

INTRODUCTION: THE POWER OF A PUBLISHED BOOK

Have you strolled through a local bookstore or browsed through the book section on Amazon recently? The number of published hardcover books in either of those marketplaces is simply astounding, and that doesn't include digital eBooks.

One common denominator that connects all these authors is they have a story to tell – or lessons to teach – be it fiction or non-fiction.

Even if the author's main goal in publishing a book is to tell their story, there are associated benefits of publishing a book that are sometimes forgotten in the process. For those in a non-fiction/business genre, a published book is likely to bring in new clients to their company. Once their book hits the shelves, that's one more accolade to add to their website and social media profiles, which will appear in search results. Being listed on Amazon as an author will also appear in the search results, as will any reviews on their Amazon author's page. Remember, publishing a book automatically improves your credibility and makes you appear as an expert, appealing to potential clients.

The same is true when joint venture partners do an online search. If one of the first listings is your published book, you automatically capture their attention as being an expert and jump ahead on their list of potential partners. If the partner is interested in publishing their own book with you as a joint venture, the fact that you've already been through the process will be attractive and beneficial.

Let's not forget the implied expertise a published book gives an author. Publishing a book — especially with a major publishing house — requires a lot of time, money, and expertise. If you are one of the rare writers who receives an acceptance instead of a rejection letter from a publishing company, that means they consider you an expert in your field and are willing to front the money to publish your book. Your story or lessons are THAT important to the publisher, which equals credibility to the masses.

While publishing a book is a fantastic way to bring your message to the masses, the masses won't know you exist unless you do some marketing, too. And what better way to market than to use the power of the internet?

By using social media platforms with professional profiles, you can interact with your fans, appeal to new readers, and ultimately grow your fan base. This process, of course, requires dedication and consistency with your interaction so you appear online every single day. Add a virtual book tour to the mix and you'll create buzz and excitement, either before your book launches or even after it's been out for a few months. People crave excitement and they want to take part in the fun. However, all this marketing takes as much planning as writing your book, so let's dive in and plan your virtual book tour.

STEP ONE: BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION

What is a virtual book tour, you ask? It's essentially a mass marketing campaign across multiple blogs, podcasts, videos, and social media platforms in which big influencers in your market "host" or "sponsor" you by featuring you in a blog post, podcast interview, or with social media shout outs. You need to plan carefully because to be successful with a tour like this, you need lots of things moving smoothly throughout the process.

Before you make yourself known to the public through your marketing efforts, people need an easy way to contact you. Creating a website with a blog is the easiest way to create a home base on the internet. This will serve as your hub for distributing information.

One of the biggest mistakes authors and bloggers make — especially if they WANT to be contacted by media or public relations reps — is not making their contact information clear and accessible. Media reps are busy, and they simply won't spend more than two minutes of time on your website searching for a way to contact you. If your info isn't right on that first page — or there's not at least a link in the navigation bar that says CONTACT ME — they will simply move on to the next person on their list.

Another note about your contact information: always include a phone number; don't rely on a contact form. Media reps prefer to use the phone because it's quicker and many times contact forms get lost in a sea of email spam, or your assistant doesn't realize it's an important notice and deletes it. If you want the media to contact you, always publish a phone number.

Be sure to also include a media page where the press and your blog tour hosts can find and download your preferred headshots, bio (long and short), book cover graphics and other promotional material. Making this info easy to access will save you a ton of time with back-and-forth emails, and will also ensure you've approved any photos of you that find their way onto blogs and websites.

Do you have your current achievements listed on your website? You should. Listing things such as speaking engagements, interviews, awards, and degrees will increase your credibility in the eyes of the public.

Your website is the hub of your internet existence, but it won't serve you well unless it's updated and people find it in the search engines. Google and Bing don't like websites that act as online business cards, just sitting in space and never being updated. They like authority sites that are active and updated once a week with photos or a simple blog post. Adding blog posts and other things of

interest to your readers also gives you more opportunity to promote your website on your social media sites. Anything that is worth sharing with the public — especially your book release dates — should be done on your website first, then shared on your social media sites, all linking back to your website. That's the simplified way of getting traffic to your site.

Exercise: Create a website, your online home base

Do You Have	Who To Hire	Notes
A WordPress website/blog that is easy to update?	Virtual Assistant	
 Reliable hosting so your website doesn't have down time? 	Virtual Assistant	
 A website design that supports or matches your professional image? 	Web Designer	
 A headshot on your website? 	Local Photographer	
Your contact info on the first page of your website?	Virtual Assistant	
A bio listing your achievements?	Virtual Assistant	
 A media page listing your past appearances or interviews? 	Virtual Assistant	

 Published blog posts showcasing your writing an expertise?
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STEP TWO: DETERMINE YOUR BOOK TOUR GOAL

Before you start planning your virtual book tour, think about the ultimate goal of this tour. What do you want to accomplish by hosting a virtual book tour? Answering this question will better prepare you so you have every element you need in place during the tour.

