

AN AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO
BOOK MARKETING



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS

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An Author's Guide to Book Marketing at the University of Nebraska Press

Congratulations on the forthcoming publication of your book. Most authors, both first-time and experienced, have questions and ideas about the marketing of their books. Although the publication of your book may be planned for several seasons from now, the purpose of this guide is to anticipate some of your questions and to inform you about the methods used at the University of Nebraska Press to market books.

The marketing team is responsible for the promotion and sale of approximately 180 new frontlist books and more than 3,000 backlist books each year.

We market UNP books by:

- sending review copies to targeted media outlets
- exhibiting at numerous scholarly, trade, and bookseller conferences and trade shows
- sending direct sales materials (both print and electronic) to specific organizations, faculty, libraries, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, and end consumers
- working with sales representatives, who meet directly with domestic and international retailers and wholesalers
- distributing examination copies to professors and instructors for potential class adoption
- advertising in journals, magazines, and online
- engaging in online and social media campaigns

The Author Information Form

The Author Information Form (AIF) is sent to all authors, volume editors, and translators immediately after the book contract is signed. This form asks for a variety of important information and feedback that will be used to help position and sell your book. Without a completed AIF we cannot market your book effectively. The more detailed your responses on the AIF, the more information we have with which to build a successful marketing plan. The marketing team appreciates your inside knowledge about your book's audience and subject matter.

The AIF is a critical planning tool used to develop the marketing strategy for your book. If you have already submitted the AIF, thank you! If you have not yet completed this form, please do so as soon as possible. Please send your completed AIF to your acquiring editor.

Publication Date

The most important date for you to keep in mind from a marketing perspective is the publication date assigned by UNP. Events, launch parties, readings, or other promotional activities that you may wish to organize should be held after the book's publication date.

Promotional Blurbs

Prepublication quotes (commonly referred to as "blurbs") from people with high visibility or good reputations in their field are an excellent way to draw attention to your book and influence people who make buying and book-review decisions. Please keep in mind that anyone who writes a blurb for your book will not be eligible to also write a book review following its publication.

If you want to have blurbs on the back cover of your book, you are responsible for soliciting the quotes and you should work with your acquiring editor to identify the appropriate people to provide such quotes. We tend to limit blurbs to two or three on the back cover, and it is our experience that keeping them short (less than 50 words) is preferred. If you are able to secure more than two blurbs we will select the best for the book cover and use the other(s) as part of our larger marketing campaign. Please contact us well in advance of your publication season for blurb deadlines for your book.

Author Photograph

If you would like us to consider using an author photo on your book cover, please submit your photo by email to mpress@unl.edu. Due to space constraints, we cannot guarantee that your photo will be used on your book's cover. However, it may be used in various marketing and promotional materials for your book. The author photo deadline is six months prior to your book's publication date. For example, if your book is scheduled for a September publication date, you should submit your photograph no later than March 1.

[Author photo guidelines](#)

The Seasonal Catalogs

UNP presents two lists of new books each year: one for the spring/summer season (books with publication dates from March through August) and one for the fall/winter season (books with publication dates from September through February). Each season these lists are presented to booksellers in the form of a seasonal catalog, which the marketing team mails to bookstores, book wholesalers, libraries, media outlets, reviewers, and others.

Based in part on the information and the description you provide on your AIF, the team will prepare descriptive copy for your book. You will have an opportunity to review the copy for your book; we ask that you limit input to factual errors rather than rewriting or editing the copy. The copy is a marketing and selling tool and is written by a marketing professional with that goal in mind. The target audiences for these biannual catalogs are retail and wholesale book buyers and book review editors, not individual customers so the description will be aimed at a general reader who may not be fluent in the language of your discipline. Once this catalog copy is finalized, it will be used again as the basis for the text that appears on the book's back cover.

Publicity

Copies of your finished book will be sent to selected appropriate reviewers prior to its publication. Our publicists compile a list of reviewers after considering suggestions provided on your AIF; the final recipients will include other relevant publications from our extensive media database of journals, magazines, newspapers, other national and regional media, and other requests we may have received. We welcome suggestions for suitable reviewers but we reserve the right to make the final determination regarding the number of copies that are sent for review and the recipients who receive those copies. We are happy to share with you the full list of reviewers upon request.

