



News & Views

▶ Empowering authors and publishers to create and market books

JUNE 2011

June 8 meeting at Brentwood Community Center You can write, but can you communicate?

Writing a book is a wonderful accomplishment, but you must also know how to communicate to others the essence of your book. Whether you are speaking to a friend or talking to a crowd, these tips will help you polish your presentation.

In the talk, our speaker will present:

- The Components, Parts and Elements of a Presentation.
- How to Lessen the Fear of Public Speaking.
- Bonus Tips for making a subtle little difference in your presentations that make all the difference!

There will also be time for questions.



Our presenter is **Fred E. Miller**, a speaker, a coach and the author of the book, *No Sweat Public Speaking!* The book is currently getting rave reviews on Amazon.com. Local media figure Don Marsh recently interviewed him about his book on KWMU's "St. Louis on the Air."



He is a serial entrepreneur who has owned, or been a partner in, six successful businesses. Businesses and individuals hire him because they want to improve their public speaking and presentation skills. They do this because we perceive really great speakers to be experts. Perception is reality and people like to work with experts. He shows them how to develop, practice and deliver *knock your socks off presentations! with—no sweat!*

Find Fred on the web: www.nosweatpublicspeaking.com

What's ahead?

July 13 – Aiming for an Agent/Publisher... The Query Letter Story

Writing a compelling query letter is a key step to attracting the attention of a mainstream publisher or agent. Join us as we discover the many formats used in crafting a query letter that tells and sells, regardless of the writing genre.

"You can speak well if your tongue can deliver the message of your heart."



— John Ford, playwright and poet

SLPA meets on the second Wednesday of the month at: Brentwood Community Center 2505 S. Brentwood Boulevard, Brentwood, MO 63144

Doors open for networking at 6:30 P.M. and meeting begins at 7:00 P.M. The formal meeting concludes at about 8:30 with networking continuing after the meeting.

Our regular meetings are free to Members.

Guests – \$10.00 at the door, cash or check only.

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The 10 terrible truths of book marketing

by Terry Cordingley



During the time I have worked in the publishing industry, I have heard a lot of different ideas and statements about how to market books. Some of them are pretty good. Others might seem like a good idea to someone new to the industry, but in actuality they don't work at all. Those are the ideas I'm going to address in this post, but only because they come up so often.

I probably hear these ideas or comments on a weekly basis. So, here they are, in no particular order: **The 10 Terrible Truths of Book Marketing**, along with the marketing requests or comments which generally accompany them.

1. My book will sell itself.

No book sells itself. Selling books happens to be a lot of work, but it can also be a lot of fun. But no, books do not sell themselves. If they did, I wouldn't have a job.

2. Celebrities will help me sell my book.

I have had requests to send review copies to President Obama, Joel Osteen, Sean Hannity and Larry the Cable Guy, among other celebrities. I'm not sure what authors think these people are going to do with their books, and I think President Obama has his hands full without taking on a book marketing project (other than his own book). Besides, most celebrities are more concerned with selling THEIR books than that of another author.

3. I'm an author, not a book salesman (or salesperson).

Well, of course you're an author first, but along with that title comes a certain responsibility to help promote and sell your book. For some authors, this means doing book tours and making media appearances. For others, it means speaking to Rotary Clubs and eating rubber chicken dinners at speaking engagements. But make no mistake, authors must be involved in promoting their book, or it will collect dust on the shelf.

4. Let's sell my books through Scholastic Book Fairs (from children's book authors).

They sell a lot of books. Yes, Scholastic Book Fairs do sell lots of children's books... millions of dollars worth each year, in fact... but only books that they publish. If your book isn't published or licensed by Scholastic, this isn't an option that's open to you.

5. If I could just get on Oprah (or some other national TV show) my book will be a bestseller.

I have worked with authors who have been on numerous national TV shows. There is no denying it is fantastic exposure, and it's the kind of exposure I work toward for my authors every day. However, making one appearance on a TV show does not guarantee best-seller status.

