

10 Effective Ways to Use Your Book Copies

1. GIVE THEM AWAY TO FAMILY & FRIENDS

These are the people who supported you through thick and thin as you wrote your book, who brought you coffee during the late nights and kept you from going under when times got rough. They're your allies, and they are your advocates. Most of them will want to know what all you were getting up to in those all-night writing sessions, too, so make sure to thank your team with a free book or two—and ask them to review your book online once they've read it.

2. GIVE THEM AWAY TO FANS & FOLLOWERS

Your cheerleaders aren't limited to friends and family; many of your followers on social media would be overjoyed to receive a free copy of your book. Better still, you can make use of this joy in your marketing campaign. With your fans and followers, you have the option to use your books as incentives in a way you can't with family and friends—incentives to attend an event, purchase a sequel, or participate in a webinar. Their book (bought or gifted) might serve as an all-access pass to exclusive content.

3. GIVE THEM AWAY TO THE UNKNOWN READER

Readers may not know you and your book yet, but they most definitely will if they're given a reason—and what better reason than a free copy? You can put your book copies to work by making them the end goal of a Goodreads, Amazon, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram giveaway—and that's just to mention a few websites and social networks that are congenial to the giveaway process. And if you're launching a new social media platform as a part of your larger marketing strategy ... what better way to convert those unknown readers into diehard fans?

4. GIVE THEM TO YOUR LOCAL LIBRARIES

Many libraries are starting to come around when it comes to self-published books; some even have entire sections or displays dedicated to local authors! Check with the director of your local branch as well as any other libraries in your area (it wouldn't do to neglect your school, college, and specialty libraries where appropriate) to see if there's room for your book in their collection. Some libraries will pay to purchase a copy, but many prefer donations since surprise additions aren't budgeted. Librarians are often champions for neighborhood authors, so you might even convince them to host an event for your book!

5. HOST OR SPONSOR A LOCAL BOOK CLUB

Book clubs, like libraries, are often deeply embedded in the neighborhoods, cities, and regions within which their members live. Inquire at your local bookstore or spend a little time on a search engine to discover what sorts of book clubs are active in your area. Then, reach out! If there's room in their upcoming reading list, many would be more than happy to take a couple copies of your book in hand for discussion. And have you ever heard of a more passionate book-lover than the kind that's willing to meet, week after week, to talk about books? And talking, when it comes to books, leads to sales.

6. SEND THEM TO RADIO HOSTS

Despite the rumors, video has *not* killed the radio star. In fact, more people now listen to regional and national radio than ever before—and it's time that you got in on the action! Radio show often pre-record spots of 3 to 5 minutes to bookend other, longer segments. These spots are the perfect “in” for a self-publishing author; all you have to do is ask! Not every radio station will be a good fit or need the content, but it's well worth sending off emails to showrunners (easily discoverable online) and following up with a phone call, offering a free copy of your book in exchange for a spot on their show.

7. SEND THEM TO BLOGGERS

As with radio stations, not every blog is a good fit for a review of your book or a transcribed interview with you, the author—but many *are*. Many bloggers, too, cannot resist the siren song of a free book in the mail, so make sure to offer book copies to certain select bloggers that fit your marketing strategy in return for an unbiased review. The “unbiased” part is fundamentally necessary to the process, but don't worry if not every review is unstintingly complimentary; as NPR's “Planet Money” team discovered in February 2016, *all* publicity is good publicity for midlist and self-published books!

8. SEND THEM TO PRINT MAGAZINES

Don't give up on print! Specialty magazines and digital zines are phenomenal places to place a review; even some of the most elite print journals accept proposals for review. The benefit to targeting readers of print media is that they're already in your pocket ... they just might not know it yet! After all, they still treasure the physical experience of handling a tangible work of literature. Many magazines and e-zines cater to acutely specific audiences, so search for ones that highlight literature, entrepreneurs, and local or regional “flavor.” These are your people, and they love words.

9. SEND THEM TO BOOK FAIRS

Talk about the opportunity of a lifetime—how wonderful would it be to give your book a world tour, even if you can't accompany it to every stop? Outskirts Press offers the chance to send your book to the Frankfurt Book Fair, Book Expo of America, Bologna Children's Book Fair, Beijing Book Fair, London Book Fair, *and* the American Library Association (ALA) Book Fair. These book fairs play host to hundreds of thousands of book lovers each year, and sell an equal number of books. An Outskirts Press staff member will be on hand at all times to advocate for your work. How awesome is *that*?

10. STOCK & SELL THEM AT EVENTS

Last but certainly not least, take your book copies to every event you attend as an author—whether it's as the headliner at a book reading, moderator of a panel at any sort of literary conference, or as MC of a neighborhood poetry slam. These books are your brand, and you'll likely find that you move the majority of your copies when you have the chance to place them directly into your readers' hands. And don't forget to tuck a bookmark with your social media contact information on it, as well as a little promo for your next book. There's nothing that whets the appetite like anticipation!

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