

Topic: Digital Marketing Plan for Authors/Writers

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(Figure 1: Heading created with Canva. Image from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/writer-working-on-typewriter-in-office-3808904/>)

Do you want to be a writer? Well, personally, there has never been a better time than right now to be a writer or be an author. Having a completed book that you have written and published, if victorious, could do wonders for your personal brand. In addition, it can be used for networking, building relationships and, importantly, attracting clients.

However, whether you publish traditionally or independently, personalized or customized, you need to dirty your hands a bit and do some marketing to your potential readers for the book to be profitable. So, you may ask, where do I start?

Fauzia Burke, founder and president of FSB Associates, one of the first firms to specialize in digital branding and online publicity, wrote a book for new authors like you titled "Online Marketing for Busy Authors: A Step by Step Guide".

A very insightful and great read for new writers. It provides tips and advice that helps beginning authors or writers on their journey on digitized writing.

"A professional writer is an amateur who didn't quit."

Richard Bach

Marketing a new book back then, either personalized or customized, included radio interviews, local book signings, and perhaps even talks or festival appearances.

Most book marketing nowadays happens online. However, if you are self-publishing or working with a conventional publisher, you will have to do a significant part of the marketing yourself.

If you consider yourself more of a writer than a digital marketer – and almost all writers do! – you could be intimidated by the prospect of promoting your book, especially if you aren't particularly tech-savvy. You may also be hesitant to promote yourself, fearful of coming across as overbearing or inauthentic.

Worrying about the finances could also add salt to the wound. Things associated with digital marketing can be costly to maintain if outsourced to professionals.

The best part is that marketing your book online does not have to be difficult, but it requires a significant time investment. But, as I said, it doesn't have to be expensive either. You need to find a balance between the time required and outsourcing.

We'll look at some of the most important digital marketing tools in this article, many of which are free to help authors build a long term marketing plan for their newly published book.

1. Know your audience

Customised and personalised online marketing is the standard. You must understand your target audience so that you can market to them effectively.

Your audience can be defined with their age group, gender, interests, social media sites, and online hangouts. When you know your audience, it becomes easier and better to do your marketing.

2. Get a professional website or create your website with WordPress.

Your website is the only place online where you have complete control. However, unlike social networking platforms, they still have the power to amend the rules, and you have to comply with their terms and conditions.

No one can challenge the ideas on your website, unlike social media sites. However, people can send a complaint, resulting in your ideas being removed and your account suspended.

WordPress is the most popular website-building program and has been used by dozens of brands. The advantage of WordPress is you do not need to know coding or programming languages like HTML, CSS, or any other programming language.



(Figure 2: WordPress logo from Canva)

How to start?

Simply create an account. Choose a template and then customize it to your liking. Though WordPress still provides hosting, you'll need an external hosting provider. Buying a domain name and hosting plan could cost you around \$5 - \$10 monthly.

Structuring Your Website

Some good pages to add to your site after you've built it is:

- Home Page – This is where you can introduce your book and display other writing resources you have done previously. List all your books on your home page as well.
- Books Page - If you have more than a few books, you can create a page that lists them all and reviews each book. Notably, include links to where readers can purchase them online and make them available on your website.
- About Page - This section will tell people who you are, where you come from and describe your passion for writing.
- Contact Page - Make it easy for your readers to contact you (a contact form, your email address, or both).
- Blog Page - A blog page can be used to write short or even long projects that you may be currently doing. In addition, you can post daily to weekly articles on your blog about topics related to your books or writings.

3. Creating an Email Database

As an author or writer, you should know how important an email list is. Look at it as building your village or community of followers.



(Figure 3: Email list from Canva)

So how is having an email list important? It is the first internet from Facebook and Twitter.

Although there's no guarantee that your email subscribers will open and read your message, it will likely hit their inbox. However, here is the do's and don't do once you hear r email list is set up.

- Your emails can be lengthy and formatted in almost any way you like and not constrained to characters like social media.
- Do not use your regular email account to contact people. Instead, preferable to use a business email with the same domain name as your website.

- Tools such as Mailchimp, CovertKit and Aweber, is good email service providers. Conduct some research and choose the option that best suits your requirements.

4. Develop a Social Media Presence.

To begin, pick one or two social media channels. Do not feel obligated to be on every social media platform. Just ensure it's the platform used chiefly by your target audience.

But as we all know, social networking may be a valuable tool for connecting with other writers and authors in your profession or genre as well. But use it primarily to communicate with your fans.



(Figure 4: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/person-holding-silver-iphone-7-887751/>)

An excellent social media platform to access is Twitter, which is home to many authors and journalists.

LinkedIn (if you write nonfiction for a professional audience). Pinterest and Instagram are excellent to provide a visual aid to your books' content and add snippets to each image from the range.

Regardless of the social media pages you use, make an effort to:

- Concentrate your efforts on one or two platforms rather than spreading yourself too much.
- Post (or tweet, pin, etc.) exciting material that your readers will appreciate.
- Respond to notifications as soon as you can (not weeks later). One of the best aspects of social media is that it allows for two-way communication.

4. Engage and Have Your Work Featured on Other People's Blogs

Engagement is imperative. Consider how to engage the audience you already have. Communicate with the audience and other people within your space. Collaborate to reach a wider audience and increase credibility.



(Figure 5: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/photo-of-man-holding-white-paper-6325955/>)

Be more visible through collaboration and identify platforms that your audience also engages in. How to go about it?

- Guest Posting - Guest blogging on other people's sites can be a perfect way to get your ideas in front of a wider audience.
- Interviews - An interview is a perfect way to introduce yourself to new and broader audiences. It is also an ideal opportunity to speak about your book and promote your website and social media platforms.
- Book Reviews - If you write fiction books, several websites will review your book for free if you can supply a copy. If you write nonfiction, there are plenty of book reviewers that would gladly critique your work. You might also consider contacting bloggers who write about your subject who may be interested in reading, featuring, recommending, or at the very least referencing your novel.

5. It is a marathon, not a sprint: organic results from digital marketing will take a longer time.

It's okay if the marketing campaigns don't go viral right away. By regularly engaging on your social media pages, you can consistently create hype about your brand and book. Consider the larger picture because establishing a footprint and growing a following requires time.

Focus on consistent actions such as:

- Every week, write an article on your website or guest article.
- Once a month, send an update to your newsletter list.
- Four times a day, tweet on what you are reading, what interests you, and so on, not just about your novel.

For more digital marketing strategies, click here:

Remember to be accurate, brave and don't hesitate to try new things—all the best in your writing journey.

REFERENCES

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