



Ready, Set, Launch!
Developing a Successful Book Launch Plan

Tips for a Successful Book Launch

1. Create a Book Launch Marketing Plan and use it! The key to a successful book launch is to plan, plan, plan. Don't wing it.
2. Start early. Planning should begin as soon as you get a book deal. Don't wait until the last minute.
3. Clear the decks and your schedule as much as possible for the months leading up to your launch.
4. Spread out activities. Remember that a book launch is a marathon, not a sprint.
5. Try to get comfortable with self-promotion. It's essential to success as an author!
6. Use the Brand Strands to market your book: Visual, Auditory, Print, Offline, and Online.
7. Use the 4 Cs of Marketing. You want to have great Content that you Communicate Consistently and makes a genuine Connection with others.
8. Leverage the internet – it's a valuable tool to help you build an audience.
9. Marketing is all about testing. Try new strategies, eliminate the ones that don't work, and do more of the ones that do work.
10. Always have multiple marketing strategies running concurrently.

Pre-Publication Checklist - Phase 1 (Approximately 6-12 months before)

- Get organized!
 1. Consider using productivity software like Asana or Trello, an Excel spreadsheet, a notes app (Evernote, One Note, iPhone notes), or a master notebook or binder to organize and track all info related to your book launch.
 2. Create a photo album on your smart phone to capture images for author branding and book marketing.
 3. Get a graphic design account on Canva or BookBrush for creating attention-grabbing visuals and images that promote your author brand and book marketing.
- Build your author brand and book platform. Use the 5 brand strands: visual, auditory, print, online and offline.
- Create your elevator pitches: author slogan and book's hook.
- Figure out your target audience and brainstorm how to reach that audience.
- Talk to the marketing team of your publisher or a marketing consultant if you are self-publishing. Make sure your visions for promotion align. Share ideas for contacts you have or events you could attend.

- Evaluate your social media.
 1. Which social media platforms are you using? What could you add? Do you need to rename or convert your profiles?
 2. Revise your bios on each platform to add your forthcoming book.
 3. What are your Content Buckets (areas of interest, experience, brand strands)? How often and where will you post?
- Claim your domain name. Your name.com is ideal. If you can't get it, add on Writer, Author, or Books.
- Create a writer/author website. That's the hub of your author brand.
- Start a subscriber list/author newsletter.
- Link to your website on all your social media profiles.
- Link to your social media profiles on your website.
- Create author profiles on Goodreads, BookBub, Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc.
- Join writer's groups like the Author's Guild, Alliance for Independent Authors, PEN America, Authors Guild, National Writers Union, California Writers Club, Sisters in Crime, or Women's Fiction Writers Association. They often offer free advice to members, and some have affinity groups by genre or for self-publishing.
- Research book festivals, awards, and contests. Deadlines can be up to a year in advance. Check BookAwardPro.com.
- Create your book cover if you're self-publishing. Even if you are being published by small press or traditional publisher, if the cover isn't ready yet, create one on Canva to use as a placeholder in marketing.
- Post an excerpt from the book on your website (if you want to use it as a reader magnet).
- Gather the names of book bloggers, bookstagrammers, book reviewers, podcast hosts, and collaborative reader-author Facebook groups, online book clubs, plus any specific people and groups interested in your book's genre or subject matter.
- Contact libraries, bookstores, organizations, book clubs, alumni associations, chambers of commerce, local media (TV, newspaper, and radio stations), etc. telling them about your upcoming book.

Pre-Publication Checklist - Phase 2 (Approximately 6 months before

- Start gathering author blurbs from writers you know or from experts in the field.
- Build your Launch or Street Team. Ask them specifically to help you with the process of birthing your book.
- Line up early reviewers.
- Join debuts group for your launch year (17 Scribes, 2024 Debuts, etc.) if this is your debut novel.
- Post launch date on social media, website, and in your newsletter.
- Do a Cover Reveal on your website, social media, and in your newsletter.
- Nail 5-10 target key words/themes that describe your book.
- Create a hashtag for your book (ex: #EverythingWeThoughtWasTrue).
- Consider getting a domain name of your book title.com.