As with any project, assigning a goal will help you stay on track and will help you break the process down into smaller, manageable steps. Think of yourself right now. Are you completely stymied at the idea of coordinating a virtual book tour? If so, ask yourself, "Why are you planning this tour?" and proceed with your next steps. Placing the goal in your mind allows you to focus on the small steps, all of which should lead to your primary goal.

For instance, if your main goal is to sell books, you'll need to know the number of copies available and who is responsible for the fulfillment of orders. Is there a landing page for ordering? Do readers order via Amazon links? If you have a digital book, be sure the download link and your payment processor both work.

If you want to grow your email list, you'll need an autoresponder service, messages queued up ready to go, plus a free incentive for those who sign up. Most importantly, you'll need a landing page on your website dedicated to grabbing those email addresses.

Want to drive traffic to your blog? Make sure the design is up to par and you actually have good blog posts for readers to peruse. Do you have calls to action at the end of each blog post so they don't just click away from your site? Also be sure to check for broken links within the blog posts and throughout the site. Are your headshots recent and professionally done? Appearance is everything when new readers find your blog; they'll make a judgement within seconds about whether they want to explore what you have to say, so your site should align with your public persona.

Do you want to grow your social following? Update your social media profiles with correct website links, profile pictures, descriptions, and lots of posted content. Readers want to interact. If you haven't posted in a long time, then you may repel followers instead of attracting them.

Can you see how each of these goals involves different elements and tools to be successful? Of course, your overall goal may be to have all of these things working in perfect rhythm – and that's fine – but some people become overwhelmed thinking that ALL these elements have to be perfectly aligned, thereby stalling their virtual book tour. If you fall into this category, focus on only one of these goals and prepare for your book tour.

No matter which goal you have in mind, it's incredibly easy to add an opt-in offer on the last page of your Kindle book that leads to your email list. An email list is your golden way to stay in touch with readers, even after the novelty of your book has subsided.

Exercise: Determine your book tour goal and create the tools needed

Goal	Next Steps
Cour	Hext Steps
Sell books	
Physical books	How many copies are available?Who is doing fulfillment?Create online order form/sales link
• eBooks	 Are your download link + payment link working? Amazon? – what's the sales link? Create Amazon Author Page
Grow your email list	 Set up autoresponder to gather email addresses Create a landing page where people can sign up to your list Write a Welcome message and a few others that will be sent automatically Create a free incentive for people who sign up Include the download link for the freebie in the first autoresponder message

Drive traffic to your blog	Update your website design to
	reflect your professional image
	Add a headshot on your site so
	people get to know you
	Add your contact information on first page
	Post interesting and well-written blog posts that readers will find valuable
	Check for broken links throughout your site
	Include a book sale landing page or link to Amazon page
	Add sales link in your calls to action on your blog posts
Grow your social media following	Update all your social media profiles for consistency (same name, profile picture, keywords)
	Post! No one wants to follow someone with an inactive profile
	Keep all the social links easily accessible for cross promotion

STEP THREE: IDENTIFY YOUR IDEAL READER

When setting out to write a book, do you write it with your ideal reader in mind?

In the business/non-fiction genres, it's a bit easier to do since most authors are trying to solve a common problem among those in their niche. However, even fiction novelists need to understand who their ideal reader is and how they will react to the story being told.

Knowing your ideal reader is also imperative for attracting them to your virtual book tour. If you know the important characteristics and values of your ideal reader, you can deduce where your ideal reader "hangs out" online, and you can market to them more efficiently and effectively. You'll be able to speak to them directly, address their fears and struggles, and convince them why your book is the answer they've been looking for.

To figure out how to market to these ideal readers, you must first create an extremely detailed ideal reader avatar, which is basically creating a persona of your ideal reader along with their demographics. Include their name, gender, age, family status, religious beliefs, core values, education, career, and a description of their day. Get as detailed as possible; list their struggles and what answers they are searching for.

No, this is not a creative writing assignment! You'll be able to fill in these blanks very easily based on your past experience and from interacting with your audience on social media. Doing this exercise is a way to bring your market to life and personify who you are trying to help with your book. The more you understand the needs and struggles of your market (aka your avatar), the better you can serve them. You may even discover that you yourself are a member of this group, which should make it easier to speak to them.

