



TAKE AIM. PROCLAIM.

WestBow Press Book Marketing Guide

 **WESTBOW** PRESS®
A DIVISION OF THOMAS NELSON & ZONDERVAN

INSPIRE THE WORLD WITH YOUR BOOK.

To spread the message that God called you to share, getting your ideas on paper and publishing your book were just the beginning. With the right kind of marketing and publicity, you'll have a better chance of inspiring readers with your words.

A Collaborative Approach to Marketing Your Book

WestBow Press, a division of Thomas Nelson & Zondervan, has simplified the process of book promotion, providing a comprehensive solution for Christian authors by bringing together a range of services under one roof.

WE PROVIDE THE RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE. YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN.

Marketing your book can be as fun and creative as the actual process of writing it — if you have the right attitude and approach. Your thoughtful input, combined with our expertise and experience, can give you a platform for sharing your book's message and achieving your own version of success.

GETTING STARTED

Developing a marketing plan is one of the most important tasks you need to complete in order to promote your book successfully.

Follow this guide to learn how you can create a strategy to target your ideal readers; distinguish your book from the competition; plan dynamic events; and develop press materials that can grab the attention of media outlets.

To get started, consider the essential elements of an effective marketing plan outlined on the following pages; then contact a WestBow Press Marketing Consultant for help putting your plan into action.



“We really focus on the authors that have a strong platform and are able to prove themselves; they’ve got a message that has already resonated in the marketplace in some way.”

Pete Nikolai, director of publishing services for Thomas Nelson Publishing

3 Phases of a Successful Book Marketing Plan

As with any good book, a good marketing plan has an effective beginning, an engaging middle and a powerful end.

PHASE ONE:
Ask the Important Questions
pg. 2

PHASE TWO:
Gather Your Resources
pg. 3

PHASE THREE:
Follow Through
pg. 4

PHASE ONE: ASK THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

Take a moment to consider the questions below and write down your answers. Outlining your goals and thoughts on paper is a concrete way to start building your marketing plan.

- **WHAT ARE YOUR BOOK MARKETING GOALS?**

Identify goals that are observable, measurable and attainable. You may dream of selling a million copies, but that's not a realistic starting goal. Set some targets you can hit, so you can measure progress and celebrate successes.

- **WHO ARE YOUR IDEAL READERS?**

Develop a clear picture of who your potential readers will be. Your book won't appeal to everyone — and that's OK! Create a prototype of your ideal reader by considering age, gender and other demographics. This will help you to pinpoint the right strategies for reaching them.

- **WHAT ARE COMPETING TITLES FOR YOUR BOOK?**

Search a bookstore or online for books that might focus on a similar topic or have a similar title to your own. What are these authors doing to compel readers to pick up their books? How can you appeal to readers drawn to books such as these while still making your book stand out?

- **HOW CAN YOU POSITION YOURSELF AS AN AUTHOR?**

Depending on the genre and topic of your book, you may be able to cite particular experiences, professional accreditations or other compelling factors that lend authority to your status as a writer. This information will come in handy when it comes time to pitch your story to the media.

- **WHAT ARE YOUR KEY SELLING POINTS?**

When you speak to book buyers, potential readers or media representatives, you want to have clear and compelling reasons why someone should buy your book. This selling sound bite is key to gaining the initial attention of your target audiences.

- **WHAT ENDORSEMENTS CAN YOU SECURE?**

Having quotes from well-known or respected people can give your book added credibility in the eyes of potential book buyers. Think about who might be willing to endorse your book. With their permission, you could use their quotes on your back cover and in your sales materials.

- **HOW WILL YOU UTILIZE THE WEB?**

The Internet can be one of the most effective ways to promote a book. That's why you should get your website up and running as soon as possible to start building interest. Include your website address and social media information in all your promotional and press materials.

MARKETING TIP: Identify your target audience by thinking critically about what type of people are most likely to buy your book. Are they men or women? Baby boomers or young adults? Narrow your focus for a better chance at reaching the right audience.

PHASE TWO: GATHER YOUR RESOURCES.

With your goals in mind, you can now start to lay the groundwork for the launch of your book.



• DEVELOP YOUR BOOK'S MEDIA HOOK.

Sometimes called the “elevator pitch,” this is the brief speech (brief enough to share with someone during an elevator ride) that you use to get media outlets interested in featuring your book. Above all, make sure your pitch is quick, clear and unique. Writing it down will help you be able to deliver it at a moment's notice.

• PLAN YOUR BOOK LAUNCH EVENT.

Generate interest with some grassroots-style promotion of your book. In some cases, an event may help you gain valuable media attention. Be creative in planning and choosing a location. Tie it in to the theme or subject of your book. And don't forget to have fun — people are more likely to respond to someone who is enthusiastic and inviting.

• IDENTIFY VENUES FOR BOOK SIGNINGS.

Many local churches, bookstores and libraries welcome authors who are interested in speaking or holding a book signing, but they want to plan for them in advance. Reach out to members of your community and church family to see if they know of any suitable venues. Once you have a list of possible locations, contact the people in charge to make initial plans; and set a date only after your book is available for purchase.

