

Connecting with Readers

Guiding Principles of Indy Authorship

Focus your Goals and Efforts

The top priority is to write great books!

Promotion and social media are tools to let readers know about your books, not ends in themselves. Choose your platforms wisely (and sparingly).

Professionalize Your Product and Presentation

You need not only great content but also professional-level cover design, editing, proofreading ... “indy” doesn’t mean going it alone!

Approach your efforts as if you have an audience of thousands.

Maximize Your Reach and Exposure

Publish on multiple platforms—paperback, ebook, audiobook, large print, hardcover.

Consider ebook bundles (e.g., BundleRabbit).

Consider short fiction (See *Taking the Short Tack: Creating Income and Connecting with Readers Using Short Fiction*).

There are many ways to reach the people who will love your work!

Consider publication on each new platform (e.g., audiobooks) as a separate launch.

Challenges of Connecting with Readers

- The stigma of “self-promotion”
- The challenge of introversion
- So much to do, so little time

Practical Advice for Successful Promotion

Define Your Goal

For example: “Increase recognition of me as an author and of my books in the Philadelphia, Bar Harbor (ME), and Sedona (AZ) areas to establish connections with readers and pave the way for book sales.”

Consider Your POV

- Bring a third-party point of view to your efforts.

Email

- Don’t allow platforms you don’t control (social media, Amazon, GoodReads, etc.) to be your only link to your readers—create and maintain an email list in order to own this information.
- Don’t risk running afoul of GDPR or other regulations—use a reputable email service such as MailChimp, MailerLite (NOT your personal email account).

Social Media

- Pick one or two that are applicable to your target audience ... and that you enjoy!
- Sell sparingly ... focus on building a relationship. 80% NOT sales related.
- Flag people / organizations in your posts (@R. C. Bray, @Ruth Ware)—people will respond!
- Engage and interact (e.g., solicit ideas for character names).

General Media

- Collect a list of media outlets applicable to you and your books (location, theme, etc.).
- Do the work for them!
- Adjust your angle as needed (e.g., Main Line > Philadelphia metro area > SE Pennsylvania).
- Create a presence with your author photo.
- I have not found PR services to be effective.

Networking

- Automatic conversation-starter at writers' conferences: "What are you working on?"
- Talk with everybody! (That's how I got author blurbs for my books.)
- Talk with the celebrities when they're available (don't stand in line).
- Take full advantage of writers' groups!
- Consider an ebook bundle (a la BundleRabbit) to cross-promote.
- With Zoom / Skype / FaceTime / etc., you can connect with anyone anywhere!

Author Events

- Have realistic expectations—consider your goal!
- Be willing to contribute your time, knowledge, and skills.
- Recognize that there must be something in it for the venue.
- Partner up with other authors.
- Consider enlisting a third party to approach venues about possible events.
- Reciprocate support!
- Be professional and well organized. Track:

Status	Facebook	BVWG	Press Release
Day / Date / Time	Facebook Boosted	Nextdoor	Confirmation to Organizer
Event	Facebook Invite	Patch	
Contact	Friends	<i>Dickinson Magazine</i>	Thank You to Organizer
Contact Email	Website	Other Media Outlets	
Outlook	S in C Email	Check Venue	Post Follow-up on FB
Google Calendar	S in C Events	Promotion	Update website

Think Outside the Box!

- Author events at a non-traditional location (e.g., credit union)
- Sales at non-traditional locations (e.g., salon)
- Align yourself with a charitable cause (e.g., animal rescue)
- Donate branded mugs to cafes / diners

Follow *Matty Dalrymple* and *The Indy Author* on Facebook and Twitter
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