- Create a video book trailer. You can hire someone, ask someone good at video to do it as a favor, or do it yourself using Canva or your cell phone.
- Create a spreadsheet including bookstores, organizations, authors, influencers, or other communities that might be interested in your book.
- Start setting up book signings with local bookstores, and visits with local and virtual book clubs.
- Check out the cost of ads on Book Bub, Goodreads, Amazon, Facebook, and subject-specific publications.
- Create Content Buckets to share on your website/blog, social media, and newsletter. Buckets may include your personal world, writing world, reading world, book world, and the larger world. You can organize the content into an editorial calendar to be even more strategic as to what, when, and where to share in the future.

Pre-Publication Checklist - Phase 3 (Approximately 3 months before)

- Plan your Virtual Launch Party (use Facebook Live, Instagram Live, or Zoom). Ask an author friend to serve as moderator/discussant.
- Connect something fun and artistic to the book to feature at the book launch like music from a live musician, a poetry reading, chef or bartender making signature drink or recipe from book, wine tasting, etc..
- Draft more friends/writers/readers to help you spread the word.
- Print author business cards.
- Post background info for the book on your website and social media: settings, character profiles, recipes, maps, etc.
- Create swag for giveaways: bookmarks, postcards, mugs, pens, tote bags, magnets, etc.
- If running a pre-order campaign, market it widely. Use Amazon for online orders, and partner with a local bookstore where readers can order your book and get it delivered there. Then sign the stock once it comes in. Use Bookshop.org for local bookstore orders.
- Send Advance Reader Copies (ARCs) in e-book or print to list of early reviewers, bloggers, influencers, etc.
- Research Little Free Libraries in your area and arrange to drop off your book. Consider a campaign for readers to add your book in Little Free Libraries around the U.S.
- Think about using videos in your marketing. Options include Facebook Live, Instagram Reels, YouTube, and TikTok (BookTok).
- Send press releases to local or online media interested in your subject matter. Connect your book promotion to national events or holidays if possible. Black History Month, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Pride Month, Christmas, etc.
- Post pics of your cover and description/blurb on social media and your website.

Pre-Publication Checklist - Phase 4 (Approximately 1 month before)

- Create a sales sheet for bookstores, festivals, libraries, etc.
- Feature any praise/reviews/accolades your book has garnered on your website.

- Put author blurbs on website, along with their author photo, image of their books and links to purchase their books on Amazon (be a good literary citizen!).
- Write an Extended Acknowledgements and put on your website, in your newsletter, and post on social media.
- Include a Behind the Scenes/Extras section for recipes related to book, playlists of music, details about locations/settings, deleted scenes, link to Pinterest Board, etc.
- Contact local press, blogs, and podcasts you reached out to previously. Remind them of launch date and that you're available for interviews.
- Ask for reviews from friends, family, colleagues, and other writers.
- Post your events calendar to your website and newsletter and share on social media.
- Send invitations for the virtual or in-person book launch party, as well as any book signings.
- Create a list of topics interviewers can ask you about with question and your answer (Talking Points).
- Memorize your elevator pitches.

Launch and Post-Launch Phases

- Write posts related to the book and launch on social media (countdown to launch day, one liners, etc.)
- Post pics of your book on social media.
- Ask readers to post pics of your book around the world. Start a campaign!
- Create a book giveaway and thank/connect/engage with those who share/like your page or enter your contests.
- Thank those who've reviewed the book or posted about it.
- Run an Amazon or Facebook Ads campaign.
- Offer to guest blog on any of your book's topics.
- Reach out to readers to let them know you're available to speak at their book clubs.
- Do book readings and signings (hopefully, you scheduled them earlier!).
- Stretch your social media network. Join author-reader collaborative groups. Share your knowledge.
- Write think pieces or personal essays on your area of expertise or themes/issues featured in your book, and pitch to online outlets.
- Prepare a talk or presentation about your book or pathway to publication. Universities, libraries, writing organizations, indie bookstores, and book clubs might be interested.
- Put your book on sale and/or consider adding it to Kindle Unlimited.
- And last, but most certainly not least: Start writing the next book!

Recommended Resources

- *Launch Pad: The Countdown to Marketing Your Book* by Mary Helen Sheriff and Grace Sammon (featuring Author Branding chapter by Lisa Montanaro)
- *Before and After the Book Deal: A Writer's Guide to Finishing, Publishing, Promoting, and Surviving Your First Book* by Courtney Maum