



How to Sell
Thousands
of Your
Self-Published
Book



A Solid Marketing Plan for Selling
Thousands of Books
This Year

Penelope Thompson

How to Sell Thousands of Your Self-Published Book

By Penelope Thompson

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Introduction

Let's face it — you bought into the hype. You saw so many other people self-publishing books, and thought “Hey, why can't that be me?” So you decided to jump on in, even though you didn't really have a solid reader base and you didn't do any market research. Or maybe you did do research and found that there was a market for your type of book but you can't figure out exactly how to reach those readers.

You just can't quite figure out a way to move those square cardboard boxes full of books out of your door. Maybe your POD books are growing dust in cyber-world, having never been seen or read by anyone ex-

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cept your parents, sisters, cousins, and friends.

But no need to stress yourself out about this. You're definitely not alone. Thousands of self-publishers everywhere are dealing with the same problems.

At the very least, this is a great learning experience to take with you into your next business idea or book release. If you truly believe in your book, don't give up! Hopefully my advice will renew your excitement and anticipation regarding your book. Boy, if only I knew what I know now when I wrote my very first book, how things would be different!

This eBook will help re-hype you about the selling potential of your books.

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Some important pieces of information to keep in mind as you navigate the self-publishing world:

1) Between 8,000 and 11,000 publishers (mostly self-publishers) enter the industry every year. It's highly unlikely that you will manage to sell 100,000 copies of your self-published book faced with all of that competition, all by yourself, in a short period of time.

Yes, some self-publishers have achieved this goal -- some claim to have managed to sell over a million books. But 10 or so of these breakout stories out of 10,000 new publishers a year is hardly the norm at this point. Even traditional authors struggle to sell thousands of copies of their books. Source: <http://selfpublishingresources>.

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[com/resources/books-news-and-publishing-industry-statistics/](http://www.nytimes.com/resources/books-news-and-publishing-industry-statistics/)

2) There are 175,000 books published each year in the United States alone, which calculates to 19 books every hour, all competing for book selling dollars.

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/18/books/the-last-word-how-many-books-are-too-many.html>

3) The average self-publisher is considered to be successful if he or she manages to sell 5,000 copies of his or her book.

4) 93% of books published every year sell less than 1,000 copies and only 1,000 books sell over 50,000 copies.

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Source: <http://www.steveshapiro.com/2006/07/03/statistic-about-the-book-industry>

Some people will disagree with me here or call this a pessimistic view, but I'm one who likes to deal in reality. I also have a marketing background, so I understand market limitations.

What I find is that the average self-publisher goes in *thinking* his book is going to sell over 100,000 copies and spends or works himself into a tizzy to achieve that lofty goal. Then when he doesn't even come close to that figure, he thinks he's a failure, gives up and ends up with mounds of debt.

It's much more effective, in my opinion, to set a

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self-publishing marketing plan with a realistic goal: say 1,000 to 5,000 books within the next year. Then, if you do sell a million instead, you can party like it's 2099. Even if you don't sell a million, now you have a formula for selling a few thousand books a year and making a nice short-term profit -- so write some more!

And please be wary of people who brag about selling hundreds of thousands or millions of books for little to no effort or money as a self-published, virtually unknown author -- usually there's more than meets the eye. Don't believe *everything* you read!

SEE THE CONVENIENT SUMMARIZED PLAN OF ACTION FOR HOW TO SELL BOOKS IN CHAP. 22

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CHAPTER 3: GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TARGET MARKET AND WRITE YOUR BOOK ADS

When you publish a book, you have to think about who your target audience is. No I take that back. You must **KNOW** who your target audience is before you do a thing. In fact, you should be thinking about your target audience when you are writing the book.

The target audience or market is the group of people who are most likely to want and need your book. You have to narrow this group down as much as possible if you want to successfully convert sales of your

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book. Find your niche.

For instance. Let's say that you are selling a book on the repair and maintenance of cars. Did you write the book to appeal to mechanics, wannabe mechanics, enthusiasts, or the average everyday Joe or Jane who wants to learn how to properly maintain and make simple repairs to a car?

In my opinion, the #1 mistake new authors make when trying to sell books is targeting the wrong audience. The #2 mistake is trying to target too broad of an audience, which is expensive.

Focus on the Customer's Motivations

Continues with more advice on target markets....

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CHAPTER 5: YOUR PERSONAL STORY AND YOUR PITCH

This chapter is so key to your selling success as a self-published author. When you're selling your book, you're not just selling THE story, you're selling YOUR story. It doesn't matter if you're selling a non-fiction book or a fiction book.

“Is it about your life?” I have heard this question so many times while out selling my books. Don't be afraid to tell a stranger, yes, this story is inspired (at least in part) by my own life.

People are nosy by nature—hearing that the book is going to reveal some secrets or juicy details about

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your life is going to prompt a quick sale.

I told you a little about my story earlier. How I struggled after quitting my job, and how I got into the whole writing thing by accident. My story is probably not much unlike yours and so many other self-published authors. People love to hear a story of struggle and then triumph. It inspires them to work through their own troubles toward a better day.

Even if you're selling a novel that has absolutely nothing to do with your life story, you need to sell yourself. I will say it again: sell *yourself* when you are selling your book. (*More on using your personal story to sell books in this chapter*).

