

Marketing Your Book to Libraries

An Insider's Guide for Authors



by Nancy K. Humphreys

CONTENTS

Chapter 1 – Introduction to Library Marketing	1
PART 1: BOOK DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN	
Chapter 2 – The Importance of the Look and Feel of Your Book	7
Chapter 3 – Books That "Fit In" at The Library	15
Chapter 4 – The Four Kinds of Libraries	23
Chapter 5 – Get a Catalog Record for Your Book	28
Chapter 6 – Decide Who Will Publish Your Book	37
Chapter 7 – Strategies for Marketing Your Book to Libraries	49
PART 2: YOUR BOOK PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN	
Chapter 8 – The Laddered Book Review Strategy	53
Chapter 9 – Book Reviewers and Their Book Reviews	60
Chapter 10 – Example of a Book Review with a Quote	64
Chapter 11 – Your "One-Sheet" for a Review Editor	66
Chapter 12 – Less-Well-Known Book-Review Sources	71
Chapter 13 – Book Review Sources Just for Librarians	82
Chapter 14 – Reach the Readers Most Likely to Want Your Book	90
Chapter 15 – Databases Librarians Use in Support of Book-Buying	96
Chapter 16 – How to Get Your Book Reviewed	99
Chapter 17 – Ways to Use a Press Release to Get Your Book Reviewed	104
Chapter 18 – Final Review and Tips for Your Book Review Campaign	107

PART 3: YOUR TARGETED DIRECT MAIL STRATEGY

Chapter 19 – Direct Marketing to Librarians 111

PART 4: BACK DOOR STRATEGY

Chapter 20 – Special Collections within Libraries 120

PART 5: DIGITAL BOOK MARKETING TO LIBRARIES

Chapter 21 – Ebooks, Audiobooks, and Other Media 128

PART 6: OTHER WAYS TO USE THE LIBRARY

Chapter 22 – What Else You Can Do at the Library 135

Final Advice 137

index 138

Chapter 1 – Introduction to Library Marketing

Why get libraries to buy my book?

Libraries are a **HUGE** market. According to the American Library Association factsheet #1 for 2011, *there are 122,101 libraries in the United States.*

These libraries buy all kinds of books: print, large-type print books, ebooks, audiobooks, and even PDF books.

They spend billions of dollars on books each year.

- The largest library market is school libraries (grades K-12). School libraries number 99,180.
- Every state, every county, and almost every city in America has a public library. Public libraries number 9,221.
- There are 3,827 college and university libraries in the U.S.
- In addition there are 8,476 private and non-profit libraries devoted to particular specialties.

Suppose you sold your book to just one percent of all libraries in the US? That would be 1,221 copies of your book. Suppose you could market your book to ten percent of all libraries. *That would be 12,210 copies of your book!*

Bestseller lists and libraries

Many authors aspire to be on a bestseller list. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands of these "bestseller" lists. Online sources top-listed by search engines say that sales of as few as 3,000 copies of your book a week can make it a "bestseller."

But know that bestseller book lists only count sales reported to BookScan by bookstores and other large sellers of books. BookScan does not count sales of books to libraries. This means any copies you sell to libraries are in addition to what you sell to brick and mortar and online bookstores.

Libraries are an invisible, long-lasting, market for book sales. Print books don't stay at the top of bestseller lists long. In fact, many books disappear from book and mortar bookstores within months. They are sent back to publishers and/or remaindered at huge discounts through direct mail catalogs.

The library market, on the other hand, is a steady market that will be there for authors year after year. By marketing your book to libraries, you can make way more sales than by getting your book on a transitory bestseller list!

Bookstores and libraries

Bookstores and libraries are two separate markets, and libraries are the bigger of the two! According to OCLC's "How Libraries Stack Up" 2003 report, public library cardholders alone (148 million) outnumbered Amazon.com customers (30 million) by more than 5 to 1.

