



EVERYDAY BOOK & MARKETING

Promotion ideas to
fit your regularly
scheduled life



MIDGE RAYMOND

Everyday Book Marketing

*Promotion ideas to fit your
regularly scheduled life*

Midge Raymond



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Intro

When my first book was published, I knew I had a lot of work to do. For one, the book was a short story collection, a genre that is not exactly wildly popular with mainstream readers. In addition, the collection was published by a university press, which by definition means a small staff and small budget. Not only that—unbeknownst to its authors, the press was about to close its doors, and before my book was released, half the staff had been laid off, with the few remaining staff members juggling the work of the entire press.

Needless to say, when it came to promotion, I was on my own.

While it was pretty disheartening at the time, I've come to realize that I wasn't at all alone—and that this learning process was time very well spent. The vast majority of authors, whether self-published or traditionally published, are largely in charge of their own marketing, and the trial-by-fire I went through gave me the tools I needed as an author. Granted, a great many readers have still never heard of me—but my book did go into a second printing before its original publisher closed, is now enjoying a new life in a second edition from another independent press, and has a robust digital life as well, selling in countries from North America to Europe to Australia.

But none of this happens on its own.

Today's author plays not only the role of Writer but also of Publicist and Director of Sales & Marketing. Depending on the type of publishing agreement, an author today may be in charge of anything from writing his own cover copy to sending out her own review copies. In addition, the entire publishing industry is in a state of flux and likely will be for quite some time. As I often tell my fellow writers, all of this can be so challenging and so time-consuming that it actually makes writing look like the easy part (and that's really saying something).

Who this book is for...

I wrote this book for several reasons. For one, I wanted to share all that I've learned over the years—not only as a writer but as someone who's worked in publishing for two decades, from working for traditional New York publishers in the 1990s to becoming a co-founder of a boutique press in 2011. Publishing has changed tremendously during the last couple of decades, and more changes are sure to come (among them: at the time of this writing, the Big Six publishers are on the verge of becoming the Big Five, due to the merger of Penguin and Random House). Having become a published writer amid all these changes in the industry and in technology has been enlightening and invigorating, and future authors are sure to find similar opportunities and challenges.

Second, I wanted to share what I've learned about book marketing on a strict budget, not only of money but of time. Some authors have publishers who pay for advertising, review copies, and book tours; many of us aren't as fortunate. Some authors have the luxury of time, money, and freedom to travel to events, book festivals, and conferences; others have to consider jobs, child care, and finances first.

I wrote this book with the Everyday Writer in mind—the

published author who is not only a writer but also has a career, a family, and/or any number of other obligations that require fitting book promotion into a budget in which both hours and dollars may be hard to find.

This book is for all writers who have published a book or are on their way to publication, by whatever means, whether it's traditional publishing or self-publishing. This book aims to teach you cost-effective ways to promote your book, from scheduling a book tour to making the most of social media.

Most important is to keep in mind that while the months leading up to your book launch date are vital, promotion is by no means finished a few months after publication. Promotion is, in many ways, a journey without an end. But, well managed, it can be a fulfilling journey.

How to use this book...

Readers who are still many months away from publication will get the most out of this book, but even if your book has already been released, you'll learn tips for how to keep the buzz going, how to continue to find new readers, and how to build upon what you learn as you go through this process, which will be unique to each writer. I recommend reading the whole book through even if you're not at a certain stage in the process yet—for example, you'll want to learn why, in the **Book Launch and Beyond** section, it's important to prepare for readings even before your book goes into print.

The first section, **Think Outside the Book**, is designed to help you begin the transition from Writer to Marketing Expert.

The second section, **First Things First: Book Marketing Basics**, covers the things you'll need to take care of before publication (that is, once you have a book contract with a publisher or once you decide to self-publish). This includes everything from building a website to planning events to getting familiar with social media.

The third section, **Book Launch and Beyond**, offers tips and advice for not only how to have a successful book launch but also how to keep the buzz going on an everyday basis.

This section will include advice for how to stay involved in the process of promoting your book, whether you have ten minutes a day or two hours.

