

A guide to promoting your self-published book

You've written the book; you've found a printer and had copies produced, the cartons are filling the spare bedroom and now you are off to sell them; here's a guide to getting started.

Develop a New Title Information sheet (NTI, also known as an Advance TI)

This single-sided A4 sheet gives the book's full details – plot description, cover, author information, possibly a brief excerpt and the retail price, along with your contact details and website and social media links if you have them.

Talking money

Booksellers buy books as a percentage discount off the recommended retail price (RRP) minus GST. The standard is 40 percent off, and it's unlikely that, unless the title has a huge turnover, a bookseller would accept less than a 35 percent discount.

Marketing direct to customers

If you haven't allowed enough margins in your production to sell to bookstores then it's probably best to sell direct to the consumer by every means within your power.

1. Set up a NTI at the direct sale price.
2. Create an online presence - website, blog or Facebook page, which can all be done yourself, and
3. Spread the word – send out relevant emails to interested groups: maybe of the association you've written a history of; your own entire address list, friends' contact lists. Send a brief well-constructed email enticing them to read the NTI you've attached. Ask for mentions in appropriate email communications – the school newsletter for example. Be sure to include information about how to purchase.
4. Sell local: Ask if you can sell the books at school fetes, craft or other appropriate markets (offer them a \$1 donation for each copy sold.)

Promoting your book as a new release

Send your new release title to info@booksellers.co.nz and we'll add it to our new releases page on the website <http://www.booksellers.co.nz/book-news/new-releases>

Books stay on the new releases page for about a month and it's a high-traffic area with new book listings being promoted to over 600 booksellers and publishers in our weekly e-newsletter *The Read* as well as on Twitter, in our email digest and occasionally through our Facebook page. Booksellers NZ will take most listings, which should be emailed and include:

- Title
- Author

- Publisher
- Publishing date
- ISBN
- A blurb about the book
- Ordering details
- A JPG or GIF image of the cover (under 1 MB).

We will only promote books that are available to be sold in New Zealand bookshops.

Advertising

If you have a budget for promotion you might consider advertising in *The Read*. It goes out each Thursday to over 600 booksellers and publishers and is widely read. Details on advertising <http://booksellers.co.nz/book-news/advertising>

Use your community channels

The local community newspapers usually like to highlight books written by new authors in their area, so e-mail them briefly about yourself and the book, trying to point out the newsworthy features. If they don't get back to you follow up with a friendly phone call.

Speak about your book

If you are a confident speaker, try the local Rotary, Lions and other clubs. Never forget word of mouth – tell everyone you know and most people you encounter!

Book reviews

Send review copies to media that run reviews of books. However, best to think outside straight review pages here – books on business and finance often get news/reviews in the relevant sections of daily papers, and the same can apply to other subject areas. Booksellers NZ operate a well-read blog <http://booksellersnz.wordpress.com> and often features reviews so email us too on info@booksellers.co.nz

Targeting PR to magazines and radio

Don't just get a list and send your NTI to everyone on it; think about which titles the story you're telling is appropriate to – a cookbook to food magazines; a farming history to country-focused publications or perhaps genealogical publications. Gear the email accompanying your NTI with ideas of how this book would be relevant to the magazine's readers – a targeted approach is many times more effective than one blanket promotion to all and sundry. Sure, it will take longer but it's worth the effort.

Radio – as for magazines: select appropriate channels and pitch accordingly.

Approach your local library

Call in at the local library, introduce yourself and your book and find out how to sell it to the library and others throughout the country.

Getting on TV

If your topic is under the media spotlight, contact relevant programmes to let them know about your book, and (potentially) your status as an expert in the subject. Understand that you won't get far with a novel – unless that incident you created and wrote months back is uncannily repeated in a real life situation.

It's all about time and effort

Promoting a book takes effort, as you've got to suggest to media how and why the book is newsworthy and will be one their readers will want to know about. Never forget the what-where-when-why and how basics, and also factor in that media will usually want a 'peg' – an angle on the story to make it newsworthy.

After all, it's not 'my travel story' - it's 'the horrifying/edifying situations you experienced'.

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