Library users are unlikely to buy your book in a bookstore (unless, of course, they love it and want to keep a copy!) However, people who get their books at the library often have friends and family who will buy a book that library users recommend. And, if your book is popular at the library or in more than one format, individual libraries will be likely to buy more than one copy of it.

One of the big disadvantages of Amazon.com and many other online booksellers is that, unlike libraries, they do not have sophisticated search capabilities that enable readers to browse books by subjects. If your readers don't guess the proper words in your title, they will never even see your book on Amazon.

Amazon's bestsellers are books with the most "hits" by online searchers on their Amazon pages. Amazon "bestseller" doesn't mean actual number of sales. If you want bestseller sales, marketing to libraries is the best way to sell your book!

Why read this book?

Other books about marketing to libraries:

- Aren't written by someone who worked in a library, let alone a librarian who bought books for libraries for two decades and was an editor of a library book review journal for three years.
- Don't offer a single strategy for getting you book into libraries, let alone multiple strategies.
- Cite reference sources haphazardly, without teaching you how to really use them and see how they fit into specific strategies for marketing your book.

Libraries use a unique system for ordering books

You may be used to a world of Nintendo, Xbox, texting, blogging, and tweeting. As a result everything in this ebook might seem like ancient Greek to you. The

very structure of this book may be something you've never seen before. And that's OK. This book will introduce you to the kind of organization that librarians use in their work.

Why is that important to you? Because good marketing requires getting into the heads of your customers. Entrepreneurs, and you are one if you're serious about marketing your own book, look for opportunities. "Opportunities" is simply a short way to say "things other people need or want." If you want librarians to buy your book, you need to know what librarians want to see in books they buy.

Librarians are looking for good sources of information to help those come to them for assistance. And library users come in all ages, genders, races and ethnic backgrounds, and interests. Librarians buy fiction, non-fiction, ebooks, audiobooks, and even games and music and movies for their patrons.

Most libraries are non-profit organizations. Some are funded through tax monies. Some are funded by grants and/or donations. Other libraries are part of profit-making organizations, funded out of corporate profits. All libraries are beholden to those who pay for their services. As a result, librarians must buy the best books they can find that serve the mission of the organization they are part of.

As you read this guide you'll come to understand how librarians decide to buy books, what things they expect to find in the books they buy, and last but not least, the lingo they use in their work. You'll see and know exactly how you can market your book to libraries.

Do this and watch your sales skyrocket!

Defining the word, "book"

By "book," I don't just mean traditional printed books. I also mean ebooks, audiobooks, and books for the blind and sight-impaired as well as print books. In particular, ebooks for eReader devices are an exploding library market. Even books with unusual formats like videobooks ("vlooks"), comic books, app books, and downloadable PDF books are of interest to librarians. If you've written one of these kinds of books, I'll show you how to get it into libraries.

Making the best use this book

The most important thing for you to get from the book is a clear understanding of *the strategies* that will open the doors to getting your book into the library. The other vital thing you'll learn is how to make your book attractive to librarians.

I purposely designed this book so that you can create a marketing plan for your own book while you read mine.

You'll find thirteen suggested activities called **Prep Work** scattered throughout this book. Following these suggestions will make your project feel more real, more do-able, and easier to accomplish than merely reading this book. I urge you to take advantage of the **Prep Work** exercises.

You'll gain a lot more doing my "**Prep Work**" activities than by simply reading this book. After you carry out these **Prep Work** ideas, you'll be mapping out your unique book-marketing plan for your book.

As you read, keep a diary of your thoughts and mark down the title/author of each book you come across that seems similar to your idea. You will use information about these books in several **Prep Work** activities.

If you work through this book and apply what it says, you *will* get libraries to buy your book. So, be sure to **keep this book**. Read it again when you write your second book!

Is my book really one librarians will buy?

