



Which sales tools are right for my book?

We are constantly telling authors that it's direct sales that will put the most money in their pockets, so they should sell direct anytime they are able. However, there is only one of you, and your reach is finite. So you'll want to use the tools that make the most sense for you and for your reader. Simply put, the right sales tools are the ones you're willing to master and use.

Keep in mind that, thanks to recent advances in technology, there are hundreds of tools to help you make a sale. The traditional sales tools of yore included partnering with bookstores and gift shops, signing books, advertising in national media outlets, and being featured in catalogs. Don't discount these options for your book, but keep in mind that there are tools available to you now that might not have been around a few years ago. There are new ways to reach your audience and get them excited about your content that you might not have thought of.

Before figuring out which tools are best for your audience and discovering a few nontraditional sales tools, answer the following questions:

Who will be purchasing my book? (This is often the same as your audience, but if your book is for children or makes a good gift, it might not.)

How does my audience purchase books? (Catalog? Online retailer? At live events?)

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How can I organically engage with my audience? (Newsletter? Email blast? Twitter? Courses?)

Where does my audience do their research?

For fun, my ideal reader is likely to go to the following places online and in person (e.g. conventions, meetup groups, blogs, websites, online communities, and clubs):

These are the experts, public figures, social media profiles, and bloggers that my readers follow and trust:

These are the hashtags important to my readers:

While we absolutely love indie booksellers and highly recommend you work with your local bookstores in any and all ways possible, the truth is that Amazon is the most powerful indirect sales tool at your disposal. Here are our favorite ways to make Amazon work to your advantage:

- **Get as many reviews as possible before, during, and after your launch.** This is crucial. Remind your network through email—and ask a select group of friends and family to remind *their* networks—to review your book. When a reader shares a positive verbal review, ask them to post it on Amazon.
- **Make sure that your book’s information is accurate and up to date.** Take advantage of Amazon’s Author Central platform, where you can update your book’s endorsements and add your photo, an extended biography, your website, and links to your social media accounts.
- **Plan a “blitz” to coincide with your launch.** Organize a group of people close to you to purchase and review your book on a specific date. Promote this date ahead of time and turn it into a virtual event. Not only will this set a deadline for some of your slacker friends, but it can also increase your odds of debuting high on sales charts.

Remember, content sells books. Social media is a powerful tool for sharing your content, and you should do so judiciously. Ideas include: uploading pictures of you at events to Facebook, asking timely questions on Twitter based on current events, pulling a quote

from your book and posting it as an image to Instagram, and uploading how-to articles to LinkedIn.

However, try weaving your sales tools into areas where you already spend a lot of time so that you can spend less time building and more time marketing. Also add low-maintenance sales tools to your arsenal of resources—once they're created, upkeep is low and the return is high for helping more readers find you.

Examples of low-maintenance sales tools include:

1. An integrated shopping cart widget on your website
2. Offering free resources (e.g. checklists, templates, favorite tools) on your website in exchange for an email when someone visits your website or blog
3. Inviting attendees to subscribe to your email list at live events
4. A strategy to sell books at speaking engagements (e.g. a thoughtful presentation related to your book's topic, a dynamic table or booth, and the ability to accept credit cards)
5. A link to buy your book directly from your email signature
6. An affiliate arrangement with other authors or experts who promote your book on their websites
7. Advertising your book on websites, blogs, or podcasts that target your audience
8. A page in the back of your book that promotes you as a speaker (fiction authors, add a sentence to your copyright page or at the end of your bio that demonstrates your willingness to speak to groups or book clubs)
9. Amazon ads