 8½") with a picture of the book cover, blurb and a review or two along with the publisher's website, your own website, and book trailer URL. Include a note saying something intriguing about the book and where it can be obtained:

"Thank you. A must-read: The Judas Apocalypse, a novel by Dan McNeil being compared to The Da Vinci Code. Available at www.ipublishpress.com. Provocative and controversial!"

or

"Thank you. Here is an opportunity to travel to New Orleans by reading Unmasked a novel by Jody Gerbig. Available at www.ipublishpress.com. Don't you love the cover? Great Reviews!!"

Preparation for Promotional Events or Book Signings

- Send promotional materials with the date of your appearance to the bookstore or other venue in advance and request that they put them on display and/or hand them out with purchases. Offer to send any additional information they might need for their own in-store flyer etc. well in advance.
- Contact local newspapers and television stations (the store or venue may have a local media list available) to give them notice of your appearance two to four weeks in advance. Many community and local media have event listings, so request that your event be listed. They may do an interview or review of your book the week of the event. Suggest that someone could come and take pictures at the signing and interview the book store manager or community relations person for a follow-up "feature article".
- Make announcements about your event on all websites of which you are a member. Blog on your amazon.com blog, your personal website, and make sure that there is a notice on the publisher's website.
- Verify that the event or book store sends a news release about your book signing, and send your own as well. This increases the chance of getting coverage. Send it at least two to three weeks in advance to all media within a 50 kilometre radius. Include a short synopsis of the book, information about yourself, a photograph of yourself, and an image of the book cover. Include your phone number and the contact person, address and phone number of the book store. Editors often will call you or the store for more information.
- Make the most of your own social network. Send book cover postcards with information about your event, email or call acquaintances, business associates, fellow club members and anyone who might be interested in attending your event.

At Promotional Events or Book Signings

- Bring a table cloth large enough to cover the table top, front, and sides (find out the table's dimensions from the contact person at the store/venue if you're unsure). Make it neutral or contrasting colour to show off your book. It will make you look classy and make your book stand out. The bonus is that all clutter including your coat, boxes etc can hide unseen.
- Have at least a dozen books with you to sign and sell.
- Write your own announcement for the bookstore's intercom. Make it short and brief. You can give them several versions because they should announce that you are there several times (every 20 minutes or so is recommended). Don't hesitate to remind them to make the announcement again if it's been a while since the last one. Or even offer to make the announcement yourself.
- Talk to people. Many people think because you wrote a book, you are unapproachable. Prove them wrong. It builds relationships. Be friendly! Book signings are no place to be shy.
- Be sure to note details of the signing or event for future reference.
- Have a guest book at your signing table that asks for an address, so you can send information about upcoming events and news (for example, about future books).
- To help call attention to you and your book, you can provide candies or little chocolates that have some relation to your book, its setting or characters (for example, Jody Gerbig, the author of *Unmasked*, could have round candies resembling beads in Mardi Gras colours and put them in a clear bowl with a Mardi Gras mask wrapping around or Dan McNeil, the author of *The Judas Apocalypse*, could place sweets on a chess board or in a box made to look like an ossuary). While they are unwrapping the candy, people will stop and look over your promotional materials and your book. (Note: Don't offer children any food or candy without permission of parents!)
- Have copies of readers' reviews available at your table. Hand them everyone who shows any interest in you or the book and say, "Here's what other people who have read my book have to say."
- Have a stack of signed book cover postcards available at your table. Make sure everyone leaves the book store with one. Ask them to mail it to a friend.
- Sign a bookmark for someone who lingers at your table. Remember your aim is to spread good will. Many people will come back to the store or go online to buy your book later.
- Bring a camera and have your picture taken with the manager or community relations representative and other key people in the venue--make sure your book is in the picture. If you want to call attention to yourself, pay attention to other

people. You may want to use several of the photos in publicity in the future.

- Have a Polaroid camera handy at your table. When someone buys your book say, "Let's have our picture taken together!" Have someone take a picture of you and your new customer. Give it to them and sign and date the back of the picture. Or you can take a picture with a digital camera, getting their e-mail address and asking permission to send them the picture by e-mail.
- Most authors wait for people to come to them. Instead, roam the store, greet customers, introduce yourself, and place either a copy of your book or a signed bookmark in their hand.
- Ask before signing if the book is for themselves or someone else. Here are some examples of how to sign your book during a book signing:

"Best Wishes"

"Good Luck"

"To (John) - Enjoy!"

"Keep Reading!"

[or a phrase relevant to your book; for example, since Jody Gerbig's book, *Unmasked*, revolves around Mardi Gras, she could use the Mardi Gras phrase "Laissez les bons temps rouler!"]

- After the signing, give each employee or staff-member a signed bookmark and autograph any remaining books. Let them know that you appreciate any hand-selling that they do for your book. Ask the manager how many books they would like for you to sign before you leave so they will have some on hand.
- If you are going to be involved in any upcoming events, make available promotional material (such as a flyer) for that event too.
- Play your book trailer on a laptop computer to attract attention, even from a distance.

Follow-up

- Ask the manager how many books they would like for you to sign before you leave. Generally speaking, books signed are non-refundable, so always ask!
- Send follow-up book cover postcards to those who've signed your guest book.
- Create an e-mail list to send people information about future events and news.
- Send a thank-you note to the organizers or store staff and those responsible for media coverage you receive. A thank-you goes a long way.
- If you had a picture taken of yourself with the manager or organizer, buy an

inexpensive frame, and mail the photo in the frame along with a handwritten, personal note suggesting they hang the picture in a conspicuous place in the store, perhaps on an “Authors’ Photo Wall of Fame.”

- Write about the event on your blog, your own website, and other websites of which you’re a member
- Touch base with the store or event organizers periodically through updates and press releases.
- Put the store or venue on your holiday card list and when you send the card, make sure it has a personal note.