6. If we buy an ad on (Facebook, YouTube, Drudge Report or some other web site) my book will sell thousands of copies.

Millions of people use these sites. It is true that these are high-traffic sites, attracting millions and millions of users. But hits on a web site don't necessarily transfer into sales. Think about it: when is the last time you purchased something as a result of seeing an ad for it on one of these sites? If you're like most people, the answer is probably "never." If you do sell a few copies, it is unlikely you would make back the amount of money spent on the ad. Even after I tell people this, they still insist on spending the money, only to later call and tell me they shouldn't have done it.

7. I'm just going to set up a web site and sell all of my books online.

Having a web site should certainly be a part of any author's marketing strategy, but it's only one part of an overall strategy. Authors should also use other social media sites, do book signing events, niche marketing, media appearances, etc. One web site alone won't help an author sell a lot of books.

8. My book appeals to everybody.

Unfortunately, no book appeals to everybody. Take a look at the New York Times bestsellers list. I'll bet there are books on that list you have no interest in reading. This is why it is crucial to specifically target your book's niche market.

9. Once my book is released, I'll be able to quit my day job and work at writing full time.

This is every author's dream, but unfortunately few writers are able to make a full time living from doing nothing but writing. Many of them have day jobs, teach writing courses, teach book marketing courses, take freelance writing jobs, write for newspapers or magazines, etc. Most authors make \$1 to \$2 in royalties for every book that is sold. If they received an advance, they don't receive those royalties until the publishing company sells enough books to recoup the advance. In those cases, it could take years for an author to see their first actual royalty check, if they get one at all. If a book isn't a success, the advance may be the only cash an author receives for their book. If authors can't purchase books from their publisher at a steep discount for resale, they may be waiting a long time to see any real money from their book.

10. If my publisher believed in my book, they would spend a lot of money to market it.

The fact is, your publisher has already taken a chance on your book by agreeing to publish it. They have already paid for editing, layout, cover design, printing, distribution, shipping, and marketing. However, not every title gets a big ad budget. In fact, few books get ad budgets, period. These are usually reserved for authors who already have a reputation for producing books that

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The 10 terrible truths ... *continued*

sell. These are authors who have a platform, a fan base that wants to read the books that they write. Now more than ever, publishers are depending upon authors to deliver the fans that will buy their books.

In most of these instances, there is a belief or a misconception that if the author or publisher “just did this ONE thing, the book would REALLY take off!” What I’m trying to convey with this list is there is no magic bullet when it comes to book sales. There is no “one thing” that will deliver the sales the author wants. It takes a lot of things: hard work, persistence, patience, and of course, writing great books, to achieve success in the publishing industry. So tell everyone about your book, consistently promote it, work hard, don’t give up, and great things CAN happen! 📖

Terry Cordingley is Associate Director of Marketing at Tate Publishing & Enterprises, and has been with the company since 2006. Prior to working in publishing, he was a radio and television reporter for more than 20 years, and he puts that experience to use obtaining media opportunities for his authors. Terry is currently writing *Your Book is Your Business*, a guide to help authors market and promote their books. Get book marketing advice on the Terry Cordingley blog.

Authors: Imagine you’re at a book signing event

by Fred E. Miller

Here’s a question: How do I handle questions?

Here are answers: Tell the audience, in the **opening** of your presentation, how you will be handling questions.

The best place to handle questions is before your conclusion.

Taking questions throughout a presentation takes great time management skills. You might run out of time before completing your talk.

The *Closing is the Closing* (That’s why it’s called the **Closing!**)

- Here’s why. The last thing you say is the first thing the audience will remember. Always deliver a **Strong Closing** with a *Call to Action* or *something positive* for them to be thinking about as they leave the venue. (“This book makes a *great present!*”)
- Taking questions after **Closing** has the audience remembering the answer you gave to the last question asked. If you and the questioner get into a *disagreement* (or worse) about your answer, this is going to be in the mind’s of the audience when they remember your talk.

When it’s time for Q&A, don’t say, “Do you have any questions?”

- Asking in that manner implies “You didn’t understand my message,” and doesn’t nurture questions.
- It begs for a “Yes” or “No” response.
- It’s better to ask, “*What are your questions?*”
 - Raise your hand high when speaking these words, and keep it raised until, and someone *will*, ask the first question.

You may have to Prime the Pump! People are often reluctant to be the first to ask a question.