Exercise: Describe your ideal reader

Answer These Questions	Your Ideal Reader
Name/Age?	
Gender?	
Marital Status?	
Where do they live?	
Do they have kids?	
What is their level of education?	
What do they struggle with?	
What is their daily life like?	
What is their daily life like?	
What are their core values?	
How can your book and expertise help them?	

Where do you think your ideal reader hangs out online? Social media platforms, forums, websites, etc.	

STEP FOUR: PLAN YOUR PITCH

Even though you've spent considerable time writing and researching your book, not everyone will jump on board wanting to promote it. You'll need to pitch bloggers, podcasters, and social media influencers and convince them that <u>your</u> book is just what *their* audience has been waiting for.

Remember, the key focus should be on <u>helping</u> your audience, not just driving sales dollars into your wallet. Likewise, these big names in the internet world have worked for years cultivating their following by caring about them. These influencers take their audience members' privacy very seriously and want to protect them from scammers.

Consider these influencers the gate keepers of their own dominions, where you have to pass a certain test of standards before they will let you into their community. After all, if they don't vet you properly and your offer isn't relevant to their audience, the audience will start to lose faith in the influencer who introduced them to you, which breaks down the credibility they've been building for so long.

Always, always, always create a personalized pitch and indicate how their audience will benefit from your book. What's in it for them? Never use a generic copy-and-paste message; these big names will notice right away and never look at the rest of your pitch. Be original, be confident, but also be humble; you're trying to help their audience, not simply generate sales from your book. Making these pitches personal also shows them you've done some research about their blogs or podcasts, which may earn you some points.

Also, think about what makes you special and how that will resonate with his or her audience. This is true for everyone you contact. They likely won't know you, so tell them why their audience will love you and what you have to teach them.

Before you send that pitch, brainstorm a list of at least 50 ideas of what you'll blog about or talk about in interviews during this virtual book tour. How are these topics beneficial to the reader/listener/viewer? Also, have some current blog posts published to your own blog in case any of these influencers want to see a sample of your work.

Lastly, plan a block of time that you want this virtual book tour to happen, and give yourself plenty of time for planning and execution. For instance, if you want this tour to happen in the month of October, starting your calls the last week of September is unrealistic. Even if you have an assistant who is awesome at working the phones and getting this scheduled quickly, it's unrealistic to think you can set up the tour in a week's time. Always give yourself more time than you think you need so you won't feel stressed about creating the content and you'll actually enjoy the whole process.

Exercise: Important things to mention in a pitch

Things to Mention	Your Answers
Your name, company/website name	
The purpose of this email	I'm planning a virtual book tour and
The month or other time frame you want to schedule this tour	
Name of your book, what it's about	
Why your book is relevant to their audience	Mention their blog or podcast name; mention something specific about their audience that shows you've done your research.
What type of content can you provide them?	Choose a few topics from your brainstorming list
What's in it for them if they promote you	
What makes you special?	

Why will you appeal to their audience?	Again, show them that you understand who their audience is

Exercise: Brainstorm 50 blog post/interview topics

50 Topics	
1.	26.
2.	27.
3.	28.
4.	29.
5.	30.
6.	31.
7.	32.
8.	33.
9.	34.
10.	35.
11.	36.
12.	37.
13.	38.
14.	39.
15.	40.
16.	41.
17.	42.
18.	43.
19.	44.
20.	45.
21.	46.
22.	47.
23.	48.
24.	49.
25.	50.
25.	

STEP FIVE: RESEARCH BLOGS

Yes, you'll want to approach bloggers who are well known and have large followings so you can reach more people, but the <u>type of audience</u> they serve should be a bigger indicator of whether you should approach that blogger.

Think of it this way:

Let's say Blogger 1 has 100,000 readers each month and Blogger 2 has 50,000. You may be tempted to only approach Blogger 1 because of her bigger readership.

However, maybe Blogger 1 doesn't have the exact audience demographics you're looking for while Blogger 2 attracts your ideal reader (see your list in Step 3). You are likely to attract a larger percentage of the readers in Blogger 2's audience than in Blogger 1's audience, even though Blogger 2 has fewer overall readers.

Attracting more readers usually means making more sales. This is made possible because you paid attention to the audience you are serving. A common thought among internet marketers in regards to email marketing is it's better to have a smaller list of active purchasers than a larger list that ignores your offers.

The same can be said about this blogging example: it's better to reach a larger percentage of readers that match your ideal reader demographics because they are more likely to buy than reaching a larger number of readers who don't have any interest in your book.

