



How Sales and Marketing Work

Marketing is not a dirty word! We want your book to be read by as many readers as possible—that's why No Starch Press puts a special effort into the sales and marketing process. Your editor begins thinking about how we'll sell and market your book from the first day we sign the publishing agreement! And be warned, when your book goes to the printer, the work isn't quite over . . .

We hope that this document provides you with a solid introduction to how the sales and marketing process works and how you can help make your book a success. If you have ideas or questions, please contact us. Your suggestions and participation are truly invaluable. Just like the editorial process, the process of selling your book depends on an honest and open discussion between you (the author) and the staff at No Starch Press. Ask questions, tell us your goals!

Who Does What

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Publicity, reviews, press releases

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Publicity, reviews, press releases, copy

How's It All Fit Together?

Explaining Timing

It's important for you to understand the scheduling issues involved in promoting your book. Coordination is key with publicity; most books benefit from one big concerted push toward the end of the process. That said, there's plenty of planning and advance work that goes into a successful book launch.

Six to Nine Months Before Publication

Six to nine months before publication, No Starch has prepared a document called a tipsheet that acts as a sales summary of your particular book for book buyers at major bookstores like Barnes & Noble, as well as all the independent book buyers. These book buyers are book experts, not experts on your book's topic, so they need a high-level overview of what your book is about and who your readers are. Booksellers are most concerned with whether a book will sell in their stores or not—we make the case to them that your particular book will sell great, by listing related titles or demonstrating our track record in other areas. At this time, your book will also have a catalog page on *nostarch.com*, *Amazon.com*, and so on. The copy on these pages is not yet final and can be changed.

Three Months Before Publication

At this time, we have the skeleton of a marketing plan in place, including potential reviewers, likely media outlets, sympathetic organizations or groups, and the like. You've given No Starch Press a list of people you'd love to read the book.

You Shipped Your Book!

At this point, your production editor has sent final files to the printer, but you haven't yet seen the physical book. This is the busiest time for marketing, the calm before the storm. No Starch Press is now actively pitching reviewers on your behalf and preparing all the moving pieces of your book's launch, including the press release, mailing list announcements, forum posts, book videos, any other book assets or placements, and so forth. At this time, talk to your editor and marketing contact to coordinate the timing of all book-related promotions and what you'd love to see. Have a crazy promotion idea? Share it!

- **IMPORTANT! If you're attending any trade shows or conferences in the coming months, let us know well in advance, so we can prepare!**

Books Arrive!

Boxes land at No Starch Press, ready to be shipped to reviewers. We send dozens or even hundreds of review copies out to reviewers. The marketing efforts continue. Now the book is on the shelf, ready to be sold! As reviews come in, we'll share them with you (and our sales reps, in order to increase bookseller buy-in).

Distribution

Penguin Random House Publisher Services (effective August 1, 2017) is our distributor in the United States—No Starch Press is not a Penguin Random House imprint, but an independent company (owned by Bill).

Penguin Random House sales reps sell our books to a wide range of bookstores, including Barnes & Noble, regional chain stores, and key independent bookstores, as well as online bookstores like *Amazon.com* and *BarnesandNoble.com*. PRHPS also sells books in Canada, the UK, Europe, Australia, Southeast Asia, and South Africa. Curious who's selling your book in a particular region? Just ask.

We sell ebooks directly to customers on *nostarch.com* and *oreilly.com*; through resellers like *Amazon.com*, iBooks (Apple), Barnes & Noble (Nook), Google Play, and Kobo; and through subscription-based services like Safari, Skillsoft, and EBSCO. Our goal is to provide books to customers in the formats that they want (print or ebook), wherever they buy books or content.

Publicity

Many authors ask us how the review process typically works. Do we solicit reviews from newspapers, luminaries, notables, magazines, and websites, or do they come to us asking for the privilege? The answer is yes, on both counts.

As you're working with your editor on making an excellent book, your editor is talking with the No Starch marketing staff to develop a marketing plan that's specific to your book. As the plan develops, we'll ask you who your dream book reviewers are and which media outlets you'd love to see cover your book. We'll send out early copies (as PDFs or printed editions) of your book to reviewers where appropriate.

We will send a press release a few weeks before your book is available for purchase. This press release is blasted to our media contacts—literally thousands of reviewers and reporters. We'll receive media requests from these contacts.

A few weeks later—allowing enough time for the books to ship and for the reviewers to read them—we start following up with those who requested books in response to the press release. We ask about their plans to do a review, see if they want to interview you, and offer to provide more information or samples from your book (where appropriate). We will send reviews on to our sales reps to help get them excited about your book. We will also archive it on the reviews section of your book's page on our website and other sites (like Amazon). We'll be in contact about any major media that happens for your book, but don't hesitate to drop a line to ask how things are going.

