

Creating Demand for Your Self-Published Novel

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Desktop publishing software, the Web, and print on demand services have enabled writers to publish complete written works from home. Regardless of the reasons why you decided to self-publish your work, developing a market for your novel or other piece can demand more effort and ingenuity than any other stage in the process.

You will need to step out of the comfort of your office or home to arrange events to showcase yourself as well as your work, discuss your work with potential readers and retailers and explore venues where you might like to see your book displayed for sale. Trial and error, perseverance, intellectual honesty and a tough skin will serve you well in the highly competitive literary marketing arena.

Multipurpose Your Novel's Content

The finished novel is only the ripened fruit in terms of the amount of research and preparation you have done to master your subject. Create a blog or website as an offshoot where you can elaborate on aspects of your novel and encourage readers to discuss your work. You are also grooming them to become your future customers.

If your novel is historical, scientific, or political in nature, the online information you provide may be of interest to high school teachers, instructors at colleges or [online degree programs](#) as required reading for students. They might eventually consider stocking your book.

Find Your Novel's Niche

An approach to discovering and developing a niche for your novel could be to distribute free copies to a selection of bookstores. Independent bookstores are usually more receptive to this type of offer and more likely to stock your book if your sample copies sell. They also sponsor book signings that can be significant marketing opportunities.

Another possibility is to offer to autograph copies of your book if they'll put them in the front of their store on display. Bookstores have found that books with a sticker that says "Autographed Copy" or "Autographed by Author" sell better than books without that sticker. This is especially true if the author is local or from a nearby community.

Networking Opportunities

Reader's groups or book clubs make it possible for you to discuss your novel in person with members, or participate in over-the-phone visits to distant

club meetings. Websites such as readerscircle.org support networks of over eight hundred clubs which list author events and other activities.

Online writer's clubs are a resource for you to connect with other writers to share ideas about any aspect of writing. You can get advice about ways to stir up publicity about your novel and yourself.

Master Your Presentation

A successful response to your novel depends on your persistent effort at marketing. One way to add consistency and persuasiveness to your discussions at book clubs and bookstores is to polish your "sound bite." Develop a clear, concise and compelling lead-in about your book that will motivate people to read it.

Get Interviewed about Your Book

Even though large metropolitan area newspapers have cut back on book reviews, your community newspaper probably has a book review editor you can communicate with about your book. This will be more productive for a smaller town's paper, and more so if published weekly. Consider contacting the newspapers of your hometown, alma mater, and other communities in which you have a connection, to pitch a "local flavor" to editors. For that matter, contact your alma mater to connect with school publications.

With a little detective work, identify and contact local radio show personalities and producers who might be interested in interviewing a local writer. You can discover a bounty of opportunities for free publicity locally and beyond, with a little ingenuity.