

Promotional Guideline – Standard Format

6-12 months pre-publication date:

- Solicit testimonials & blurbs from other authors and people of influence in your book's field.

Locate authors of books in your book's field which don't directly compete with yours. Initiate a relationship. Send a review packet to the author with a letter asking if he/she would be interested in providing quotes or blurbs for jacket copy. It is a good idea to develop a relationship with authors whose works complement yours; later, consider a cooperative marketing mailing, or other joint effort that will share cost and may create more exposure. Consider teaming up for a panel discussion on your mutual topic to any of the service organizations or other places your niche market might be reached.

- Design an eye-catching cover.

Don't sacrifice here. Use full-color, and if you can afford one, a professional book designer. Make sure your cover has good contrast of light to dark and so that promotional materials and book reviews can show a thumbnail size black & white and still have your book title readable. Use blurbs and sharp, clean copy. Don't sacrifice prime marketing space on the back for your bio and photo – you can do that inside, if you want.

When your book goes to the printer, get extra print-runs and overruns of your cover to send with your promo materials or to your distributor. Make sure to get your cover saved on a good digital file so that you can insert it into your promotional materials.

- Prepare your promotional documents: Your fact sheet (also called "sell" sheet), *(need a link here for how to's)* order sheet, back cover copy, trade catalog copy, and a short bio.

Less is more. Keep it short, say it well, and be sure to include a few blurbs or quotes from fans. Don't do a large order of fact sheets in the beginning – just print enough to send with your pre-publication book review packets and first serial rights queries. You'll want to re-do these when you've got some reviews in.

- Research book-trade magazines and prepare mailings of pre-publication review packets.

Most of the book-trade magazines are listed in Literary Marketplace; the top ten Wingspan book-trade choices are listed in our resources, as well as other sources for researching these names and addresses. There may be specialty reviewers in your book's genre. Pay special attention to these.

The key is research. It's important to contact each periodical prior to sending out your review packet to check on the correct book reviewer to address your packet to, and doublecheck the address. The publishing industry often plays musical chairs with jobs, and a misdirected packet is a waste of your money. Also, ensure that you are submitting within their guidelines; i.e., many reviewers initially want bound galleys; some, like MidWest Book Review, want sample copies of the book only. Calendar their deadlines for submission (i.e., Kirkus Reviews needs to have your galley in hand 4-5 months ahead of your publication date – and mailing time for periodicals can take up to three weeks. Send it off as soon as you've got it prepared.)

- Identify your niche market trade & consumer magazines and newspapers that do book reviews for pre- and post-publication book reviews and sales of first serial rights of excerpts.

Locate magazines and periodicals that serve the trade that your market is interested in. There are hundreds of periodicals read by business owners in the floral business, the stylist business, sports equipment – you name a business that your book should be in, and chances are, you'll find magazines that supply industry information to the owners of those businesses. Next, identify the consumer magazines that reach your target

market. You can find them listed in Bowker's at your local library (or online at _____ need the website for bowker's); many will be in the current issue of Writer's Market, or found through an online search engine.

While you are researching, also use these periodicals for in-depth marketing research.

- Submit Advance Book Information (ABI) to R. R. Bowker for inclusion in Books in Print (Wingspan Publishing will do this for you as part of the basic publication package).

An ABI is a special form used to list all books in print. It is a standard in the industry; Wingspan will take care of the submission as part of your publication package.

- If you want to use conventional advertising, design your ad and determine where you will place it.

Conventional advertising is costly and, in the book industry, not always effective, as reviews and word-of-mouth generate the most sales. Readers believe articles over ads, any day. See Getting (Almost-Free) Publicity for more ideas.

- If you are planning a website, work on it soon. You'll want to have it up and running at a minimum of two months pre-publication date.

You'll need ordering information, a copy of your cover, space for a synopsis (or perhaps a few pages of the beginning to get a reader hooked), and any blurbs you may have already. Make sure your blurb/review page is able to be revised as more reviews come in.

5 months pre-publication date:

- Continue sending pre-publication review packets.
- Get advance review copies or galleys out to key booksellers and chain bookstores.

Locate key booksellers and bookstores in your area. Send them your fact sheets, order forms, copies of reviews.

- As reviews begin to come in, collect and insert them in an update of your promotional materials and website
- Prepare announcements to your alumni or other association newsletters that print a list of upcoming books or news about their members.

You can tell them of your book's publication and your author's tour or speaking engagement. Find out any deadline or other submission requirements to increase your chance of coverage.

Four Months Pre-Publication

- Design your postcards, bookmarks, flyers or brochures.

Postcard design can be tricky. Check the template guidelines at modernpostcard.com to ensure that you are keeping the required space free, and don't insert a full return address in the bottom 2.5" of space – otherwise, you might find all of your postcards returned to you, instead of the addressee!

Aim to allow enough lead time so that you can send them out to bookstores well in advance of publication and your author's tour. Keep in mind that printing takes time, shipping takes time, and there could be errors in the final that make a re-order necessary. Do it far enough in advance that you can use them, and prepare a mailing, in time. Even printing labels takes longer than you'd expect.

- Continue sending out pre-publication review copies.
- Submit to appropriate catalogs and book clubs.

Try to locate some that specifically target your market as well as more general readers. Depending on the catalog/club, you might end up submitting your sample and sell sheets to a distributor. No matter who you talk with, always be friendly and enthusiastic. You can also consider purchasing use of their mailing list, if the market is really tailored to your book, and mailing out a flyer or postcard closer to publication date.

- Begin working on your media kits and media releases for your publication announcement promotion.