For right now, don't worry about your book fitting into the library market. It isn't a question of "*if*" your book will fit, but rather "*where*" your book will fit. Even if you're writing an underground comic book, there's a potential library market out there for your work if you package and market it well.

Your main challenge in marketing will be to get librarians to become aware of your book in the first place. If they don't know your book exists, they can't order it. The goal of three of the four major strategies in this book is to let librarians know your book is available for them to buy and to entice them to buy it

Can my book get into the library if it's "different"?

Don't worry, it certainly can! You may have to work a bit harder to sell your book to libraries if it is, but my book will show you how to get your book in the door even if your book is a bit odd — ***even if it's really different!***

While librarians purchase a broad range of books including ebooks, audiobooks and books for the blind, there are some kinds of books libraries tend to avoid. This guide will also teach you how to make sure your book doesn't fall sight unseen into a library reject pile.

If your book is already published, you will learn if, and exactly how, it differs from the kinds of book librarians prefer. You can then focus on its most desirable qualities when you market it to librarians. So let's tackle the next question:

How will librarians find out about my book?

Librarians will find out about your book in the following ways: (1) you get your book reviewed in a source that librarians use for selecting books to buy for the library (2) you do a direct mail campaign to a list of librarians you've targeted as being most likely to buy your book, or (3) you write and publish a best-seller.

Of these three ways for getting librarians to hear about your book, (1), the book review route, is the method likely to work best for most authors. That is why we will be spending a lot of time on how to get your book reviewed in the kinds of journals that librarians use to order books for their libraries.

In fact, even if you write a best seller, some libraries will insist it have book reviews. Library buyers are one reason why mainstream book review journals like the *New York Review of Books* and *The Women's Review of Books* exist.

These venerable book review sources take only a fraction of a fraction of the books published. To get into them, you'll need to have a publisher, and/or build up a large fan base for your book. Don't worry if this is not your path.

There are tens of thousands of other places (print and online) to get your book reviewed. Only a few hundred of these book review sources will really "count" with librarians. And most librarians read less than a dozen book review journals.

This is because librarians are busy serving patrons every day. Librarians help patrons find materials in the library. They answer questions from patrons. They manage library support staff. They are part of the budget planning process and serve on committees. They put on programs. Some of them do online searching.

Some librarians take care of special materials like newspapers or photographs. Some process books to put them out on the shelves. Others are in charge of checking out and receiving books returned to the library. As a result of their other duties, very few librarians get to spend a lot of time reading book reviews.

In addition, library budgets aren't big enough to buy and store every book that librarians would like to buy. Cataloging and storing just one book on a library shelf over time can cost a library hundreds of dollars! ***This is why you have to show why your book is worth that library's purchase.***

A few good book reviews can do that for you, and I am going to show you how – and more importantly where – to get them.

Another common way librarians find out about books is a "press release" addressed just to them. You can use snail mail or email for sending libraries notices about the publication of your new book. Why would you do this?

Book reviews are necessary to get in the front door of the library, but they can only take you so far. Librarians actually tend to rely on only a dozen or so book review journals to make purchasing decisions. These important book review journals are created just for librarians to read.

Even if you are able to get your book reviewed by one of these journals designed just for librarians, it's still possible your book's review could be overlooked by the very librarians you want to buy your book. That's why you need to make extra sure that the librarians most likely to order your book *know it exists*.

Once they know your book exists, librarians use special tools in the library to find book reviews in the few hundred magazines or newspapers they respect as being "authoritative" to support the purchase of books for their library. This is why a targeted direct mailing campaign to let librarians know about your book is also essential to maximizing your sales of copies to libraries.

Your targeted direct-mail strategy needs three things to be successful: (1) a list of librarians and libraries most likely to order your book, (2) a good write-up about your book that is short and catches their attention, and (3) supporting quotes from favorable book reviews and other endorsements of your book.

I'll show you how to do these things. But first, let's start with how to write and put a book together that librarians will want to buy for their libraries.