

Authors Tool Kit

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What Every Author Should Have:

A Marketing Plan including Author Assessment

- My target audience: who are they? Where are they? How do I reach them?
- My competition; Who are they? How do they reach the audience? Who is most successful? and Why?
- What products can I offer? Books? Seminars? E-books? Audio books? Large print? Book club connections? Classes?
- What marketing modalities will I use?
- What branding image do I want to use?
- What is my platform

A Website and/or Blog Website vision, design idea, objective (cohesive with your branding):

- See Website Assessment tool
- Analytics , tracking tools & SEO program
- Way to purchase your books from the site
- Virtual media kit (bio, images, contact, etc.)
- Book club info, questions and answers list, and links if applicable
- Character blogs/interviews

- Events (links to)/tour schedule
- Reviews (links to)
- Way for fans to join your list/newsletter
- Give a-ways Contests
- Fan pages
- Articles
- Publisher link
- Wiki page
- Podcasts/Video-casts
- Links to favorite authors, fan sites, articles, booksellers, etc.
- Links to all your social media outlets
- A Social Media Program & Blogging Plan
- Author profiles on all outlets;
 - Amazon
 - Barnes & Noble
 - FiledBy
 - FaceBook
 - Twitter
 - Gather
 - Helium
 - eHow
 - YouTube
 - Goodreads
 - Librarything
 - Shelfari
 - LinkedIn
 - Any others you enjoy

A Master Media List:

- Local
- State
- National
- Internet

A Media Kit:

- Cover Letter
- Bio with current professional photo
- Press Release
- Interview Questions and Answers
- Reviews – include all pubs (growing)
- Will add for each book teaser
- Book cover in color
- Branding material
- A Growing Reviews List (Develop a list of people you admire to invite to review your work Create list of review

magazines, newspapers, and websites. This list needs to be growing and may be using different parts of it for different projects (These links go on your website, as well.)

An Assistant- actual, virtual or perceived:

- Create the image you are a busy successful writer, in your mind and in others.
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What Every Book Should Have:

A Marketing Plan:

- Target Audience – Where are they, How to reach them
- Project's Personality
- Reviews – ARCs
- Social Media Plan, when to start, how to drive interest.
- Virtual Tours
- Book Signings/Readings – personal and virtual
- Book Trailers
- Financial Plan
- Branding with you and book
- Distribution list for media/press kits

A Media/Press Kit:

- Basic Kit should include:
 - Your current professional picture with a bio
 - Color plate of your book
 - Teaser for the book
 - Reviews for the book
 - Other things to add based on usage of kit.
 - Cover letter
 - Request for review letter
 - Press release letter
 - Promos for the project
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Your Blog Plan

Authors who want to connect to others and get their writing noticed need a blog. This is an easy first step as you are developing a full web site or can be the complete extent of your way to communicate.

What is a Blog?

A blog is defined by Wikipedia the free encyclopedia as:

A blog (a contraction of the term weblog) is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.

Why do I want a Blog?

A blog is an easy way to communicate with large numbers of people and to let them get to know you. Readers enjoy learning about the everyday lives of their favorite authors. You can be as personal as you want. As an author you can post pieces of your writings to help develop interest in your writing. You allow comments and track visitors to your site.

What would I say in a Blog?

Blogs are used in many ways, so you decide how your blog will be used. The biggest issue is contributing to it regularly. You can use the blog to journal, talk about your writing life, your other life, present some of your materials, ask and answer questions, run contests, post pictures and links to video and audio podcasts. (Podcast are just taped conversations.) You could do your entire blog as a podcast or video cast. Technology is great! You can open your blog for comments and/or for others to post to it. The idea is to have fun with your blog.

How do I set up a Blog?

Choosing where to locate your blog is a matter of deciding what works easiest for you. Many websites are set-up with the blog as part of them, so if you are developing a site you might want to start the blog first. You can do free standing blogs on places like www.blogger.com and <http://wordpress.com>.

