

Website.

Every author needs a website, simply to appear professional. A good site lends credibility in a world of incredibility. Make your website user friendly and easy to navigate. Offer free items of interest on your website. When finances permit, buy freebies like pens, bookmarks, nail files, writing tip cards, calendars, magnets, bumper stickers, key chains, Post-it notes, coasters, rubber jar openers with your promo info. These can be ordered from Earthly Charms at <http://www.earthlycharms.norwood.com/>

- ~If you are able, use your guest book or mailing list and send free thank you/holiday gift promotional items, such as those listed above.
- ~No matter what, have an *attitude of gratitude*. Be gracious and kind. There is nothing that turns fans off faster than an ego.
- ~Use your Christmas list to send inexpensive postcards to friends and relatives about your new releases. Suggest they buy your books for holiday and birthday gifts for the readers on their list.
- ~Make it your goal to be helpful. Always think in terms of solving a problem for the person you're pitching to. Amazingly, having a servant's heart often turns out as a win-win situation.
- ~Offer a better deal on the sale of advanced autographed copies of your book. Perhaps take a dollar off, or foot the shipping bill yourself.
- ~Hold contests. Use your website or newsletter to announce the contest to win copies of your upcoming release. Have contestants correctly answer questions from your most recently released book, in order to qualify for a chance to win the upcoming book.
- ~Give libraries a free or reduced price copy of your book if you can. Some authors are leery of letting their books be available free at libraries, but your goal is name recognition, to create a buzz about you and your work. And remember this marketing secret. The average person has a circle of 250 friends. If they only tell 1/10th of that number how much they enjoyed your book, your name will shortly be recognized, and not just in your little corner of the world.
- ~Offer libraries and bookstores complimentary copies of your book *covers*, enlarged, for use as wall posters. They are usually more than glad to post them on the walls.
- ~Create an e-mail newsletter, simply to announce upcoming book releases, speaking engagements, book signings or other news. Some authors have increased sales by 1/3 by doing this. (*Always have a sign-up sheet available to add to your mailing list.*)

Radio stations

~Talk to your Christian radio station about interviewing you on the air in regard to your new book. **(Do this in advance of release date if at all possible)** Give them a copy of the book to pass around, and then get back to them by a certain date to discuss the possibility of an interview.

Bookstores

~Give a bookstore owner or manager a copy of your book, asking her to commit to reading it. When a bookstore owner or operator is plugging your work, you'll more than gain back the investment as she enthusiastically promotes your work. And as the old saying goes—there's nothing better than a satisfied customer and a word of mouth recommendation.

~Take advantage of specialty shops in your area. Sub sandwich shops, boutiques, specialty dress shops or specialty coffee shops that you patronize, are often thrilled with the idea of holding a book signing event at their location, especially when they're having a promotion of some kind. Blow up copies of your book cover and use them as posters in their front windows, announcing the event, beginning several weeks in advance. Make up bag-stuffer announcement sheets that they can add to customer's purchases as they leave. Get the local radio station and newspaper to list it on their community calendars. *(These must be notified 3-4 weeks in advance.)*

Press Releases

~Send concise, clear press releases to your hometown newspapers and libraries, asking them to announce your new release. Write to newspapers and libraries in cities where you have lived, with the same request.

~Rent a post office box for contest entries and book requests, to protect your privacy. They are inexpensive as well as being a tax write-off.

Book signings

~If you have a book signing in a distant city, send advance press kits to up to churches in the area. A short blurb on how Christian fiction can change lives may also help. In this kit, include posters of book covers, bookmarks, a personal letter of invitation to your book signing, business cards and any applicable brochures. Make sure your web site info and contact info is on every piece you send out.

~If you can, hold book signings or other events around in October or November, before Thanksgiving, be ready to pitch your books as an easy holiday gift giving solution.

~At book signings, (in private bookstores particularly) have your picture taken at your table, with the store personnel. Be sure and take candy or donuts along for them to munch on if you can. Also send a thank you to the storeowner, and copies of the pictures you took, for them to hang on their bulletin board. It promotes good will and will reap later rewards.

At your book signing, look around for people to whom you can hand your bookmarks. Invite them to your table to sign up for your gift bag giveaway. (See below) Orient yourself to the store, so you can direct them to fiction or biographies, etc. If you don't know how to help them find something, offer to go ask.

~Have a beautiful dish of wrapped chocolate (hard is best, like Riesen, for instance) candy at your book-signing table (and a small trash can for wrappers). Have a guest book, and ask each person to sign name, address, zip and e-mail address if applicable. Make it easy and painless to sign up for your newsletter.

~ Put together a beautiful gift bag, for a free drawing at your book signing. People are wild about gift giveaways. (Dollar store items make great gifts!) To my bags, I've added charming small figurines, tiny address books, my book marks, pens and other promotional items, as well as Hershey's kisses, packages of microwave popcorn and hot chocolate mix, apple cider packets, paperback romances, (not mine), hand lotion sample bottles, fancy hankies, fragrant candles or soaps. The list is endless and need not cost much, if you just scout out items you already have on hand. Make a classy colorful sign (I used yellow paper), saying " Free drawing. Sign up to win a fabulous surprise-filled goody bag."

~ Add a small but attractive silk flower arrangement to your table and borrow or buy plate stands to display your book. Have several of your books there for people to pick up and look at. Purchase gold "Autographed" stickers for the front of your books. Ask each buyer how he wants his book personalized. Keep messages short and sweet.

*** Remember, at your book signing, you want to leave a lasting warm impression.**

A Press kit should include:

1. A short, appropriate biography
2. A color and black and white photo of you, the author
3. A color copy of your book cover, with a short page excerpt of a grabber scene
4. A page of reviews for your book
5. Your business card
6. Bookmark (with website info included)
7. Copy of author interview
8. Contact and website information (on everything you hand out or send out.)

Another tip: Send your bookmark out with every bill or letter you send, no matter where it's going. You never know when the receiver is in the mood for a good Christian book, perhaps the one that will make an impression for eternity.

And last of all, ask God to help you look at marketing in a whole new light, as a new adventure in which you kick back, meet people and simply **HAVE A BALL!**

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