The fourth and last section features **Q&As with Authors and Experts**, featuring a range of writers and industry experts—from librarians to fiction authors to poets—who provide invaluable tips on everything from how to present yourself as an author to how to reach out to event venues. You'll hear from authors who've published with big houses and with small presses, as well as from self-published authors. You'll hear from authors who have published one book and those who have published dozens. You'll also hear from experts with wide-ranging experiences in the book industry, offering such tips as how to approach bookstores and book reviewers, how to find the right photographer for your author photo, and how to effectively promote your events from the ground up. These are people who, quite simply, love what they do, in whatever way it involves books, and I'm delighted that they are willing to share their experiences with me so that I can share them with you.

And, finally, throughout the pages of this book, you'll encounter **Everyday Marketing Tips** designed to help you complete the most essential marketing tasks even when you're short on time.

Part 1:
Think Outside the Book

Transitioning from Writer to Marketing Expert

As anyone who has published a book knows, the promotion can be just as much work as the writing itself—if not more. And promotion can be particularly challenging for writers who are far more comfortable in the solitude of their writing spaces than in front of audiences, as well as for those time-strapped authors who managed to find time to finish their books in the early or late hours of the day but now may have to find time during more normal hours to promote it.

Thanks to the Internet, it's possible to promote your book without leaving your home. It's not ideal—most readers love the opportunity to meet writers—but even if you're only able to schedule a few in-person events, you can do a lot on social networks and on a “virtual” book tour.

It's also possible, if you start at least six months before your book's release date, to accomplish all you need to do within an hour or so a day—it's a question of knowing what you need to do, getting organized, and making the most of the moments you have.

First, you'll need to transition from writer to marketer. This is

often a difficult transition for a writer who only wants to start on her next project—but while it’s great (and essential) to keep up with your writing, you don’t want to do this entirely at the expense of the book you’ve just worked so hard to finish and get out into the world. And with more than 200,000 books being published each year and so much competition for every reader’s attention, you need to be willing to get out there (in person and/or virtually) to talk about your book. If you’re not out there talking about your book, you’re likely to find that no one else is talking about it either.

The next section will give you an idea of the specifics you need to think about, but in the meantime, here are a few big-picture questions to consider as you make this transition into marketing mode.

How is your book coming into the world?

Whether you’re being published by a large publisher, by a small press, or self-publishing will determine much of your marketing plan. If you have a large house behind you, you may have access to a great deal of its resources (on the other hand, as Kim Wright points out in her Q&A on page 132, you may not). If you publish with a small press, you may be able to work closely with your publisher to share marketing opportunities. If you self-publish, you’ll have to be especially creative—and also have partners willing to help (see Zoe Ghahremani’s Q&A on page 173 for more about this). If you publish an e-book only, you’ll be doing online marketing since you don’t have a physical product (or you may decide, as Jackie Bouchard discusses in her Q&A on page 188, that having a print copy is worthwhile for the marketing opportunities it

offers). But do keep in mind that, in whatever way your book is entering the world, you'll need to prepare yourself for a lot of promotion ahead.

Who's the audience for your book?

If you publish traditionally, your book will be categorized by your publisher; talk to your editor and/or publicist about how they plan to market it—as literary fiction, or women's fiction? as general fiction, or mystery? Not that you have to follow their category for your book, but how it's labeled by your publisher allows you to tap into certain markets. For example, if your publisher is labeling your novel as a romance, this opens up a lot of opportunities with book bloggers, romance writers' associations, etc.

Another thing to consider is the way readers are most likely to discover your book. If you self-publish, you may find that your core audience is primarily digital, as bestselling Kindle author L.J. Sellers has learned (see her Q&A on page 159). If you're publishing on your own, providing lower-priced e-books is a great way to get your work into the hands of new readers who are more likely to take a chance on a new author if it doesn't cost them very much. And then, if these readers like your book, word of mouth (via good online reviews) will keep the buzz going.

What are the best ways to reach your intended audience?

You'll want to go where your readers are. If they're mystery fans, check out the big mystery conferences, such as Bouchercon, Malice Domestic, and Left Coast Crime. If it's literary fiction, look into such conferences as AWP (Association of Writers & Writing Programs) and Bread Loaf. You'll also want to explore the myriad venues where you can plan book-related events; see Part 2 for more on events.

What resources will you need to promote your book?