Publicity staff also conduct other activities to garner further exposure for your book, including:

- presenting the season's books during appointments with major media representatives
- distributing the upcoming seasonal catalog along with a "Reviewer's Checklist" to an extensive list of publicity contacts
- following up on media requests for review copies and author interviews
- targeting pitches to radio, TV, and other media
- offering guidance for conducting your own publicity efforts
- pitching op-ed pieces and feature stories to relevant media

Please contact Publicity with additional questions.

Book Cover Usage

If you would like to receive an electronic file of your book cover image for use on your personal website or social media page, please contact mpress@unl.edu. Requested cover images will be sent to authors once the cover design is finalized. Please note that the file is for your personal use only. The image used on your book cover is likely covered by the creator or owner's copyright and thus should not be distributed or altered in any way. All image requests from the media, universities, or other entities should be directed to the marketing team at mpress@unl.edu.

Book Flyers

After the seasonal catalog is produced, the marketing team will provide to you a PDF of your book flyer via email, along with a link to your book page on UNP's website. Please email or print and distribute this flyer as widely as possible: to friends, colleagues, institutions, and any other contacts you may have. If you are a volume editor please send the flyer to all the book's contributors so that they too may disseminate it as widely as possible. The book flyer is also an effective book promotion tool at any conferences you attend.

Social Media

UNP endorses the use of social media in all its forms, and we encourage you to use any social media platforms with which you are comfortable to help promote your book. Our publicity manager oversees the Press's Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest accounts, as well as our blog, which together form the basis of our social media marketing campaigns. As an author, you are encouraged to write a guest post for UNP blog on a topic about or related to your book. Contact Publicity for more information.

Blog: unpblog.com
facebook.com/NebraskaPress
twitter.com/UnivNebPress
pinterest.com/UnivNebPress

Online Marketing

UNP uses a variety of online tools to promote your book. Our website is the focal point of this electronic marketing. Your book will join the complete list of our in-print books, which are cataloged on the website with bibliographic information, descriptive copy, and a cover image. In the months preceding the publication of your book, visitors to our website will be able to pre-order your book. New content is routinely added to the website, including excerpts, reviews, author events, and book awards received.

We routinely conduct email campaigns to promote books from our frontlist and backlist. Please share the good news of your forthcoming book with any email contacts you might have as well. Be sure to include the University of Nebraska Press website URL address in your announcement of the

book. Some authors like to include their book's URL in the signature block in all their routine email messages. If you have your own website, please link to your book's page on the UNP website to help promote and facilitate sales.

Direct Mail

The direct response manager organizes and facilitates catalogs and flyers to promote your book where and when appropriate. These materials are intended to promote new titles to new audiences.

Exhibits

UNP exhibits our new and recent books at thirty-five to forty academic conferences and trade shows each year. The marketing team uses these meetings as part of the promotion of your book to relevant audiences. Due to space constraints, target audiences, and budgets, we cannot guarantee that your book will be featured in every exhibit.

The AIF includes a query about meetings that you usually attend as well as your anticipated speaking engagements. You may have other opportunities to speak or participate at conferences, conventions, seminars, and workshops, and we strongly encourage you to do so. Although it may not be possible for UNP to display your book at these events, they are excellent opportunities for you to talk about your book and to distribute book flyers and other information. You can find a [complete list of the meetings](#) we plan to attend in the forthcoming year on our website.

Advertising

UNP advertises books in appropriate media based on multiple criteria, including budgetary limitations. After reviewing the advertising suggestions that you provide on the AIF and based on our knowledge of appropriate publications, the media planner formulates a seasonal campaign for each book. We have a limited advertising budget, so we often group ads with related titles to optimize those dollars.

Advertising serves many purposes but it is not always a particularly effective sales tool. Carefully targeted ads put your book and the Press into the public's consciousness, which is valuable but there may be more effective ways to spend our marketing dollars. As such, we hope you understand that not all books will receive a dedicated advertising campaign; we may well have identified a better way to sell it.

