

Marketing to Newspapers and Radio
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Where to start ...

- Who is their audience?
- Who is yours? Your first contact: the editor or program director.
- The most important question to answer: What can you offer that will benefit their readers/listeners?

You're not marketing yourself. You're not really even marketing your book. You're offering content. Get that right and the marketing should fall into place.

What can you tie your book to? Find a connection.

- A holiday or special day
- A book signing
- A presentation at the library
- A local event
- Other ideas?

NEWSPAPER

The Feature Story

Ideally, you want a reporter to do a feature on you. Which is why it needs to be more than "I'm a local author and I have a book."

Ask yourself questions until you find the best hook to pitch to a reporter. Some suggestions:

- Why did I write the book?
- Who inspired me? (Even better if that person is local.)
- Why did I choose my main location? (Again, some place local helps.)
- What is your hope/goal for the book? (Will it benefit the community? How?)

Fortunately, most small newspapers are very open to local interest suggestions. Be confident they will want to share your story.

Other considerations:

- Make sure you ask them to include a photo.
 - You could provide one or, even better, have them take one.
 - If they come to your house for the interview/photo, plan ahead.
 - Choose an outfit that fits your brand and scout out a few nice backdrops for the pic.
- Phone interviews are fine, but in-person is preferable.
- Find newsworthy events to get involved in if you aren't already.
- Should you ask to read the article before publication?

The Press Release

- What is your PR about? A book signing? A presentation/speaking engagement?
- Start with a hook, but keep it short. Get to the point quickly.
- Keep the paragraphs short—one to three sentences each. Make sure the article can end after each paragraph.
- Follow AP Style, NOT Chicago. Some rules are different, like use of the Oxford comma and numerals.
- Write in the third person.
- Focus on an event or an accomplishment.
- Feel free to quote yourself. Just make sure you tag it in the third person.
- Downplay the language that tells readers how great the book is and make sure you focus on the who, what, where, when and why of the news story.

RADIO

Getting on the radio is even trickier, especially for novelists. Most radio programs are topic- or issue-oriented. Fortunately, smalltown radio stations are often looking for local stories.

- Did writing/researching your book make you an expert in something that would benefit the listening audience?
- What is your hook/angle that makes you interesting to your potential audience?
- Are you comfortable speaking without an audience? Remember: radio is only your voice. You have to be able to express emotion and be interesting without any visual aids.
- Having a unique voice—or a unique angle on a news story helps.
- The chances of a cold query actually making it on a national show is pretty slim, though working with a trusted publisher helps.
- However, a personal story that grabs the producer could still have a chance.

If you do get invited to be a guest, make sure you are well-prepared.

- Offer the host a list of questions but don't direct the conversation.
- It's their show. Withhold your input unless it's requested.
- Answer the questions, have a conversation.
- Engage with the audience/host.
- Avoid yes or no answers
- Don't think of a radio interview as publicity, but as a chance to build relationships with potential readers.
- Practice *not* saying "like" ... "um" ... and other conversation fillers.
- Prepare a few good soundbites ahead of time.