The lesson here is to make the audience research your number one benchmark followed by the numbers. And remember, your offer (aka your book) has to be relevant to the audience or you're wasting everyone's time.

With that in mind, start researching blogs. Which blogs do you already read and respect? Do they serve your ideal readers? Where are your ideal readers? Who are they following? Who are they mentioning on social media? Don't be afraid to ask your own followers who they follow or what their favorite blogs are to read. If

necessary, do a Google search with the keywords describing your ideal reader and see what shows up.

When doing your research, there's no set number of bloggers to approach (or podcasters, in the next section), but you have to understand that not everyone will see your pitch, not everyone will say yes, and not everyone will fully understand how a virtual book tour works. So pad your numbers a bit; you may have to hear more no's before you hear some yes's.

Once you have a list of names, do your heavy research. Become familiar with their blog, their style, how often they post, what kind of content they post, and what audience they cater to. Also think of ways you can add value to their content (tweak your list of 50 blog posts ideas from Step 4) and follow these bloggers on social media to gauge the interaction between them and their followers.

Exercise: List 10 bloggers who cater to your ideal reader

Blogger Name + Website URL	Contact Info or Links

STEP SIX: GET YOUR MIC TUNED UP

Have you ever heard a financial adviser talk about how important it is to diversify your funds and not put all your money into just one investment? The same can be said about diversifying your marketing efforts. While lining up influential bloggers is wonderful for your book tour, not all of your audience members have the time to read blog posts, or they may simply not like sitting at their computers reading online. Yet you still want to reach these members of your audience, and one way to do that is by lining up podcasters to interview you.

Browse through the Podcast section in iTunes and prepare to be astonished. Several thousands of podcasts are available for free for people in your audience who are too busy to read blog posts.

A podcast is an audio subscription, fashioned like a serial radio program, that people can subscribe to on iTunes. Each new episode is automatically downloaded after it's published to the web. The format and length of podcasts varies considerably. Some are merely 10 minutes long while others run a full hour. Some have the host opining about a specific subject, while others have guests on doing interviews. The subject matter also varies and you'll find dozens of podcasts about each subject. Podcasting has the potential for huge reach while also being inexpensive to produce, thus making the number of podcasts available on iTunes immense.

Being featured on a podcast allows you to have the spotlight for up to one hour. You'll have the undivided attention of many people in your audience as they listen while working out at the gym, commuting to work, or folding laundry. Don't let this make you nervous. Use this anxious energy to fine tune your message and speak about how you can help them.

Just as with your bloggers list, a podcaster's audience demographics should be the most important aspect of your research, followed by the number of listeners. Use a combination of Google searches plus iTunes searches to find podcasts that target your ideal readers. Each podcaster's website should have a way to play or download the episodes from their site so you can get a feel for their style. Accomplished podcasters will likely have their download numbers in a prominent position on their website, too. If not on the site, look for a media/advertising kit with those numbers. Also look for their guidelines for submitting your guest application.

One more important note: be sure to have a reliable internet connection and a microphone before conducting any interviews. Headset mics work well, as do the iPhone ear buds that have a microphone built in to the wires. Never rely on the built-in microphone from your computer. These produce notoriously bad audio quality and you need to convince these podcasters that you are professional, even if this is your first audio interview. Check out Amazon for numerous mic choices; Plantronics and Logitech are known for their quality mics.

Exercise: List 10 podcasts that reach your ideal reader

Podcast + Host Name + URL	Guest Application Info + Link
Foucast Host Nume ORL	Odest Application into : Ellik

STEP SEVEN: GO LIVE ON FACEBOOK

The idea of going live on Facebook to hundreds, if not thousands of viewers can certainly be nerve-wracking. But with some planning, you can conquer this fear and use this marketing method to spread your message – about you, your book, and your virtual book tour.

Of course, go live on your personal Facebook page as well as your business page. Make each of these messages different since there may be some overlapping viewers, and invite them to share the video in their own feeds. Encourage engagement by asking the viewers questions and always answer each question that is asked, even if it's after the live feed has ended.

Some Facebook live tips: It's alright to plan what points you want to talk about, but do not write out a script. It will look and sound like you're reading a script, which is the complete opposite of what the word "live" means. Try your best to avoid ambient sounds, like air conditioning, fans, lawn mowers, etc., but don't be discouraged if your toddler interrupts your live video. This is life and it will soften your image and make you more relatable as a person. Also, respect everyone's time and start talking when the 'recording' light flashes. You can do some small talk at first but don't just sit there drinking water or brushing your hair, waiting for people to tune in. People who are not viewing live will turn it off unless you find a way to capture their attention.

