

BOOK MARKETING & PROMOTIONS TIMELINE

By Jeannie Ruesch

6-12 Months Before

- *Know Your Author Strengths*: What skills do you have that you can utilize? Are you a good public speaker? Know your limitations as well and be realistic.
- *Research, research, research*:
 - For your genre, what are your options for promotion? For advertising? List *everything* you find, no matter what the budget or how unlikely it may seem. You just need to know what's out there.
 - Research local events and book fairs around the time of your release. A starting list can be found here:
<http://www.bookpromotion101.com/bp101/links.html#BLG>
 - Collection Promotional Ideas. See what others are doing, what you respond to, what you find interesting. Make an ongoing list and keep adding to it, no matter how small or large.
 - Learn what your publisher will do for your publicity/marketing.
 - Find out where the book will automatically be sent for reviews. Research other relevant places for reviews.
 - Endorsements/Quotes – research possible options.
- *Take stock of what you have in place already* (website, blog, yahoo loops, etc). **WRITE IT DOWN** in a list and what you'll need.
 - Your Website: Do you have one? Does it need to be re-worked; does it meet the needs of your readers? (IE information, brand, trust factor). If you don't have one, research designers. Start looking at author sites you like and check out their designers. (Do this sooner than later, as good designers can book up months in advance.)
 - Marketing/Promotional Materials: Will you do this yourself? If not, start researching people and options. Ask fellow authors who they use for bookmarks, etc. Start to build a file of printers, designers, etc.
 - Author Photo – A professional photo for your website and media kit. Consider the look of this as you would for any other business.
- *Know your Audience*: Define them in groups and create a brainstorming-like map of your circle. You in the middle, the groups closest to you who you know (friends, family), and farther out – writing groups, publishers loops, acquaintances. Local folk and people. The easier reach you have to a group, the closer to the circle.
 - How would you reach each of these groups?
 - Correspondence/Business Aspects:
 - Get a PO Box
 - Basic Business Cards
 - Stationery (leave off your phone number or home address)
- Set up google alerts for your name and your book title, separately.
- Keep writing your next book. The best way to earn your readers' trust is to write another good book.

4-6 Months Prior

- *Decide on a budget.* This will include all promotions, marketing materials, advertising, giveaways, author copies, ARCs, etc.
- *Map out your Promotion Schedule.* SCHEDULE your time ahead. This will start blank and fill up as you book ad space, guest blog appearances, etc. It's important to put all of it on a calendar so you know exactly what your timeframe capabilities are, what you can actually do in real life. Don't just start agreeing to things without having a functional calendar of events in front of you.
 - Release Date
 - Website Launch
 - Promotion/Advertising Deadlines
 - Book Review Deadlines
 - Award Submissions Deadlines (after the release)
 - Blogging Schedules
 - Booksignings
 - Speaking EngagementsFree Printable Calendars available at:
 - <http://www.vertex42.com/calendars/academic-calendar.html#2008-2009>
- *Start Making Your Lists*
 - Book Reviews: Prepare your list and timeframes for where to send the book for consideration – small press departments of bookstores, bookstores, libraries, reviewers, magazines, etc. Prepare any ARCs you need to based on their time frames and send them out.
 - Local Interest: Create a contact list for bookstores, newspapers, magazines, trade journals, libraries, etc.
 - Start mapping out the ideal Book Tour– physical or virtual – if you are doing one. Choose the ideal choices, create a tentative schedule, secure contact information for each website/blog or location.
- *Marketing Materials*
 - Start on your Promotional Package & Press Kit for media and reviewers
 - Create business card
 - Create your Book business card or bookmark – A business card or small postcard with your cover on one side, and the basic information on the back: ISBN, Available Date, Title, Author, Website, Publisher, Where to Buy, promotional quote if you have one. Add a small blurb if there's room.
 - Contact designer to get started on other promotional materials.
- Keep writing your next book. The best way to earn your readers' trust is to write another good book.

1-3 Months Prior

- Preparations/Name Branding

- Visit your local bookstores and introduce yourself. Tell them about your book, leave them materials, tell them when it's available. Leave bookmarks or business cards.
- Visit your local library, meet the librarian. Ask how you can get involved in their events. Take a picture. Leave bookmarks or business cards.
- Marketing Materials/Promotional
 - Book Trailer: Launch and update your online avenues.
 - Prepare a Q&A about you and your book for interviewers.
 - Write your press release.
 - Send out remaining ARCs to your reviewer's list (again, double check your publisher's list so you aren't duplicating efforts).
 - Make arrangements for Book Tours, publicity options, author spotlights, speaking engagements, interviews, booksignings, etc.
 - Mail bookmarks and other promotional items to booksellers
- Schedule your book launch event/party – prepare invitations and update all relevant online options (website, etc)
- Follow up on ALL avenues you've started. Don't underestimate the power of your actions—people don't often forget the person who offends or insults them by not following through.
- As you receive reviews in for the book, post it to your reader and writer loops (check their promotion rules first), to your social networks, update your email signature to include snippets of the review comments. The reviews do no good if no one hears about them. ASSUME they aren't coming to your website every day. Reviews draw interest.
- Allow time to support your fellow authors. You should *never* be too busy for this. Visit their blogs, participate in their conversations, and offer good wishes. Networking is a MUTUAL sport; it requires both parties to give and take to be effective. If you haven't given, you can't expect to take when it's your turn.
- Keep writing your next book. The best way to earn your readers' trust is to write another good book.

One Week Prior

- Prepare your book information with links and information for your website, social networks and other places. Make sure you are ready to post or upload the new information on your release date.
- Confirm your schedule for appearances, guest blog days, etc. Make sure all parties have everything they need.
- Confirm details for your book launch party. Have the books been purchased, either by you or a bookseller?
- Keep writing...you know why by now.

Release Date

- Make an announcement and update all your relevant online options: website, social networks, etc. Include links to where your book can be bought. Make it easy to buy your book. One click Buy links.

- Send newsletter if you have a list with the announcement. Include any reviews, and links. If you don't have a newsletter, start to build one. Offer a freebie for sign up (NOT a free copy of your book.)
- ENJOY. Celebrate. Break out the bottle of bubbly or cider and toast your accomplishment. Your dream is a reality. :)

The Month after the Release

- Book Launch event/party at your local bookseller or other location.
- Visit your loops and message boards. Schedule in time for this -- Participate in conversations, support other authors.
- Host a special contest on your site to draw traffic. Advertise this contest on your social networks, in your signature, on your loops.
- Make sure that there is a BUY THIS BOOK link on EVERY page of your site. Make it easy for them.
- Prepare your list of *Thank Yous*. Thank the people who helped you, who hosted you on their site, who worked with you to build your name and your book up. Thank Yous go a long way. If you have mailing addresses, send a thank you card. Include a promotional item or with certain people, an autographed copy of your book otherwise send a short and sweet email.

After Release Date

- Review your schedule; review all commitments you've made. Be prepared for them. (Write your guest blog posts ahead of time, be sure to comment after it's posted, have plenty of bookmarks or other promotional items on hand)
- Contests/Awards – Begin choosing/preparing for the contests/awards you will send your book to
- Promote any bestseller lists you make, even if it's your publisher's website list. A bestseller is a bestseller.
- Review conferences and make options that suit your budget and time. Keep an eye on your stock of promotional items for any conferences, any chapter meetings.
- Keep writing. Promotion only goes so far...the best way to keep your readers' trust is to write another wonderful book.



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