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CHAPTER 7: CREATE YOUR BOOK WEBSITE

As a self-published author you absolutely need a website. No ifs ands or buts about it. Again, there is a right and a wrong way to set up a book website.

Many authors—both vets and newbies—don't understand the power of the Internet yet. They don't know a thing about how to optimize a site, place ads to get traffic, and do article marketing to establish yourself as an expert.

Step by Step Instructions for creating simple, optimized book websites.

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CHAPTER 12: RADIO ADS, RADIO INTERVIEWS & NEWSPAPER ADS

Onto more specific advertising vehicles that will help you sell more books directly to customers. Let's start with radio ads.

Paid Radio Ads

Don't neglect radio when it comes to selling books. Placing radio ads is somewhat expensive, but worthwhile for a variety of reasons.

For one, radio creates instant sales. Interested radio listeners who are sitting at or near a computer will

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go to Amazon to look up the book. If the ad message is compelling enough, they'll buy it right there and then.

Even if browsers don't buy your book right there and then, they will know your name as a local author now. One day they might be at the bookstore browsing and run across your book. The chance that they will now purchase your book, which they remembered from the radio and now have in their fingers, is much higher. They may even go into the bookstore specifically seeking "that book I heard about on the radio." People tend to trust what they hear about on the radio in my experience.

I tried running a few ads in one city where I lived

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for a period of time. The cost was about \$500. The ads ran mostly at odd times of the day, like mid afternoon or late at night, but they were extremely effective.

Because of those ads, I got the attention of a bookstore at a local mall. I started a new consignment account (see more about consignments in chapter 18 “Target Wholesalers, Distributors, and Bookstores”) with the bookstore.

I gave them a case of my books (about 60). They sold out in the first couple of days. At first I happily thought “wow, how could that have happened?” But then I remembered that my radio ad campaign had just finished running about two weeks before. I had built

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name recognition—readers were coming into the store, seeing a familiar name and title, and buying the book on a whim.

Details on Placing the Radio Ad

In your 30 or 60 second radio ad you need to give a quick one or two line “clincher” description of your book, keeping with our format in chapter 3 for writing a book ad.

More on using radio ads and interviews to sell self-published books in this chapter

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CHAPTER 13: PROMOTE VIA WORD OF MOUTH

Your readers are your best salesmen. If someone buys your book and likes it, the chances are that he will tell at least three friends. If those three friends like it, they will tell three more each. That is how word spreads about your good book. Sales start coming in that you can't even trace. Note that I said a GOOD book. Word of mouth might go against you if your book isn't up to par.

A poorly written book will not only affect your current sales, it will affect every future book you re-

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lease. That's why I talked about the quality of your book in the first chapter. It really does matter—you only get one chance to make a first impression on readers.

So let's take this word of mouth plan a step further.

Give away at least 10% to 15% of your first book printing. This can be to family members, friends, established book reviewers, or local libraries. Only to people who would genuinely be interested in reading it.

Important Side Note: BEWARE of giving too many free copies of your book to reviewers—some will just resell your book for their own profit without ever reviewing the title. There is little to no benefit to you in this type of transaction. See the chapter on getting your

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book reviewed coming up.

Some people will disagree, but I give free books away to my close family members and friends instead of charging. That's because your close, trusted family members know and love you. They will push your book to others as if it were their own.

Also, go to all of your local bookstores (even the majors) and drop off a free copy of your book plus a few bookmarks to the store manager. I have received plenty of orders out of the blue this way.

More tips for using free books to help spread word of mouth about your book in this chapter.

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CHAPTER 15: WORKING A BOOK SIGNING

Okay now comes the fun part. Your books are available. And you've managed to book a booksigning event. Yay! The store has ordered books from your distributor and is expecting you to sell a good portion of them.

But you'll only be celebrating this "win" for a very short time when you realize that there's some actual selling work involved.

First of all, you have to go into a book signing with the right mindset. As a self-published author, it's not

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likely that you will have a long line of fans standing outside of the store waiting for you to arrive. Get that image out of your head right now.

Instead, envision most of your time spent alone at your book table, constantly trying to get the attention of book browsers.

But like all of my other pieces of advice in this eBook, there is a right way and a wrong way to work a booksigning.

First, the wrong way. You come in 15 minutes late with nothing but a steaming hot latte in hand. You're so vain—bet you think this book signing's about you. You say “hi” to the book manager, and sit at your book

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table, which may or may not already be set up. You fiddle with your cellphone to see if new messages came through. Then you adjust your book which is slightly off center. For the next hour you watch people walk past your table and smile, hoping that they will come over on their own will to meet the great author who has graced them with his presence.

An hour later you are sitting there, chin in palms, no books sold, wondering if you should just leave. You start blaming the book store manager for not advertising your event more and for placing you way back in the science fiction section. You may even start to blame the coffee barista at Starbucks for taking too long to make

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your latte. She made you miss all the good customers!

That is two hours of pain if you ask me. Not to mention wasted time that you could have spent on other efforts. **TIME IS MONEY.**

You have to admit that a failed book signing is no one's fault but your own. Whether it be a lack of an interesting book cover, a boring book title, non-existent pitch, or lack of effort on your part to grab attention from customers, it is up to you to make things happen at your booksigning.

Okay, now here's the right way to do a booksigning.

Step by step advice in this chapter.

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ALL 23 CHAPTERS, HERE