

Author's Marketing Checklist

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Target Audience

Defining your target audience affects every other aspects of your marketing plan. You will want to make all of your marketing material as appealing to that audience as is your book. Doing so will also bring a cohesive look and feel to your material. Keep your target audience in mind when creating the rest of the elements on this checklist.

Bio

You will need both a full bio and two short bios. Keep your full bio to less than a page, if possible. Include what credentials you to write the book from both your education and life experiences. The two short bios will be a condensed version of the long bio. Make one that is about a paragraph in length and an even shorter version that is about three sentences.

Many authors who do not already have a marketing mindset may find these very difficult to create. It's likely that you will be more modest about your background, experience, and book content than a professional marketer would be. Since it's hard to be objective about yourself, you may not easily be able to write your bio in a way that sells you to your target market.

It's a good idea to seek outside help with this process. You can hire a professional author's assistant to write it for you. Even if you write your own bio, have it edited by an author's assistant or another marketing professional.

Headshot

You'll want at least two nice portrait pictures of yourself. In different marketing venues you'll find multiple uses for a "business" shot as well as a more "casual" shot. Make digital copies available in several sizes and formats, including both high resolution .tiff in CMYK format and compressed .jpg images in RGB format. Print media will require the higher resolution and special format. (If you are unfamiliar with these formats, have a professional photographer or graphics artist do the conversions for you. If you take the shots yourself, send them the original digital file from your camera.) You'll also want to convert your photos into black and white images in at least two sizes.

Be aware that you cannot display .tiff images on a Web site. However, you can display a high resolution .png format. You can offer the .tiff version as a download or email option.

Facts Sheet

This is a full description of your book on one page. The information is often provided by your publisher. It generally includes:

Title – the title of your book

Author – your author name

Category – the genre of your book

ISBN – include both the 10 and 13 digit ISBNs

Pub Date – the publish month and year

Price – the list price that is printed on the cover

Pages – a full page count, including all front and back material (index, appendixes, and such)

Type – if it's a paperback, list as a "Trade Paper"

Publisher – the name of the book's publisher

Language – the language in which the book is written

Dimensions – the length, width, and thickness of the book

Shipping Weight – list in pounds

Web site – the URL where more information can be found about the book

Media kit – the URL of your online media information or the email address to request it

Media Contact – who folks should contact about the book or the author

Color graphic of the book cover

Book Summary

Typically, this is the same information that will appear on the back cover of your book. You will also need a shortened version known as the “elevator speech”, which is a condensed summary of your book that could be stated during a typical elevator ride.

A summary of your book should be so appealing to your target audience that they would be compelled to purchase it. This could be another task for an author’s assistant who could help you “punch up” the summary in an exciting way.

Business Cards

Even if you can’t carry a copy of your book everywhere you go, you can certainly carry business cards. Be sure to include contact information and/or where folks can find more information on your book. You might also consider a design that can be expanded to the size of a bookmark or postcard, since these can include more information.

Email Address

Creating a special email address just for book purposes will help keep you more organized. It will also help folks be aware that they are talking to an author, not their buddy across town, and it’s likely to have the same affect on you. In other words, it’s an “official” email address where you conduct your writing business communications.

Web Site / Blog

This will be the landing page where folks come to find more information about you and your book. The very least online presence you need is a blog. Even if you have a Web site, establishing a blog is a great way to drive traffic to your book. This may require that you either set aside time for the learning curve associated with doing it yourself, or that you hire a designer. Professional Web designs can easily run into hundreds of dollars. If this is not in your budget, don’t be discouraged, get creative. If you have friends, family, or neighbors with teenagers, it’s likely they can help get you started with this process. You may also be able to barter services with a geek. They need things too.