An important thing to consider as you name your website or blog is: how would people search for you?

Many authors use their names as their primary website name. Makes finding them easy.

Do some brain storming to come up with words that describe your product and ways people might search for you. Then test the words to see how many results you get for each word and phrase. Lots of hits are good, but now you need to combine those words to make you special. These become your words to use in content allowing searching people to find your blog or website. You should review your words about monthly to keep them fresh and to add new ones based on new content you're offering. These key words or tags are important as you reach out to your audience.

Do I have to write on my blog every day?

No, but on a regular schedule. You want people to find something new each time they come to visit so they will keep coming back. That is why blogs often contain lots of different types of material. One day you might be writing about a life happening or the weather. The next day it might be about your next project or a success you've had. Your blog might be the primary changing part of your website when you start out. One way that we have found to manage your blog is the use of themes for the month or days of the week. For example our blog at Stimulating Conversation has a different topic for every day of the week. Mondays are Marketing Your Masterpiece, Tuesdays are Tech Tips, Wednesdays are Witty (meaning a cartoon, or thought of the day, Thursdays we share our Thoughts, and Fridays are about Focus. That way our followers know what each day's topic is, and we have a better idea what to write about, helping to manage the task of blogging. Check out what other authors are doing, and come up with your own idea, relevant to your writing style and audience.

What is a Blog Tour?

Blog Tours are a fun way to get great exposure of your work. You arrange with blog owners to be guest bloggers on their sites at specific dates. Both of you publicize the upcoming event. Some blog tours are interactive in that they can be conducted in real time. This allows guests to question and make comments to the visiting author. In essence a virtual interview. Other bloggers allow you to be a "guest blogger". In that case you write a post that relates to their blog, and link to their blog, they in turn link to your site, and allow you to promote your book. It is a great way to tap into your readers. The key is choosing bloggers whose audience are your readers. Do your research, and find your genre or niche bloggers/readers.

What are Group Blogs?

Group Blogs are found in several forms, but the basics are that a group of authors take turns in writing the blog posting. Several publishers use this technique to showcase their clients. A group of authors who write mysteries, but each writes a different type have a group blog.

Group blogs have the advantage of shared writing duties, as well as multiple points of view, and fan base. New readers may discover they adore your writing style when they are introduced to you on your group blog.

A variation on group blogs is a Community Blog where short stories or articles are submitted and then edited before chosen for publication. Some news services use this technique to keep a rapid flow of news coming. Community Blogs have editors who select who will be published and do the editing unlike Group Blogs. Often in Community Blogs the authors get no credit for their work. The BBC website is an example of a community blog.

Special platforms are available to make group blogging easier.

What the heck is Twitter?

MicroBlogging is the newest trend in blogging. Twitter is the founding father of microblogging. It is blogging distilled down to a post of 140 characters or less. The question: "What are you doing?" is asked, and your challenge is to answer with less than 140 characters, and interest. Twitter is a growing trend, and a social media mainstay. It is a never ending conversation.

Good blogging requires time and effort, but you will develop a following if you use good tags and provide useful and/or fun information.

Stimulating Conversation can help you identify tags and key words to help you become more discoverable, as well as assist you with a blogging plan, and a custom list of bloggers in your niche/genre. Contact us for a free consultation.

*Stimulating Conversation about your book is an author marketing strategy company. Authors have a story to tell, that is what drives them to write. We think that story is worth talking about. After watching authors flounder, and pay huge amounts of money for little return we set out to create a more effective model. The conversation of books **is** marketing. Getting people talking about **your** book is the key. Stimulating that conversation is our specialty. We use all the resources and tools available ranging from the press releases, media kits to social marketing, websites, and blog tours. It is our objective to create cohesive, effective author marketing strategies at affordable prices. Every author's story should stimulate conversation. Visit our website at stimulating-conversation.com for your author tool kit & assessment, or email Renee@stimulating-conversation.com for your information packet or to schedule your free consultation.*

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