



Marketing for Writers

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Marketing For Writers

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It's a cold hard fact that most writers don't want to market themselves, they want to write.

But what if you don't market, what then?

I can tell you from experience that's it not nice. No one knows who you are, and if nobody knows you, why would they buy your stuff?

Simple. They wouldn't.

It took me a long time to realise that fact, and even longer to do something about it. But almost as soon as I did, people began to notice me.

Many people don't realise this, but February 2003 I was a total unknown. Except for a six year stint as editor of a large staff newsletter for a large corporation, I had only been published in either incidental newsletters or non-paying markets. And very few of those.

So what changed for me? I decided to write full-time due to health reasons; to do that, people (read as editors) needed to know who I was, to give them a reason to take a chance on me.

This first thing I did was create a website. That was a huge effort for me, since back then I was the biggest Internet Dummy you would ever come across. These days - only a few years down the track - I have created, and maintain six or more websites. It's all true, I swear!

I began to hang out on forums and in egroups. If an opportunity arose where I would be highlighted, I took it. And I made sure that every chance I had, I stuck my head up and answered a question.

Be warned though, never, ever, join a group and blatantly promote yourself. By this I mean don't join then continuously advertise your books.

Over time I've found that the best promo is the one where it's not a blatant promo. For example, instead of placing a promo ad on an egroup, just mention the item in question in passing. Perhaps mix it in with the topic at hand - but only if it's relevant.

Instead of constantly mentioning your book etc in your messages (which is a no-no on most egroups), make sure you have a signature line with your book's name, and the website address where further information can be obtained.

In the past few years, I have done loads of marketing, but have paid out less than US\$100 in advertising. So how did I do it?

Here's a list of methods I've used to get free or near-free advertising:

Give away something that is relevant to either your book or website.

Offer to be a guest writer (at no charge)

Offer yourself as an interviewee

Give away a copy of your book or product for a contest. Choose carefully though - the aim is to find a new audience, so make sure that audience is part of your targeted market.

And speaking of targeted markets, do you know what that is? Say for instance, you have written a book about gardening; then your targeted audience will be gardeners. If you've written a book of romance fiction, then romance readers are your targeted audience. If your book is about writing, then writers are your target audience. Basically understand your niche, and you will know who your targeted audience will be.

Start a free ezine (electronic magazine or newsletter). Make it applicable to your target audience. Make sure you issue it on a regular basis.

Mention an ezine that is owned by a writing friend; more often than not they'll return the favour. (Remember what I said earlier about non-blatant promos? Doing this will work equally well.)

Write articles and ensure your bio points to your product. Offer the articles for free to websites and ezines that will reach your targeted audience.

Give away free gifts to your subscribers now and then. Don't give away rubbish - make the gifts worthwhile. There are a lot of good books available with resale rights, but you do need to check you can give them away. Some books come with certain conditions - often these will state no give aways.

Ad swaps: do any of your friends write about the same things as you? Ask them to do an ad swap. You will both most likely end up with new subscribers, and it costs you nothing.

To gain additional subscribers, offer a relevant or useful freebie on joining - if at all possible. Or run a subscriber-only contest.

For extra exposure for your published book, seek book reviews. The reviews themselves are free (if they want payment - run as quick as possible!), but some review sites are now requesting hard copies of books. This adds to your costs, but ebooks are much more difficult to read while reviewing.

Never send a book for review without querying first. Why? Firstly, it's pushy and overbearing. Secondly, many sites don't have the woman-power available to review all the books that need reviewing, and thirdly, it's downright rude and presumptuous.

If your book is reviewed, the site will often offer to interview you as well. This provides additional exposure.

Even if you're not 100% happy with the resulting review, always send a note of thanks to either the website owner, or the person who did the review. I generally do both.

For your published book, put together a pdf of the first chapter, or first few pages. Make sure you include details such as the name of the publisher, and don't forget the purchase details! (Always make it easy for potential buyers to purchase your product/s.) [Click here to view mine.](#)

Run a free contest. Don't give away YOUR book or product as a prize if possible. In my experience, people won't buy the product in the hope they'll win it instead.

