

Revised: Online Promotion Beats Traditional Seven-One

By Judy Cullins

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While traditional marketing can work for the book author or publisher, the return is dim for the huge effort it takes. You must promote 90% of the time to even get a milligram of attention. While you may have a success or two, most of your efforts will bring poor book sales. Ask yourself right now, what is working for me? What is not?

Traditional Book Marketing Method One: The Press Release

Sure, press releases can bring you attention, but it takes a lot of time to gather specific media or radio/TV producers' names. When I wrote "The San Diego Media Resource Directory" that took 50 hours to research, I had to also keep the media list up-to-date, ask editors and radio producers by phone how they wanted their releases. Some prefer fax, others email or snail mail.

You waste your efforts if your release doesn't go the right person. Many authors make the mistake of sending the release to the book editor. He gets hundreds each month, and will pay no attention if you are self-published. Like agents and traditional publishers, only 1-2% are chosen.

Another problem is the sheer numbers of releases you send out. Don't relax after you send one or two releases. Think in terms of at least five a month. Ninety-five percent releases are ignored and tossed into the round file. Why? For many reasons, but check to see if you include a compelling heading, a human-interest story, a list of how-tos, or a present-time news analogy. Ask yourself, "Is it under one page, double-spaced? Did I construct, organize and freely give the solutions that my book or service offer for my readers' problems?"

Your news release should not be about your book, but give actual solutions the media readers and radio audiences can use. My first published press release responded to an article on the editorial page about the "Three R's." My headline was "School Need to Teach the Fourth "Rapid Reading. After discussing the background problems of reading circles, I included the benefits of rapid reading, and gave nine how-to solutions. The publisher not only loved the article, but also came personally to my home to take my picture. I used the piece for marketing to corporations.

Most people don't realize the purpose of the press release is to attract the editor by the collar, so he or she will want to do a feature story on you. Make your headlines sizzle. "Seven Ways to Sell More Books Than You Ever Dreamed Of" got a feature story which attracted 90 people to a seminar by the same name. The coach sold \$550 worth of books, gained four new book-coaching clients worth \$2000, enrolled 15 in her weekly seminars, yielding 24 clients published within a two-year period.

Traditional Book Marketing Method Two: Giving Talks, Seminars and Presenting at Expos

Creating a talk takes a lot of time. You must practice it at least two times before you deliver it. You must discover resources to find organizations to present to. Many of them don't pay their speakers. You may say that's OK because I will sell books. Yes, you'll sell a dozen or maybe more, but think of the huge effort it took to get there. Consider travel time, traffic, clothing upkeep, and schlepping all those heavy books around.

Like myself, you may present a talk or seminar to a corporation with big hopes of selling your products. When they pay you, though, they may set boundaries on book sales. One positive is that because you have a book, you can negotiate and leverage with meeting planners and top executives for higher paid presentations.

The biggest disadvantage? You must wait for decision makers to accept and schedule you--that could be six months or more. Think of the time invested in marketing materials such as the One-Page, videos, and meetings. I left this venue because the time from presentation to fruition took several in-house meetings before a decision could be made.. I knew there was a better way! But was it expos?

Speaking at Expos or maintaining a booth takes many hours of work. Consider preparing and submitting press releases, creating brochures, hand outs, decorating the booth, presenting a drawing, and bringing in products to sell.

Speaking can bring you a few book sales, but people passing by your booth are usually just looking. Even when I gave free mini

seminars every 2 hours, and passed out free tickets ahead of time, not many bought books. Giving out hundreds of flyers with free seminar offers brought few results too.

Yes, I did get on a talk-radio show and eleven people showed up at my Supermemory seminar. No, they didn't buy books or book a coaching session. Yes, I collected names and email addresses from a free drawing. I was able to use them for my free eNewsletter, "The Book Coach Says..." but clients did not bang down my door to use my talents.

I figure my prep and floor time was 44 hours for just one expo. With sales under \$350, I'd say that was slave labor.

Think of Your Promotion Time and Budget

Most one or two-book authors don't have a large marketing budget. Marketing their speaking leaves them little time to write and promote their books. Marketing experts say do five things a day, six days a week, which sounds pretty doable. But do they bring results?