- *Prime the Pump* by planting a question with an audience member before you present.
- *Another option is:* You ask the first question.
 - Say, “I’ll ask the first question. One of the questions I’m typically asked is...”

Additional tips:

- If there is any chance the audience didn’t hear the question, repeat it.
- If you are not sure the audience, or you, understood the question, paraphrase it and ask the questioner if your understanding is correct.
- If the questioner disagrees with your position:
 - Affirm by saying, “We have different opinions on that. Perhaps we can discuss this after the event.”
 - If an audience member continues to attack you and/or your position.
 - Say, “Obviously, you and I disagree. I suggest we pick this up later.”
- *No— “Good question!”*
 - If you say that, how do you address the next question? Another, “Good question!” And the one after that...
 - Better to say:
 - “I’m glad you asked that.”
 - “Thanks for asking.”
 - “Let me answer that.”
- If you don’t know the answer to a question:
 - *Do not* answer with something you know is not correct.
 - You can buy time by saying, “I’m drawing a blank on that right now. When it comes to me, I’ll back track and give it to you.”
 - Ask the audience for the answer.

Follow these Q&A suggestions and that part of your presentation will benefit *you* and *your audience!*

Fred E. Miller is a speaker, a coach and author of the book, *No Sweat Public Speaking!* Businesses and individuals hire him because they want to improve their Public Speaking and Presentation Skills. Fred shows them how to **Develop, Practice** and **Deliver** *Knock Your Socks Off Presentations!* with—**No Sweat!** He can be reached at: Fred@NoSweatPublicSpeaking.com.

Tough love: Things no one is brave enough to tell self-published authors

by M.J. Rose and Amy Edelman

Part 1 of a 3-part series

Everyone is writing about how great and glorious the new publishing paradigm is. About the pot of gold at the end of the self-publishing rainbow. About authors getting 70% royalties and having control.

The scent of revolution is in the air.

A writer who writes all the time might still be a romantic ideal but it's not a practical reality. No writer can entirely devote him or herself to the muse. Not one who is traditionally published. And not one going the self-publishing route.

So how much work are you going to have to do?

If you have an agent and a publishing house you won't have to make all the decisions or do all the work yourself. You'll have partners along the way—from editors to publicists. They will do the lion's share of the work and pay the lion's share of the bills. Yes, you might want to—even need to add to some of those efforts—adding more marketing or more PR—but much of the work of publishing will be done for you.

When you self-publish, you are on your own. Okay. So what's so tough about that?

1. Writing a great book

Self or traditionally published, you need to produce the very best book that you can.

That means being committed enough to rewrite your book three, four or twenty-five times. Even pros who have been at it for years and have dozens of books under their belts don't have their first drafts published.

So far it's the same for self-published or traditionally published authors. But then the traditionally pubbed author turns his or her book over to professional editors.

If Lee Child, Sara Gruen, Laura Lippman and Jennifer Weiner all get edited, can self-published authors afford not to do the same thing?

Yes, an editor costs money. And yes, an editor might require you to do more rewrites. Yes, you might be tired of writing the book and not even want to work on it anymore.

But if your goal is to sell books, get readers, and build word of mouth—you absolutely need professional help.

It's like cooking. Just because you can scramble eggs doesn't mean you can make a soufflé. 99.9% of all books can be improved by a good editor (and we're not talking about your sister or your great Aunt Mary, unless they are editors by trade).

What if you don't have the funds? Barter. We're in a recession... maybe you can find someone who will agree to get paid in installments. Do whatever you can but whatever you do—don't spend a dime until you see examples of their work and get references. You have probably put a lot of time and work into this project. Your name will be on the cover. Do yourself proud.

The average reader buys one or two books a month. The competition is fierce. Your job is to convince Jane S. not to buy Kristin Hannah's newest but to take a chance on yours. To persuade Alan K. to buy your thriller instead of Steve Berry's.

2. Self-Publish for the Right Reasons

Even though Mark Twain and Virginia Woolf self-published, the stigma didn't really lift until very recently.

Suddenly self-publishing is no longer just a fall-back position. It can be a first choice. Just be sure you choose to do it for the right reasons.