Beyond Reviews

While published reviews are a great way to get the word out about your book, we may also reach out to the press to pitch story ideas or to get excerpts posted as articles. If you have ideas, or if you want to contact members of the press yourself, that's great. We'll keep you in the loop as we pitch and as your book gets coverage.

If you're willing to talk to the media as an expert on your book's topic, please let us know. We can get your name out there as a source and try to offer your insight as a resource to journalists.

In addition to media placements, we'll look for other ways to promote your book, such as reader contests. We welcome any creative marketing suggestions that you may have.

How You Can Help

You can do a lot to help promote your No Starch Press book! Here are a few suggestions.

- What are your book's unique assets? Do you have amazing photographs, a fun book video, "top 10 tips and tricks," useful code, a controversial opinion, or something else to offer to the media, as an article, story, or asset? Think about what the media would want and need to cover your book. Also think about what your book's readers might want to share with their friends or colleagues.
- Tell us where your audience lives and breathes online and off. Is it a mailing list? A forum? What professional associations should see your book? Geeks are self-organizing into communities on the Web—how do we find your readers? It may make the most sense for you to post directly to community-oriented sites or mailing lists, but we're happy to lend a hand.
- Work your contacts. If you know someone who can help promote the book—by writing a review, linking to the book's Amazon or *nostarch.com* page from a website, running a book giveaway contest, and so on—don't be shy about asking them for help! Positive reviews of your book on Amazon.com can go a long way, so be sure to ask your contacts to post their reviews there. No Starch is always happy to send more books to reviewers.
- Identify well-known industry figures, associations, and so on that can champion your book and influence its target audience. Share a list with No Starch so we can help contact them.
- If you have a blog, prepare articles or excerpts from your book in advance so that they're ready for your book's launch.
- Write a contributed article or guest post, become active in a user group, submit talks for consideration, and establish your voice in the community.

- Go to conferences or events. No Starch Press has a limited budget for pursuing speaking events on your behalf and simply can't vend at every trade show, but when you're already attending a trade show or conference, let us know—whether or not you've secured a speaking engagement. We can often arrange book signings with conference organizers or offer your book as a door prize for attendees.
- Talk to us about doing an O'Reilly webcast or consider a YouTube video. Do you have a talk that you've presented at a conference, or do you have a new topic related to your book that you would like to present?
- Join the GoodReads Author Program and connect with readers and fans. We can help by providing you with excerpts to post and by administering a giveaway on your behalf.

To summarize, please keep us informed, be available and responsive when we call or send you emails, and don't be afraid to talk up your book to everyone you know! We're always happy to contact folks on your behalf.

Translations

No Starch Press books have been translated into more than 30 different languages, and we work with many international publishers to license these translations. We will present your book to publishers via email and at book fairs and encourage them to translate it. If we sign a contract to translate your book, we will let you know. We'll share a copy of the finished translated work with you as well.

Did you get a request from someone to translate your book? Definitely share that with your editor, as it is often helpful to have a domain expert ready to translate your work when we're selling a particular language's rights.

We typically license translations to foreign publishing companies, *not* individual translators. This is so you can be paid.

If you hear from a foreign publisher who is interested in your book, or if you know that interest in your book's topic is especially strong in certain countries, please tell us.

Special Sales

We are constantly looking to expand the channels that sell our books. That includes "brick-and-mortar" stores, online resellers, catalogs, and ebook distributors, as well as direct sales to companies or organizations. If you have an idea for a place to sell your book, please let us know.

What do we mean, in particular?

We sell books about Arduino to electronics resellers like SparkFun and JameCo. We sell the *Manga Guide to Physics* to the Smithsonian Institute Museum Store; we sell our Blender book to the Blender Foundation; and we sell various LEGO titles to toy stores and other specialty stores. Do you know of an unusual place to sell *your* book? Tell us if you have ideas.

Frequently Asked Questions

Have any questions at all? Ask us.

When will my book be in stores?

Talk with your production editor and your developmental editor. Once your book is sent to the printer, it usually takes three to four weeks for the book to be printed and bound. If the book is printed in North America, it takes another week for the book to arrive at our warehouse. If it's a four-color book that is printed in Asia, it takes about eight to ten weeks for the book to arrive at our warehouse.

Once the book is in stock at the warehouse, we will ship customer orders placed on nostarch.com. You should receive your complimentary copies around that time as well.

It takes another one to two weeks for it to be in stock on Amazon.com, and two to three weeks for it to appear on shelves in bookstores like Barnes & Noble.