Aren't sales what we should count? Before the sales roll in however, you need to create a foundation--"a plan"--of what you want to promote, what money you want to make from it monthly, how much time you are willing to give it, and how you will get the word out to your target audience. This takes a little time, but is worth it.

If other marketing and promotion campaigns have brought few book sales, have left your wallet thinner, wasted your valuable time, or left you with a garage full of unsold masterpieces, you may now be ready to set up your book's virtual marketing machine--the Internet.

Online Marketing Can Produce 7 times your Profit in Just Five Months

Now that you see the limitations of traditional book marketing, such as speaking to groups and press releases, you may be ready to increase your book sales seven fold by submitting how-to articles to online ezines where thousands a day will see your message and visit your book-selling site.

Rather than a shot gun approach, I suggest you use this one favorite and highly successful Online marketing technique. This one approach increased my own second Web site sales more than 7 times in five months, from \$75 in August to \$2265 in December. In 2002, the sales soared to \$3000 a month. Today my sales are consistent and bring in one half of my online income. And, this is just the beginning!

Whether you have a Web site or not, you can apply your writing

ability to produce short information-packed articles to submit to hundreds of Online ezines, whose readership of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, will read some of your articles you submit. These online small business people want to know more about your subject, whether it be how to raise parrots, or how to write a book, or how to write a Web site with marketing pizzazz.

Since you will include your signature box at the end of each article with your book title, your email address, free offer, and benefit statement, people can get in touch with you and possibly become buyers. After reading seven or so articles readers are likely to buy.

From my own first week's experience after subscribing to several opt-in ezines such as:

aabusiness-subscribe@sendfree.com,
aabusiness-subscribe@yahogroups.com,
aageneral-subscribe@yahogroups.com,
aainet-subscribe@yahogroups.com,
article_announce-subscribe@egroups.com

I got ten or so responses from other publishers and Web site owners asking to post my ezines in their format. Talk about exciting. My ezine subscribers to "The Book Coach Says..." increased ten to fifteen after each article submission.

You can also submit your how-to articles and tips to top Web sites who want your material.

These articles help promote your business services too. If you are a coach, consultant, professional speaker or other small business person this method helps attract more clients than you ever dreamed of. From my own experience, my clients doubled to 14 in just one month.

When you have written a well-constructed article, giving real information and how-tos, you will attract these potential buyers and clients who will eventually end up on the Web sites where you sell your books.

Getting Started

First, create five to ten articles from 500-900 words, possibly excerpted from your book, or how-to's on your subject. Write several articles and submit one or so a week. I started submitting to only five ePublishers of the opt-in ezines. Even in the first week, several publishers used my article "Sell More Books with a Powerful Back Cover." At the end of the article, I put a link to a product "How to Get Testimonials from the Rich and Famous" in my signature box, bringing increased sales.

Join the Online Revolution by subscribing to several opt-in ezines. As soon as you subscribe, you'll receive one or more articles a day. Take time to read some of these articles to educate yourself about all topics that will boost your business success. See what format and content they use.

This Online business marketing research is gold, because you will now be able to model your articles after successfully published ones. Now just start submitting so thousands can learn from you too.

Invest in Some Promotion Time

While we need promotion, how much time do we actually put into it? At first I had a learning curve that took me 12 hours a week. I learned from a techie assistant I hired from a local high school. Now my assistant does most of this work and I spend only 5-7 hours a week creating the articles she submits.

The usual promotion investment for big results is 90% of your time. With Online, it's far less, and you'll even have time for a long-needed vacation to some Caribbean island.

For Online promotion you will want to check resources on how to write a publishable article and other tips to make publishers accept them. Check out a book coach, read writing ezines, and take a teleclass such as "Promote your Business and Books with Free Articles."

Online Promoting is Easy, Convenient, and Profitable

Better than press releases, book reviews or book signings, you can create and promote articles conveniently right from your office or home. Give this a method a chance. You'll only be sorry you didn't do it sooner!

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Judy Cullins: 20-year author, speaker, book coach
Helps entrepreneurs manifest their book and web dreams
eBk: "Ten Non-techie Ways to Market Online"
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