• ASSEMBLE YOUR MAILING LIST.

Prepare a list of people and media outlets that you'll invite to your book launch, signings and other events. Accommodate for both email and regular mail.

• SEND OUT YOUR BOOK LAUNCH INVITATIONS.

When you settle on a time and date and work out the details with the location, send out the invitations to your book event, including local members of the media on your list.

• FINALIZE YOUR MARKETING PLAN, CALENDAR AND BUDGET.

Establish a calendar of your tentative activities for the coming year and consider the investment needed to accomplish those tasks. This will help keep you accountable and help you reach your goal of connecting with as many readers as possible.

MARKETING TIP: Starting your marketing efforts locally is always a good idea. As you learn what works best, you can adapt and improve your plan appropriately as you gradually expand your efforts into larger markets and nontraditional venues.

PHASE THREE: FOLLOW THROUGH.

With your plan and resources in place, you can start carrying out the events and actions you've been preparing.



“I have a blog, and I was already telling stories before the book came out, so I have this audience that knows me and loves me and wanted to support my career.”

Annie F. Downs, WestBow Press author
whose book was picked up by Zondervan

• HOLD YOUR BOOK LAUNCH EVENT.

Congratulations! You are a published author. Celebrate that achievement. Have plenty of books on hand to sell and sign (Contact your WestBow Press Book Consultant to help with that.), and make the most of the time you have.

• SCHEDULE OTHER EVENTS.

You laid the groundwork in Phase Two. Now follow through using your press materials to finalize a calendar of promotional events. Don't just think locally. As you travel, plan ahead by looking for bookstores or venues that might be interested in having you sign your book. Also, consider asking your church leaders if there are any potential speaking opportunities for you at other churches.

• PITCH TO LOCAL AND WEB MEDIA OUTLETS.

Using the hook you developed in Phase Two, contact local reporters at newspapers and broadcast media (radio, TV) to try to secure stories about your book. Identify websites and bloggers that might be interested in your topic and make a pitch to them as well. National coverage may be one of your goals, but the best place to start is locally; then expand from there.

• BLOG TO REACH POTENTIAL READERS ONLINE.

Blogs allow authors to find and develop a relationship with readers worldwide. You can post a summary of your book, an author bio, news stories and upcoming events. Some authors use a blog as an extension of their book, offering fans an extended glimpse of their story or topic.

No matter the focus of your blog, your goal is to write interesting, valuable posts that will compel readers to follow your blog and engage with you through commenting and sharing your posts.

• PLAN AND CREATE ADVERTISING WHERE APPROPRIATE.

Advertising is a way to make readers aware of your book. There are a number of niche publications and websites out there; so no matter how specific your target audience, there's likely to be an advertising opportunity that can reach it. Several impressions may be needed for a reader to be influenced to buy, so you may want to plan on purchasing space for several ads to be featured over an extended period.

• EVALUATE AND REVISE YOUR PLAN.

A good marketing plan is flexible. Even the best-laid plans will not go exactly as you expected, so be willing to evaluate and make adjustments. If something is working, find a way to expand your efforts in that area. If something isn't working, adapt. Learn from experience and make changes as necessary to accomplish your goals.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER.

The key to a successful book marketing campaign.

Along with having clear goals, the key to book marketing is an integrated approach to your campaign. In other words, combining the right elements based on your book will give you a greater impact than a series of disconnected activities would.

This is where WestBow Press can help.

Our comprehensive approach to book marketing is designed to give you the best opportunity for success and help make it easy for you to manage the process.

WestBow Press Marketing Tools

You can let WestBow Press do a little or a lot — depending on your needs and your budget — in the areas that matter most when you need to build awareness and a following as a Christian author.

Publicity

- Press Releases
- Personal Publicity Campaigns
- Professional Review Services

Online

- Author Website Setup
- Social Media Advertising
- Banner advertising on *Bible Gateway*

Events

- Miami Book Fair International
- Los Angeles Times Festival of Books

Multimedia

- Publishers Weekly Advertising
- Hollywood Book-to-Screen
- Author and Book Videos
- Radio Interviews

Note: Marketing tools are subject to availability.

REACH THE WORLD WITH YOUR MESSAGE

Put your plan into action with help from WestBow Press

You have a unique set of goals and skills, as well as a limited amount of time and money to dedicate to book marketing. As your marketing plan unfolds, you'll likely find that some activities come naturally to you, while others are a bit more difficult to execute.

Don't worry. The beauty of publishing your book with WestBow Press is that you also get access to expert guidance and professional services to help you market your book. If you would like more ideas on developing the right plan or putting it into action, simply give your WestBow Press Marketing Consultant a call.

Whether you want a copywriter to craft your marketing materials; a Web designer to help you create your author website; access to exclusive events and opportunities to showcase your book; or a publicist to contact the media for you, WestBow Press has a team of experts ready to help.

Remember, book marketing is more like a marathon than a sprint. The key is to have a plan, stay focused, seek support and enjoy the journey.

Call your WestBow Press Marketing Consultant
at **844.714.3454** to learn more.

