

# Writing a book marketing plan

As important as the writing of the book, writing a marketing plan creates the difference between best seller and no sales at all. Whether you are self published, produced by a small publisher or one of the giants, the system of introducing the book to the right audience is truly the difference between failure and success. Without a marketing plan, you can pretty much plan on failure.

Book sales just don't happen—You must make them happen. Your book is one of about 7,000 in the average book store and one of about 5,000,000 on-line. Books can't jump off of the shelf, the prospective reader must reach for it and marketing is what tells them it is there.

A marketing plan must identify the revenue streams you expect to reach. This outline should be a guide on how you, as an author will achieve your income or sales goals, and identify in detail the market you see and how you will reach them.

Here is a question and answer approach to building the right plan for your book.

Answer these questions:

## Who will buy my book?

We call this the target market. You must be able to reach directly to the potential reader. Successful marketing begins with identifying the prospect and tactics for reaching that prospect. The book reading market is so huge that it is nearly impossible to get your head around it. Everyone will not want to read your book, plan on this. A book that sells one million copies barely reaches 1% of the total book reading market. The reality is that most books only sell 200 copies—0.0002 of the reading market. Consider that not worth your effort. You must define, with a very clear picture, who is interested in your book.

Does the reader want or need the book? People are more likely to buy something they need before something they want. The marketing plan must identify the need in each of your target markets.

Every need you identify points directly to a sales opportunity. You must narrow it down and find a unique angle about your book. You can't be everything to everyone, but you can target 100% of a specific part!

## What is your GOAL?

Define success for your book?

*Pursue goals that are important to you.*

Your goal may be to sell 3 million copies. It may be to define or present your knowledge to a certain business or social organization. It may be to keep your job at a university—publish or perish. It may be to help people solve medical problems. What ever your goals are, they need to be written down and they need to be qualified and quantified.

Your goal is part of your mission. It is *why* you are doing what you are doing. An interesting exercise is to state your goal in five words.

## What are your Plans: Objectives and Actions?

It starts with your GOALS and everything you do to market your book should be in support of your goals.

*Objectives- these are the steps you are able to take to reach your GOAL.*

Simple Example:

Goal = sell 5,000 books

OBJECTIVE = events to promote the book in bookstores.

ACTION = Identify and approach the book store managers. Write a press release about your personal appearances. Create posters for in store publicity.

The “steps” to achieving your goal along with the objectives must be reasonable and something that you can achieve. This means that you must consider your time and your budget.

*Here are things we do for every book we publish:*

**First:** We set up personal events to promote the book – book signings, seminars, radio interviews, BookTV, feature stories in local and regional newspapers and magazines.

**Second:** We send an excerpted version of the book (to solicit reviews) to newspapers and magazines.

**Third:** We create online resources for promotion of the book on the publishing company website and occasionally create a website just for the book.

**Fourth:** We identify speaking opportunities for the author (non-retail opportunities) to build awareness of the author as an expert and promote book sales.

**Fifth:** We create an author card that specifically promotes the book.

All of the above, when written down becomes more than a to do list—it is your plan. The PLAN outlines your steps to meet your goal through reachable and reasonable objectives.

**WISHES TO ACTIONS:** As the outline of your plan grows, expand the details of your activities into specific actions. **DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS!** Without the details of your intended actions, all you have is a big wish list.

This is where most marketing plans fall apart – you must have a sensible and workable set of actions to realize your plan and each objective. If you can't come up with a workable action, ditch the objective or start over. It really is as simple as breaking down the steps then taking those steps.

The next step is to measure what you have done. If it is not getting results, try a different tactic.

## What is your timeline and budget?

Remember that the release of a book is the starting point. Marketing is like a marathon, take steady steps with an occasional sprint, but it is the pace you set for the long run that counts. You have to be consistent. Overnight sensations take years to create.

Time is the only thing that God gives us equally. You bring the energy and the money. Marketing will grind up all three (time, energy and money) at a pace that surprises the pros—every time. Pace yourself. You don't want to end up tired and broke. This is where your plan works for you. You can anticipate your expenses and investment. Your budget needs to consider your objectives, one at a time, and with proper priority you can schedule your available recourses of time and money.

Here are some expenses you should include in your marketing plan:

- **Marketing materials:** posters, flyers, postcards, author cards, bookmarks, etc.
- **Sample Books:** sent after you have provided an electronic excerpted copy of the book. Most samples provide little return if sent unsolicited. Don't forget the cost of media mail.
- **Press release:** writing and distribution (consider paid reviewer services)
- **Advertising:** Display ads are generally out of reach, but classified ads, online sponsored search, links and banners can be a good value.
- **Internet:** A website for the book with a buy button and a blog can be very beneficial. Google Checkout is a great solution for an inexpensive shopping cart.

The media will probably be more interested in you than in your book. They see books like a commodity. They will see you as an expert. Your expertise is more valuable to them for story content. Your book is a reason for them to talk to you.