There was a time not too long ago when you could only go live in Facebook from your mobile phone, but times have changed and systems have greatly improved! Now you can use Live Leap to broadcast a single live event from your business page into every group you are an administrator of, and Zoom (with the webinar add-on) allows you to interview someone (or have them interview you!) with a side-by-side video view.

Now let's do some research on Facebook groups that attract your ideal reader that would welcome your message. Conduct this research in much the same way as you did with bloggers and podcasters.

Regarding these Facebook groups: you will need to pitch the group admins before going live and have a better chance of being approved if you are already an active part of the group. So many spammers or unscrupulous people join groups for the sole purpose of posting their sales links and hijacking threads with

their spam that group admins are very cautious about who they allow into their inner sanctum. Likewise, they are very quick to boot out anyone who spams, so you'll need to prove your value to them prior to going live.

Always, always provide value to the group. It's about them, not you and your book. Your viewers want to learn something from you, not hear a sales pitch. If your message resonates with them, the sale will be icing on the cake.

Researching Facebook groups couldn't be easier. Login to Facebook, click the Groups link in the left margin, and then click the Discover link. This brings up new groups based on groups you have already joined. If you're looking for something completely different, or you haven't joined any groups where your ideal readers are hanging out, use the search bar at the top of the page. Enter some keywords and results for groups and pages will appear. Some closed groups now ask you to answer 2-3 questions about why you want to join the group. It's best not to say, "I want to pitch my new book." Again, think of how your expertise can bring value to the group.

Continue this research outside of Facebook as well. Instagram allows live videos, too, and you may find some surprising groups or forums that may allow you to post a video message. Think locally as well. Are there groups in your town, city, or state that cater to your ideal reader? Maybe a live presentation is applicable in these situations.

Exercise: Research Facebook groups, online forums and local groups

Keywords that Describe Your Ideal Reader	Groups that Match these Keywords	Admin Names/Contact Info	Are You Already a Member?

STEP EIGHT: CREATE A PLAN

In exchange for helping you promote your book, your hosts and hostesses (i.e. bloggers/podcasters/other influencers who are featuring you on their sites) will want something in return. That usually means seeing some cross promotion of their blogs, podcasts, and social media links on your end.

You'll want to promote the dates of the book tour and where your newest content can be found to your own audience anyway, so definitely use your blog, email list, and social media following to promote these hosts who are graciously sharing their audience with you. By promoting your appearances on these host blogs and podcasts, you're showcasing your expertise and building your credibility as an expert. And, if you've done your audience research correctly, some people in your audience may benefit from reading or hearing one of your hosts. In a perfect world, if the audience response to you is enthusiastic, this could put a JV partnership into motion. You just never know what opportunities may arise if you plan properly.

Creating a calendar – either on your computer or in a simple desk planner – is the best way to organize your appearances and deadlines. Mark off the days you are <u>not</u> available for interviews and expect the hosts to offer some dates that they have available to publish your blog post or your interview. Many podcasters, for instance, only conduct interviews on certain days of the week. They may put you at the end of their current schedule, or they may ask you to step in if another guest cancels their interview.

One scheduling note: allow yourself enough time to create the content for each host, promote your appearance, and interact with their audience and followers. Only you will know if three, five, or 10 days is sufficient time in between guest appearances. There is something to be said about riding the wave of momentum by having appearances one right after the other, but you'll earn the respect of your hosts if you make a concerted effort to promote them and interact with their readers instead of just dashing away to your next booking. Answer all questions asked on your guest blog post. Reply to every single comment to acknowledge the commenters. This isn't about you; it's about helping them.

Exercise: Plan your order of appearances and promotional activities

Calendar of Events					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1					
Week 2					
Week 3					
Week 4					

Exercise: Check off each task as you complete it

Checklist		
Host name/contact info	 Content submitted Interview scheduled Link added to your website Email your list Promote via social media Engage with their audience on social media Send a thank you gift 	
Host name/contact info	Content submitted Interview scheduled Link added to your website Email your list Promote via social media Engage with their audience on social media Send a thank you gift	
Host name/contact info	 Content submitted Interview scheduled Link added to your website Email your list Promote via social media Engage with their audience on social media Send a thank you gift 	
Host name/contact info	Content submitted Interview scheduled Link added to your website Email your list Promote via social media Engage with their audience on social media Send a thank you gift	

Host name/contact info	 Content submitted Interview scheduled Link added to your website Email your list Promote via social media Engage with their audience on social media Send a thank you gift
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Host name/contact info	 Content submitted Interview scheduled Link added to your website Email your list Promote via social media Engage with their audience on social media Send a thank you gift

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