Take out advertising in ezines that will reach your targeted audience. For instance, I advertise my ebooks for writers in other ezines for writers. (This works equally well for websites.)

Update your website regularly. The more often you change your 'welcome message' the higher the ranking you will get in search engines.

Swap URL's with other website owners. Ensure their subject is related to yours - this also helps with search engine rankings. Linking with unrelated sites will do nothing for your rankings.

Research and use relevant and related 'keywords' and metatags for your website. All websites - even free ones - have a place to add 'keywords'. Use that function to your best advantage; don't waste it.

Make flyers, bookmarks and business cards. I make most of my stationery using Publisher, except for the business cards, which I can buy very cheaply online.

I have a brochure that highlights all my books, another one just for my copywriting services, another for my freelance journalism, and yet another devoted entirely to my novel Saving Emma. The latter also includes snippets from reviews - with links for the full review. Readers are also given the link to my free sample chapter. Make sure you update information in your brochures regularly - if applicable.

Bookmarks - I do these in Microsoft Word using a free template I downloaded from www.microsoft.com. I print the bookmarks on a colour printer, then laminate them. Very effective, very cheap to make. *I have a duplex printer, but you can easily double side your printing with a printer that doesn't have this function.

Depending on how many books you have published, you may decide to do one bookmark per book. Or you might feel it's better to put them all on one bookmark.

Organise some speaking engagements in your local area. Libraries are a good place to speak, as are schools. Again, think about your target audience and work from there. There are plenty of community groups around, and most of them are constantly looking for guest speakers. Some pay, some don't, but most of the time, your book sales will make it all worthwhile anyway. On average, I've sold to at least 50% of the audience with every speaking engagement or workshop presented. (Libraries included)

Enter your books into contests. Winning entries (and entrants) generally get a lot of media attention. This works equally well for ezines and websites.

Join egroups specifically for writers promoting themselves. There are a ton available, and the majority are worthwhile. It may take a few goes before you find one that's a good fit, but you'll quickly realise it's worth the effort.

- You'll find lists of groups and websites at Writer2Writer. In addition to these, I've listed some additional egroups and other marketing resources at my other website www.aussieauthors.com.

Contact your local or community newspaper. Let them know you're a local author. Give them an angle if possible - this helps clinch the deal.

Offer yourself for 'chats'. If possible supply a give away as well. Preferably an ebook version; it costs you nothing, but is still worthwhile for the recipient.

Always remember - where ever possible, promote you *the author*, not a single book or service. A particular book title may be long gone while you will still be well and truly around.

It's called 'name recognition' and is extremely important to your writing business.



Cheryl Wright is an award-winning Australian author, freelance journalist, and editor. In addition to an array of other projects, she is the owner of the Writer2Writer.com website and the Writer to Writer monthly ezine for writers. She is widely published, including novels, short stories, non-fiction books, poetry, and features. Her work has also been published in anthologies and other collections. In addition, she dabbles in website design and other creative endeavours.

Cheryl presents workshops at schools, libraries, and writer's conferences, and teaches writing online at the Long Story Short School of Writing (<http://lsswritingschool.com/>)

Her forthcoming release is *The Write Resources* scheduled for release by Central Avenue Press in 2007. Visit Cheryl's website www.cheryl-wright.com

Press Releases

Press releases can generate a lot of additional exposure. Below you will find just a handful of sites where you can place your press releases for little or no charge:

<http://www.free-press-release.com/>

<http://www.bookcatcher.com/index.php?a=5&b=12&page=1>

<http://www.prweb.com>

<http://www.click2newsites.com>

<http://www.usanews.net/>

<http://www.pressbox.co.uk>

<http://www.bizeurope.com/pressrelease.htm>

<http://www.press-world.com/>

<http://www.localbusiness.com>

www.paashanewsservice.com/submit.shtml

<http://www.wordthunder.com/>

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Cheryl



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