



Fame, Fortune, and Your Name in Print

By Debbie Allen

*The saddest words of tongue or pen are these four words
"it might have been."
- Oliver Wendell Holmes*

Quit saying, "Someday I'm going to write a book." If you are a truly shameless self-promoter--or strive to be one--you need to write a book! This is where the truly shameless shine. Having the title of "author" gives you a great deal of credibility.

A few years after I wrote my first book, the excitement of being an author had worn off. I decided it was time to write book number two. I worked on the second book, ***See through Your Customers' Eyes***, for three years. Then a funny thing happened. I started listening to what other authors had told me for years: "Don't write a book until it's burning passionately inside of you." Those words made me shift focus from my current book project to a new idea.

At the National Speakers Convention in the summer of 2000, the idea for ***Confessions of Shameless Self Promoters***[™] hit me. The passion flamed. I couldn't wait to get on my computer and put the idea into printed words. In fact, it burned so brightly that I shelved the other book and went full steam ahead with ***Confessions***. That passion helped me to complete this book in just six months. It can be done when you have a winning concept and a strong commitment to getting it down.

Wendy Keller, a book agent, says that the key to getting your book written is "Butt in chair!" You just have to keep at it everyday and put hours and hours in that chair to make it happen. Some of the best books and winning concepts did not take years and years to write. They came in the form of information, passion, and a commitment to share thoughts and words with the world. So if you have that book idea burning inside of you, sit down and get writing.

When you are done writing, the real work begins. Get out of that chair and market that book. It doesn't matter how great your book is; if you don't market it, the world will never know about it. The book-marketing experts in this article will show you the way.

Five Promotions a Day by co-author John Kremer

After I wrote *1,001 Ways to Market Your Books*, people kept coming up to me to thank me for writing a wonderful book. They would then make excuses for why they hadn't followed up on any of my suggestions. Well, don't even think about coming up with your own excuses now. I'm going to give you the rule that forbids excuses. I call it "the rule of five." The rule says that all it takes is five promotions a day. Really, that's all it takes. Mail a letter. Send out a news release. Phone someone. Take an editor to lunch. Contact the media. It need not take much time--15 to 20 minutes is enough--but it can make a world of difference on how well your book sells.

Essential Points for Pursuing Media Exposure

1. 75 to 80 percent of all news is planted. That means most of the news you read in newspapers and magazines has come out of news releases sent to the media by businesses, associations, government offices, and other organizations or individuals with something interesting to say.
2. If you can provide real news for the media, they will be glad to feature your book. That's why you should keep refining your news hooks until you find one that really meets a need. Don't send out a press release announcing any book until you can show that the book provides at least one benefit for potential readers--whether entertainment, information, instruction, or enlightenment.
3. Publicity begets more publicity. Once you get the ball rolling, it will often go on by itself. Local news features are picked up by the wire services and spread across the country. Local radio and TV shows can lead to bookings on network shows. One or two features in the major review media, and soon every newspaper in the country is calling to ask for a review copy (or simply reprinting the review from one of the major sources).
4. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Persistence, above all, is the key to success in generating favorable publicity for your book. Believe in your book, keep on plugging away, and the reviews will come.

No more excuses! If your book hasn't sold, there is only one reason (provided the book has any merit at all): you're just plain lazy. If you spend just 20 minutes a day, every day, on every book you publish, you will generate incredible momentum for your book.

There is no reason why any book should die after six weeks in the marketplace. Books, like diamonds, are forever--provided you are willing to put a little elbow grease behind their promotion and to use those 20 minutes a day wisely.

Now get off your rear end and start doing your 20 minutes a day right now. Don't wait. I mean it. Don't wait.

Bright Ideas Turn Around Author's Reviews

*Editor's note: Dan Poynter's **The Self Publishing Manual** was the victim of cyber-terrorism. I convinced Dan to tell his story.*

A very negative one-star review was posted at Amazon.com and went so far as to recommend another book instead. Then, the perpetrators went back and said they found the first "review" useful 25 times! There was also a three-star, unsigned review that appeared to be from a disgruntled typesetter. Anonymous attacks by those who refuse to sign their work are cyber-terrorism.

Dan called a friend for advice. The friend told Dan that he tracks his Amazon sales very carefully. He received some negative reviews by the author of a competing book and his sales dropped precipitously. Dan got scared.

Dan contacted Amazon.com about unsigned negative reviews that are obviously designed to promote another book. Amazon's position is that these comments are legitimate customer assessments. (They probably feel that review wars build site traffic.)

There were 21 reviews (one heck of a lot) of **The Self-Publishing Manual** on the Amazon.com site; 19 had five stars. The two negative reviews dropped the overall rating to four and one-half stars.

Dan called one of the authors of the other referenced book, told her the nasty one-star review of his book referenced her and made her look bad. He suggested she contact Amazon.com to have the review pulled. She apparently knew about the review. She thought over Dan's suggestion and emailed him that she would not take action.

So, Dan went to Plan B.

First, he came out with a new edition of his book. He printed out the online listing page and edited it for Amazon.com. He asked them to make the normal reference at the end of the offending reviews; "This review refers to an earlier edition."

To further build credibility for the new edition, Dan sent Amazon.com a lot of new promotional material. He sent the table of contents, back covers copy, testimonials, and a free read of two to four pages from EACH chapter.

Next, he went on the Pub-Forum Listserv and asked for advice. Dozens of publishers came to his rescue with sympathy and advice. Five posted reviews immediately at Amazon.com, which was enough to move the nasty review off the first page. About 25 publishers asked for review copies and promised to write reviews. Dan sent books to them immediately.

Then another idea struck: Dan wrote a (five-star) review of the offending book and posted it at Amazon.com. Between his call to the author and this review he hoped to telegraph that he would not slug it out in the gutter. There is a higher road. (Of course, he signed the review "Dan Poynter, author of ***The Self-Publishing Manual***. DanPoynter@ParaPublishing.com.")

Dan sincerely believes there are a lot of good books on self-publishing. He supports them. Almost all of them have a testimonial from Dan on the cover, or he wrote the foreword. People new to publishing need all the books, tapes, courses, and other education they can get. Buying a few more resources is cheaper than making a mistake.

Learning from this experience, Dan wrote 21 more Amazon.com reviews for books on writing, publishing, self-publishing, and book promotion. Each one is labeled "Reviewer: Dan Poynter, Author, ***The Self-Publishing Manual***." Now his name and the title of his book are near the top of each listing page.

Sometimes the best way to fight cyber-terrorism is to take the high road and lead by example.

If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
- Dan Poynter

Debbie Allen is an International professional speaker and author of Confessions of Shameless Self Promoters. This article is a sampling from this book.

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