

Seven Tips For A Successful Booksigning

BY ROMNEY NESBITT



In today's competitive market writers need to think creatively to increase sales. Follow these seven tips

to make your next book signing a success.

See your future. Peer into your crystal ball and visualize a successful book signing from start to finish. Imagine an article in the newspaper advertising your event. Like being in the spotlight? How about an interview on a local TV or radio morning show? Looking for sales? See a long line of buyers waiting for an autographed copy of your book. Focus on what you want!

Understand reality. People are busy. Your event is in competition with work schedules, TV, youth sports, errands, chores and weekend travel. For every twelve invitations sent expect to see one or two people at your signing. Generate interest by having a drawing for a free book. Sign books with another author and double the number of potential buyers.

Contact the book store owner or store manager early. Whether you're dealing with a chain book

store or local bookshop, signings are scheduled weeks or even months out. Once the date is set, ask what you could do to make your event more successful. Draw attention to your book signing table with a poster-sized image of your book cover, brightly colored tablecloth and a bowl of candy or fresh-baked cookies.

Court the media. Send a copy of your book and a cover letter announcing your signing to local newspapers and television stations six to eight weeks in advance. Don't stop with a notice to the person in charge of new books. Look at the subplots in your romance to find a hook to the Style or Living sections, women's issues or health. If your main character is working her way through a nasty divorce, coping with her brother's schizophrenia, suddenly raising her sister's children or experiencing paranormal disturbances in her newly purchased home, point this out in your cover letter. Invite the editor to consider using your fictional character's problems as a lead-in to an article on the topic. You might uncover a whole new audience for your book. Don't underestimate your value to a local morning TV or radio show. It's easy to link your book to a national holiday or anniversary. Check out CHASE'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS in the reference section of the library to find thousands of

quirky national holidays listed by date and topic. Under the topic of "Romance" I found nineteen listings. Did you know "Find Your Soul Mate Day" is May 22, "Resurrect Romance Week" begins August 8 and "Pleasure Your Mate Month" happens every September?

Enthusiasm pays. Even if you're an introvert, push yourself to be more engaging and friendly at your book signing. People are interested in interesting people. Make eye contact and speak to bookstore browsers, "Hi, My name is...I've written a book. Could I tell you about it?" Be positive, not pushy. Don't chase customers through the racks.

Stimulate sales with bookmarks and postcards. Your postcard or bookmark should feature the book's title, book cover, your photo and contact information. Add a sidebar listing interesting facts about the contents of your non-fiction book or print the introductory paragraph of your novel on your postcard to entice new buyers.

Send a variety of invitations. E-mail invitations are easy but can be easily forgotten once your message rolls off-screen. A hand-addressed postcard with a personal note may seem old-fashioned but will still make a good impression. Add an invitation to your book signing to

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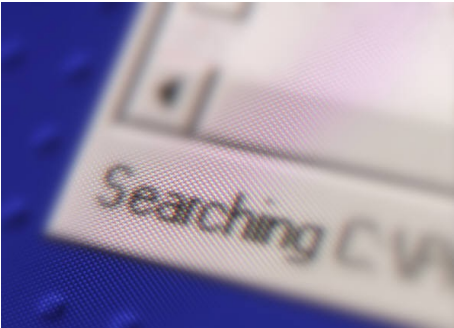


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Promotion Posse:

Does your website give you author marketing optimization?

BY VIRNA DE PAUL



According to Rebekkah Donaldson, a marketing expert at www.b2bcommunications.com, there are twelve questions one can ask to determine whether a website contains effective marketing content. With her permission, I'm going to share these questions. Let's look at each question as it relates to author websites.

1. Does your site have a goal and a purpose?

An author's website should spread awareness of the author's name and brand. It should tell a reader what to expect from an au-

thor's books in terms of content, tone, and quality, as well as provide up-to-date information about the author's background, products, and appearances.

2. Have you identified your audience and what keeps them up at night?

Know your intended audience, know their needs, and fulfill their needs. Authors can target both readers and other writers. Tell them how to find your product, but also become a gateway to other informative sites. Offer both practical and fun incentives, and keep track of who takes advantage of what.

3. Does your site design support your brand identity and communicate professionalism?

Consider whether your presentation is error-free, how it compares to the websites of other authors, and whether it reflects your

brand. The look and feel of your website will give your audience their first impression of what kind of writer you are.

4. Can a new visitor or prospect easily determine what you do and whom you serve?

You don't want readers to be confused or frustrated. Tell them up front what they can expect from you and your books. Provide excerpts. Refer to other authors who may write similar stories, but be sure to highlight what makes you unique.

5. Are the paths to information clear?

Authors need to tell their audience what they write and how people can get their hands on it. Give them information on how to buy your books, including your backlist. Make navigation simple and have an effective search function.

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Booksigning... Cont'd

your phone's voice mail message. Include a bookmark with your bill payments. A potential buyer will open your envelope.

The same creativity you used to bring your characters to life can be used to lure buyers to your book signings and increase sales. Brainstorm your way to a novel event for your novel and enjoy your fi-

nancial gains.

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