This includes everything from money to time. Part 2 covers book marketing basics, such as a website and author photo—but even before you get to this, consider what your budget is and how much money you can afford to devote to promoting your book. This will help you plan, and stick to, a reasonable budget (see Wendy Call's Q&A on page 144 for tips and advice on creating a budget).

Next, think about what sort of time you have to spend on promotion. Ideally, you'll be able to devote at least three-quarters of your writing time (if not all of it, for the next six to twelve months) on book promotion instead. Book promotion can be endless—you'll realize that there's always more you can be doing—so you'll need to be sure you do the minimum while still keeping your regularly scheduled life in some sort of order. Figure out ways to maximize your book promotion time

for the next six to twelve months, whether it means getting up earlier, finding child care, recruiting family members to take on some of your usual duties, etc. Remember, your book's launch happens only once, so you'll want to make it count.

A word about independent publicists: Depending on how you publish, you may or may not have an in-house publicist who will work with you on your book promotion—and even if you do, this publicist will likely have several, or many, other authors to promote as well. So, if your budget allows, you might consider hiring an independent publicist to work with you (this person can also work with your in-house publicist). See the Q&A with publicist Alice B. Acheson on page 196 for more details on how an independent publicist can help.

What will work best with your strengths and schedule?

This is where you'll need to be most honest and realistic with yourself. Many writers, for example, feel they must do readings as part of a book tour—yet this is only one of many options for a book tour. And if you're the parent of a small child, perhaps doing a multi-city tour isn't going to work; focus instead on making the most of local events, and do other events virtually. If you're a serious introvert, maybe in-person events will cause more stress than they're worth, or won't allow you to fully connect with readers; focus more on writing guest blogs, op-eds, essays, and articles, and submit them widely. Or, on the other hand, if blogging and social media don't come naturally to you, focus instead on opportunities that you do enjoy. While book promotion does require that

we leave our normal comfort zones—by reading in public, for example, or by writing and submitting op-eds—it needn't be (and shouldn't be) torture. Know that you'll need to do some things that will be challenging; also be prepared to recognize your own strengths and weaknesses and arrange your book marketing around ways that capitalize on your strengths while minimizing the activities that are more difficult.

About the author



Midge Raymond has been a writer, editor, and teacher for more than twenty years. She has taught at Boston University, Grub Street, San Diego Writers, and Richard Hugo House, among others.

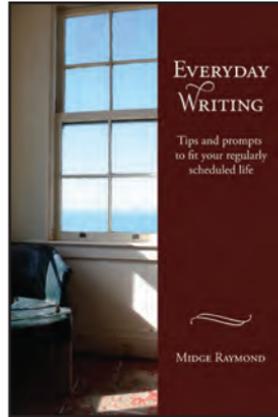
Midge's short story collection, *Forgetting English*, received the Spokane Prize for Short Fiction. Originally published by Eastern Washington University Press, the book was reissued in an expanded edition by Press 53 in 2011. Her award-winning stories have appeared in numerous literary journals and magazines, including *TriQuarterly*, *American Literary Review*, *Bellingham Review*, *Indiana Review*, *North American Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. For more information, visit www.MidgeRaymond.com.

Everyday Writing: Tips and prompts to fit your regularly scheduled life

“Raymond has a gift for dispensing gentle, intelligent advice that even the most harried and overworked will find inspiring.”

— *The Writer* magazine

Writers are often told that in order to succeed, they must write every day—yet this isn't realistic or feasible for writers with families, day jobs, and other responsibilities that preclude a daily writing practice.



Everyday Writing is about how to be a writer every day, even if you're unable to sit down to write every day.

This book provides dozens of tips for busy writers, including how to create your ideal writing space, how to develop habits that work for you, and how to keep your projects moving forward even when you're short on time. *Everyday Writing* also offers more than 150 prompts to fit into any writer's life, from five-minute prompts you can do in a grocery store line to lengthy prompts that are perfect for a writing retreat. Whether you'd like to generate new material, free yourself from writer's block, or start a revision, these writing exercises provide a way to engage immediately with your work.

“Practical and encouraging with refreshing touches of humor...If you're a writer looking for a friendly companion and supportive coach for your writing life, you'll find her living in the pages of *Everyday Writing*.”

—Judy Reeves, author of *A Writer's Book of Days*

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john@ashlandcreekpress.com.

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