



Beyond the Book



A Resource on Writing and Publishing from Copyright Clearance Center

beyondthebook.com

Publicize This Book!

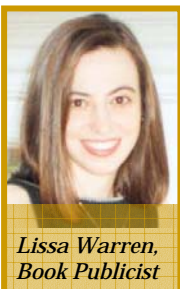
By Steven Cooper

Your new book is finally on the press. You've just spent months on research, written dozens of drafts, engaged in endless dialogue with your editor, and corrected the galleys.

Now comes the hard part: selling it to the media and, through them, to your readers. Unless you're a "name" author and are taken under the wing of a major publishing house, it's almost certain that all the responsibility for marketing your book and generating its publicity will fall directly upon your shoulders.

Fortunately, there are resources out there to assist you, such as *Beyond the Book*, Copyright Clearance Center's ongoing educational series that connects authors and publishers with experts on the latest business and technology issues in their fields. Recently, *Beyond the Book* presented *Publicize This Book!*, a free telephone conference call attended by writers nationwide that examined the best practices and the pitfalls of marketing, publicity and media relations.

"For published authors, the last word on their writing isn't between the covers of their books – it's found on cable and the airwaves and the Internet, and in newsprint," said **Christopher Kenneally**, Copyright Clearance Center's Director of Author and Creator Relations. "An effective publicity campaign ensures that your work gets the most attention from the largest possible audience, and rewards you for all the hard work of writing."



Lissa Warren,
Book Publicist

Publicize – or Perish

Contemporary publishers almost universally demand that authors totally commit themselves to marketing and publicity. Strategic marketing skill and knowledge of the media are "expected of writers because more books are being published," noted **Lissa Warren**, senior director of publicity at Da Capo

Press and author of *The Savvy Author's Guide to Book Publicity* (www.savvyauthorsguide.com).

"I can tell you very candidly that when we are evaluating a book for acquisition – before we've actually signed [a contract] and agreed to publish it – we look at the author's publicity ideas and media contacts," she

continued. "I like to have authors who are aware that they need to gear their book so that it not only interests the reader, it interests the press."



Traci Bisson,
Book Publicist

Warren and Kenneally were joined in the panel discussion by **Traci Bisson**, president and senior publicist of Bisson Barcelona (www.bissonbarcelona.com), a New Hampshire-based publicity firm that counsels authors, companies and business professionals. Bisson endorsed the need for early-stage strategic planning, and went further.

"I work in a lot of the same ways that a publishing house would – arranging media interviews and book signings, getting reviews, looking for unique and different promotional opportunities," she said. "However, I also educate authors and help them understand the process and the choices available to them, usually prior to their manuscript being published. Understanding different publishing options and choosing one method over another can affect marketing and publicity of the finished product. It allows authors to make more informed decisions and feel more in control."

Cutting Through the Clutter

The spike in the number of publishers and authors clamoring for attention has made even being considered for a review by a major newspaper or magazine exponentially more difficult.

"Authors must always keep in mind that the media, both print and broadcast, are bombarded by pitches from publicists," Warren said. "Even more so, they are literally bombarded by books flying off the shelves at them in their offices. You always need to think, 'What can I do to make this person's life easier?' [See related sidebar.] And you need to have a customer service mentality toward dealing with the media."

"Customer service is basic: it's being responsive. It's answering your e-mail and checking your voice mail," Kenneally added. "When I was a journalist, there was nothing worse than working on deadline, needing a quote, leaving a message, and never hearing back."

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Dealing with the Bad and the Ugly

Occasionally, an author may encounter an “angry customer” – an interviewer or critic who is confrontational, hostile or abusive. “It doesn’t happen too often: generally [in broadcast settings] it’s in the host’s best interest to keep everyone’s mood good on air,” Warren said. “But some of them can get pretty tough, and there are some negative reviews that get written about books in various print outlets.

“The best thing you can do is keep calm,” she advised. “If you don’t let yourself get too upset, they are just going to look mean and nasty. If a print review is really negative and nasty, I suggest that you write a letter to the editor if there are factual wrongs – errors about what you say in the book – that you can right. Even then, you have to keep very calm. You cannot be belligerent, or let them get your goat.”

“But, at the same time, stand your ground,” Kenneally advised. “If your book is advancing some kind of a new theory or an interpretation of recent events, don’t be talked out of your position.”

Maximizing Online and Radio Publicity

Newspaper and magazine reviews aren’t the only “print” media anymore. “Target Web sites that do book reviews: Salon.com, for example, Slate, CNN.com and MSNBC.com,” Warren said. “Once you get reviews, ‘blurb’ them – pull out the 15 to 20 most laudatory phrases or words and send those quotes to Amazon.com, because so many people shop there for books these days. If your book is non-fiction, think of smaller sites that are most appropriate for the topic of your book.”

Author and book Web sites have proliferated as marketing tools, Kenneally and Warren noted. To be effective, however, the site must be easy to find (for a domain name, choose the author’s name or the book’s title, not something abstract or “cutesy”), and include a contact e-mail address, an author photo, links to reviews, and notices about upcoming signings and appearances. The site and author blogs also must be updated continuously.

Radio remains critically important to book publicity. Satellite radio tours, which can cost up to \$4,000 but reach up to 30 key radio markets through individualized interviews, can be very productive. But Bisson cautions, “When considering radio as part of a publicity plan, make sure you target stations that reach your market. Prepare a key city radio plan and outline areas of the country that reach your readers.”

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All in all, a “go to market” publicity program for a new book can take three to four months, Bisson said, and cost between \$5,000 and \$10,000. That, she said, “is a substantial amount of money [but] a lot can be done for that type of budget. The most important thing to do is put a plan together and understand all the different ideas than can be used to target your market. The combination of all of them will be successful.”

‘Waking the Sleeping Book’

New books, like new cars, lose their novelty value quickly. But authors can take steps to revive flagging publicity for their books as they mature. For one thing, they can contribute op-ed and opinion pieces about their areas of expertise, or review others’ work. The writer/critic’s book title is always included in the author’s italicized biography at the foot of the piece.

And they can seek out speaking opportunities. “Usually, [the sponsor] will cover your flight there and your hotel,” Warren said. “You won’t get an honorarium, but you’ll have an opportunity to sell your book at the back of the room after your talk. It will help create some buzz.”

Five Ways to Make a Reviewer’s Job Easier

- Know the target markets of the reader you’re trying to reach and the media outlets that speak directly to those markets before you pitch a review.
- Understand each outlet’s deadline requirements and limited “window of opportunity” for book reviews. Be prepared to start sending review copies and publicizing your book months before its formal launch to meet long-lead deadlines.
- Develop a press kit that conforms to journalism standards, including a summary sheet and a Q&A document about your book, your biography, and your photo in color and black and white.
- Develop concise, five- to ten-second sound bites for broadcast media that describe or position your book.
- Understand that you are building a long-term relationship with reviewers and journalists that will affect coverage of your *next* book.

Copyright Clearance Center, as the world’s largest provider of copyright compliance solutions, is committed to supporting compliance through a wide range of innovative licensing services and comprehensive educational programs. **Beyond the Book** is our educational program connecting authors, publishers, and others with experts on the latest business issues facing today’s dynamic information content industry – from initial research to final publication and beyond.