Author Events and Appearances

While book signings and readings can be a good opportunity for an author to meet and share his or her work with the public, these events typically sell few books. Successful author events require a large investment of time and promotional dollars on the part of the sponsoring organization. The marketing team does not engage in setting up a tour of bookstores since other types of promo-

tion and publicity are more cost-effective, time worthy, and lead to book sales. If you feel strongly about doing a bookstore reading or signing, we request that you arrange these of your own accord.

Consider these factors when scheduling a bookstore appearance:

Are you known at the bookstore you are considering, and is the store known for conducting well-advertised, successful author events?

Will you have time to promote the event and bolster attendance by sending post cards or email messages (well in advance) to friends, family, and colleagues?

Are you prepared to read or provide your expertise to an audience that may not contain any actual book buyers?

You may have opportunities to speak at universities and other academic organizations or to special-interest groups at libraries, museums, or clubs. Such events have built-in audiences and can be more fruitful places to focus your energy. Should you decide to schedule a reading, signing, or appearance, please plan the event to coincide with or follow the publication date of your book. Please also ensure that there is a mechanism to sell your books at the event. Typically, either the host venue will order books from our customer service department or the author will order directly and personally sell the books. UNP does not have the ability to organize on-site sales at author events.

For any events you schedule, please send complete information about them to your publicist. Include the date, time, bookstore or organization name and full address, and the event coordinator's name, phone number, and email address.

National Buyers and Sales Representation

Each season our staff meets with our sales representatives, the national buyers for major online and brick-and-mortar chain stores, and sales representatives of the international wholesalers to provide them with detailed information about each forthcoming new book. Our sales representatives then call on bookstores and other specialized retailers to present these books.

The national bookstore chains use a centralized system for ordering books for their individual stores. Because of this purchasing method, publishers cannot influence the inventory, title information, or shelving decisions at local stores.

Online Booksellers

The marketing team provides ongoing up-to-date information about our books to online book vendors, such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Each online bookseller decides what data it will include on its website and retains control of category listings and editorial content (such as customer reviews and trade reviews). Keep in mind that these companies frequently use approximate publication dates and sometimes even adjust a book's publication date to meet their

particular requirements. What you read online may not reflect the reality of your book and UNP.

Please also be aware that each bookseller has its own formula for determining things such as sales rankings, and posted rankings do not necessarily correlate with the total number of books sold. We have our own criteria for judging the performance of a book, and we recommend that you avoid investing any psychic stock in things such as your Amazon ranking!

We look forward to working with you to make your book a success!

—UNP Marketing Department

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What sort of discount am I eligible for as an author?

A: In addition to the number of gratis copies authors receive as part of their contract stipulations, all authors who publish with the University of Nebraska Press are entitled to purchase copies of their own book and any other books published by UNP at a 40 percent discount. Prepayment is required on all individual orders, including author orders. UNP accepts personal checks, Discover, Visa, MasterCard, and American Express for payment. To order by phone, call the Customer Service Department (Longleaf Services) at 800-848-6224. To order online, visit nebraskapress.unl.edu. When placing your online order, enter the code XAUTH in the shopping cart's discount code field. Your order confirmation should reflect the author discount. When placing your order by phone be sure to indicate to the customer service representative that you are a UNP author.

Q: Will you nominate my book for an award?

A: UNP will consider all suitable award opportunities. Regrettably, UNP's limited budget prohibits us from submitting books for awards that require entry fees. Authors are welcome to submit to awards themselves. If an awarding organization requires the publisher to submit on an author's behalf, we will make a determination as to the merits of the submission and assist where possible. Please contact publicity with any questions.

Q: This is the second book I've published with the University of Nebraska Press. Do I need to fill out another AIF for this book?

A: Yes. The AIF is crucial in helping us create an effective marketing plan for each book, and even if your new book is on the same topic as your previous book, there may well be new information worth conveying.

Q: What is your examination copy policy?

A: The University of Nebraska Press examination copy policy is fully explained on the [Press's website](#).

Q: Will my book be released as an ebook?

A: If we have appropriate digital files and full electronic rights to all content, including images or previously published material within the book, we will release an ebook edition to a variety of vendors.

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