Don't self-publish because you think it will be easier than trying to find an agent and a publisher. It won't. Self-publishing is a tremendous amount of work. You have to be prepared, not only to be an author, but a business person, too.

Doing anything right takes time. So don't self-publish because you are impatient (unless, of course, you have a timely subject that you want to get out there fast, in which case you still need to pay attention to quality, but self-publishing will definitely provide you with a faster turnaround time).

Don't self-publish because an agent rejected your book a few times—or twenty times. There are lots of hugely successful books that have been rejected many times by agents. Harry Potter comes to mind. But if every agent rejects your work, perhaps instead of self-publishing it you should take a look at it again. We can't be totally objective about our own work. Neither are our friends or family.

In fact we'd go so far as to say if you can't get a single agent interested the last thing you should do is self-publishing. There is a difference in believing in yourself and being unrealistic.

Do self-publish because you are an entrepreneur. Do it because you have a vision. Self-publish because you want control of that vision. 

M.J. Rose is the internationally bestselling author of 11 traditionally published novels, one self-published novel and one self-published nonfiction book—*Buzz your Book*. In 1999, Rose's novel, *Lip Service*, was the first self-published book (e and print) to be discovered online and bought by a traditional publishing house. Rose is also the founder of the first marketing company for authors—**AuthorBuzz.com**—and one of the founding board members of ITW. She can be reached at AuthorBuzzco@gmail.com.

Amy Edelman is the author of two traditionally published books and one indie that she sold to a traditional publisher. She has been a publicist for two decades and is the founder of **IndieReader.com**. She can be reached at Amy@indiereader.com

Three layers of book promotion

by Maria Zannini

When it comes to marketing your book or brand, each venue can be neatly categorized between two camps: Passive and Proactive marketing.

Passive Promotion

Probably the easiest of all marketing, passive promotion is anything that you set up once and becomes self-perpetuating. Email signatures with a link to your book title or blog is an example of passive promotion. Once you've set up your signature to advertise your book, brand or blog, you don't need to do anything else. It follows you wherever you correspond.

Other options that you can set and forget:

- mailing labels, stamps, and business cards
- swag
- book trailers
- print or online advertising

Proactive Promotion

Here is your chance to shine. Proactive promotion requires consistent and sometimes cumulative effort on your part. The most obvious example is Twitter, where you are regularly putting yourself out there and interacting with others. Other options that allow you to interact:

- blogging
- Facebook
- online forums
- book signings

Lateral Promotion

There is a third option that I like to call 'lateral promotion'. Lateral promotion is any activity that doesn't actively promote your brand or book, but does promote you in subliminal ways. My favorite way to promote laterally is to volunteer at literary events, conferences, or at another author's book signing or speaking engagement. Volunteering strengthens your recognition to a larger audience and is a wonderful setting to chat or network. Best of all, you're helping out your peers while creating good Karma.

Other options that put you on reader radar:

- commenting on blogs, forums, and Facebook, or responding to other people's tweets
- writing articles (Bylines, regardless of genre or topic increase your visibility.)
- linking to other posts, articles and authors (This is a BIGGIE. The more you link, the higher your search engine rating. And it's so incredibly easy.)

It's overwhelming to plan a promotional campaign. The trick is not to do it all. Line up the vehicles best suited to your personality and throw yourself into those few. Make a list of all the options you can think of that cover passive, proactive and lateral promotion and pick out two or three from each group.

In the end, remember that you're not selling a product. You're building relationships with future readers. 📖

Maria Zannini used to save the world from bad advertising, but now she spends her time wrangling chickens, and fighting for a piece of the bed against dogs of epic proportions. Occasionally, she writes novels.

Book learning

"What will you take away from tonight's meeting?"

Members and guests of SLPA were asked this question following the May presentation *Tell me more: Creating interest in your book with everyone you meet*. Here's what a few folks had to say:



"I hope to be inspired to hit my stride without sounding stupid."
—Dana Scott



"I like the inter-activeness, so that everyone had a takeaway and felt much more creative in the process."
—Pooki Lee



"Instead of me talking about what I do, I need to think about what would be important to my audience."
—Joan Chamberlain

Questions about SLPA?

Contact **Membership Chairman:**

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