Research local papers and magazines first, and publications that have a long lead-time, and make sure to calendar their deadlines. Prepare your media kits well in advance, and always try to identify the correct reporter or editor to receive your packet. Local papers especially will be interested in your announcement.

Digitize or make high-quality copies of any high-contrast, high-quality book illustrations or photographs that would be of interest to the media. You can also have a professional shoot good black & white photos of you staged in some manner that references your book. Ensure you have the reprint rights to any photographs you will send with media kits.

- Plan your author's tour.

Find locations in the areas you want to include in your author's tour that will give you signings and/or readings. Send samples or sample chapters and promo materials to bookstores or associations in your book's field well in advance, as most stores book their readings months in advance. Advise them of the date of publication and the date your book will be available to their bookstores. Ask if they can schedule you for a signing after that date. Call one week after mailing to ensure that they received your packet (this also helps turn your packet from junk mail to the work of a flesh-and-blood human and, especially if you are friendly, may land a book signing).

If you get favorable response, make sure their book distributor's know about the tour. Send them a tour schedule and request that they stock the book in advance.

Ask the bookstore for any media contacts they have developed for either press coverage or for a community events calendar listing, and whether they would like to include your postcards, flyers or bookmarks in their next newsletter. If so, calendar to design, print and send them well in advance of their deadline; also ask if they would like a stack of postcards to set near the register or a flyer for promotional purposes. Calendar to send or design the flyer as well. Calendar to send your postcards to local interested businesses in the area, any friends, family, or supporters in the area, two weeks prior to your appearance. Confirm your appearance by letter one to two week's prior to your date, and ask if they've received a shipment of books yet. It's a good idea to check by phone before you leave, so that you can pack some cases in your car if the distributor hasn't responded in time.

- Arrange speaking engagements.

If you can incorporate it into your author's tour, you can also save travel expenses.

Look at your niche market. What organizations support those markets? What associations would your readers belong to? Where do they meet? Contact those associations by letter and follow up with friendly phone calls. You are now an expert in your field – you've got a book to your credit.

Always bring books to autograph at these functions. Consider the likely number of attendees, and bring ¼ to ½ that number, and a receipt book to record sales. And don't be late!

- If you choose to send out a pre-pub direct mailer, prepare your mailer, research mailing lists and purchase for use.

Your choice to use direct mailers or not will depend on your budget. A direct mailer can take many forms – a large postcard attracts attention and is often effective because the consumer doesn't have to open an envelope. A correctly targeted flyer works well if it presents something of direct interest to the recipients, enticing them to open the envelope and read more. In a targeted flyer, you can include a pre-publication order form, and offer an incentive like free shipping if ordered by a specific date, etc. Don't discount a pre-publication book.

Mailing lists can be purchased from many sources. Consider the mailing list for any catalog (especially one targeted to your market) you will be listed in, as catching a reader's attention twice can greatly increase their interest. Remember, though, that mailing lists over 6 months old are no longer considered "fresh". Try to purchase a newer list, and schedule it for when your mailer will be ready to send out.

3 months pre-publication

- Your initial printing has probably arrived by now. Send out advance copies soon.

Pack envelopes with sample copies, your reviews and fact sheets, and send them off to as many of the addresses on the advance copy listing provided as you feel you can afford. You can glue-stick a scaled-down info sheet to the inside of your front cover in case your book gets separated from the promotional materials.

- Mail out publication announcement media releases to any newspapers or magazines with a 3-month lead-time.
- Plan a Publication Day event, if the nature of your book lends itself to it.

2 months prior to publication

- Submit to newspapers, trade magazines, book reviewers, online magazines and newsgroups who do post-publication book reviews.

Use the research you did on trade and consumer magazines to begin sending out post-publication review packets. These are very similar to the pre-publication review packet mailings, but by now you may have enough of a collection of book reviews to list only select excerpts. Send a sample copy of your book in your packet – no galleys, at this point.

- Send out community event calendar releases in advance of public appearances such as a book-signing.
- Locate and prepare to contact radio stations and tv stations to announce your availability during your author's tour or any event of interest to the media surrounding your book's publication.

In general, send a media packet about 4 weeks ahead of your tour or event, including your media release, review sheet, fact sheet, and a sample copy of your book or sample chapters. Follow up two weeks prior to see if they've received the packet and to find out if they have any regularly scheduled programs that an interview would fit into. Because electronic media is so immediate, you can even call on the day of the tour/event to see if they have any time free for a telephone interview.

- Follow up on any calendar items left over from previous months – author tours may need hotels and rental cars, catalog & specialty outlets may need follow-up calls. Update your website with your reviews.

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1 month prior to publication

- Send out Publication Announcement media releases to newspapers and local magazines with a one-month lead-time.
- Prepare a short bio for any reporters who contact you. This can be the same bio that you've created for your cover copy; however, if you are contacted by a local reporter, they may want more information that relates to your community background.
- Send the author-tour bookstores, radio & tv stations promotional materials & sample book or chapters. If your postcard are back already, send some to the bookstores and to any specialty outlet that will carry your book.

2 weeks prior to publication

- Send postcards out to arrive after your book will hit the shelves. These will include all of the reporters, editors, reviewers, specialty stores, catalogs, authors, in short, every name you've entered on your mailing list.
- Follow up to check if radio and tv stations received your packet and are interested in an interview.

THE DAY OF PUBLICATION-

Some authors have a party. Some go out to dinner. Some go to bed early for the first time in months. Some people start their author's tour.

If it's appropriate, some authors attend an event they've scheduled around Publication Day, tied in with other current events or holidays. Some spend time calling radio stations to snag a phone interview.

We suggest a bottle of champagne at the very least.