There's an error on Amazon.com or another website! What can I do?

If you find an error, please send us an email, and we will submit corrections to the relevant website. Please be patient, though. In a best-case scenario, changes will take three to five business days to appear; often they take longer. Amazon.com has a massive database, and it can be very difficult to get changes to take effect. It also receives data from many sources, so it can take time to locate and correct all of the inaccuracies.

I want to sell my book at events or online. How do I get more books?

You are more than welcome to sell your book wherever and however you can. We do ask, however, that you try to avoid undercutting or directly competing with our other vendors. Please contact us to order additional books. Your author discount is 60 percent off of the book's cover price. We will send you an invoice for the books plus shipping costs. The invoice will be due in 30 days, and we accept payment by check, credit card, or PayPal.

I want postcards or flyers! When should I ask for those?

Going to a conference or trade show? Great! Bring along some postcards or book flyers to distribute. It takes time to design and print them, so make sure you let us know *well in advance* of when you need materials like this.

I need additional books for my mom, my grandpa, and my next-door neighbor. How do I get more books?

You will receive a number of free books when your book is published. If you need additional copies for personal use, you can buy them from us at your 60 percent author discount. If the people in question are colleagues or professional acquaintances who you think could review the book, let us know, and we'd be more than happy to send extra free copies directly.

When will I get my royalty statement? My check?

Our royalty periods are January 1–June 30 and July 1–December 31. We send out royalty statements 60 days after the close of the period and checks 90 days after the close of the period. You can expect to receive your statements in early March and early September, and checks in early April and early October. If you have questions about your royalties or want to request payment by a method other than check, please contact your editor.

Do I earn anything on translations?

Yes! You will receive half of all income that we receive from translations, less any direct expenses such as taxes, commissions, and mailing costs. Depending on the license agreement with the foreign publisher, this will range from several hundred dollars to a few thousand dollars. You will see this revenue reported on your royalty statements.

How is my book selling?

If you can't wait for your royalty statement (we don't blame you!), please contact your editor for a sales update. We can generally tell you how many books we've sold to our accounts and how fast those copies are selling. Since it takes two to four weeks for your book to make its way onto store shelves after it's been printed, we will only have significant sales data for you starting two months or so after the book comes out.

What does the Amazon.com sales rank mean?

Not much, frankly. These ranks indicate relative sales volume, and they generally fluctuate pretty widely. A rank that is below 10,000 means that the book is selling pretty well by our standards, but the difference between a rank of 10,000 and a rank of 100,000 is usually no more than 10 books a week. The book's *Amazon.com* ranking is just one indicator of sales, and not a particularly reliable one at that. If you have specific questions about how many books have been sold by Amazon or by our other accounts, your editor can give you sales data periodically. Just ask.

I have an idea for a great place to sell my book! How can I make that happen?

Please let us know! Email the sales staff with your idea and they will pursue it. If you have contacts and would like to approach them yourself, go for it. Just let us know when it's time to send a sample copy or when the company is ready to place an order, and we'll take it from there.

I have an idea for a great place to review my book or run a story featuring my book! How can I make that happen?

We encourage all authors to work their personal contacts to secure media coverage. We are happy to get in touch with these people on your behalf, and we recommend that you send us a list (with email addresses and URLs, where possible) of all the potential reviewers/editors/writers you know personally or by reputation so that we can pitch them and send them marketing materials, such as a press release, book excerpt, author bio, and images.

Alternatively, if you already have relationships and would like to contact those people yourself, that's fine too. You can let us know the outcome, and we will send books to reviewers who request them. It is very important that you keep us posted on any interactions you have with the media or reviewers, however, so we can avoid duplicating efforts (and annoying folks!) by contacting the same people or others at the same publication. We also watch for coverage and follow up with the writer to make sure the review runs as expected, and we don't want to bother them with the same questions twice.

I know a couple of people who could review the book on their websites or blogs. How can I make sure they receive copies?

We're happy to provide free reviewer copies of your book to people who can review or otherwise promote the book. If the person's website or blog is not widely read, please encourage them to also post their review to Amazon.com, Slashdot, or other relevant larger sites. Please send any review copy requests to us so we can fulfill them.

Someone just contacted me about reviewing my book or interviewing me. What do I do?

The critical thing is to keep No Starch Press in the loop, whether you want to handle the inquiry yourself or hand it over to us to respond.

Summary

In closing, we're going to work hard to promote and sell your book. You also have an important role in making your book a success. We welcome any and all suggestions that you have for media to pitch, sales leads to pursue, and creative marketing strategies to implement, and we encourage you to talk up your book to the world.