

# 25 WAYS

## To a Great Book Launch



By Ross Rojek

You've written your new book and want to launch it with your best foot forward. After having worked with thousands of authors in the last 10 years, there are a number of key factors we've seen that help authors have a great launch.

Some of these ideas may not apply to every author and every book. But enough of them are common across almost every book and genre to help you with your new book.

### **1. Edit, Edit, and Edit Again**

You want any reader to see your best work. From the casual reader to a potential publisher or agent. Even if you're an English major or know you're a great writer, having a second set of eyes—particularly a professional set of eyes—will benefit you. Hiring a copy editor just to review final draft might find mistakes you're blind to, because you've read it so many times.

Editing is not just looking for spelling, but can also include:

- Syntax and grammar
- Inconsistencies
- Formatting
- Flow
- Image placement

### **2. Have a Great Cover Designed**

If you're self-publishing, most companies will offer a "free" cover design or an upgraded offer for an additional fee. However, most of their designs recycle the same images, fonts, and designs book after book. And, even if you know how to use Photoshop or Illustrator, designing covers is an art, not something you toss together in 30 minutes after spending 6 months or more working on your manuscript.

You may want to use a service like [99designs.com](https://www.99designs.com), where multiple designers will compete to get your business, or you can work with a single firm that should offer you more than one design concept before finalizing it. You should have a good idea of who your target reader is, to help your designer create a cover that will appeal directly to them. If your target market is older readers, you probably want to avoid smaller text or color combinations that might make it harder to read your title or back cover text.

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Your cover should also be easy to read from several feet away if you plan on printing the book. Can a potential reader see what your book is about when they see it on a bookshelf among other books in a store?

You can see more tips and some professional book designers here: [33 Book Cover Designers to Create Your Bestselling Cover by Scott Lorenz](#). City Book Review also does [book cover design](#).

### **3. Encourage Potential Readers to Visit Your Website**

Believe it or not, most authors just count on readers to find them, and don't encourage it. When a reader buys your book from Amazon, they are **Amazon's** customer, not **yours**. And trying to get information about them is very hard. Therefore, encourage them several times in your book to visit your website "For More Information, visit my website..." Add your website URL to the back cover and your copyright page. Even add an offer or call to action with it.

"Get a free bonus chapter from YourDomain.com"

"Get a free checklist that will help you follow my suggestions at MyDomain.com"

Potential readers on Amazon (and other online retailers) will be able to see and read your back cover without having to purchase your book. And, if you include your book in the Amazon "Look Inside" program (Tip #4), they'll also be able to see your copyright page. The goal is to get readers to visit your website and give you their email address, so you can let them know about your next book. Building your reader email list is one of the most important marketing tools you'll ever have.

### **4. Include a "Look Inside" Sample of Your Book**

Amazon makes this available to all authors, and it's an important tool. This is the online equivalent of being able to flip through a book on the bookstore self. Let them read the first couple of pages or the first chapter to get a feel for your story, your writing style, and if they're actually interested. The worst thing you can get is someone buying your book, finding out they don't like it and leaving you a bad review.

You can learn more about this in Kindle Direct Publishing's [Help section](#).

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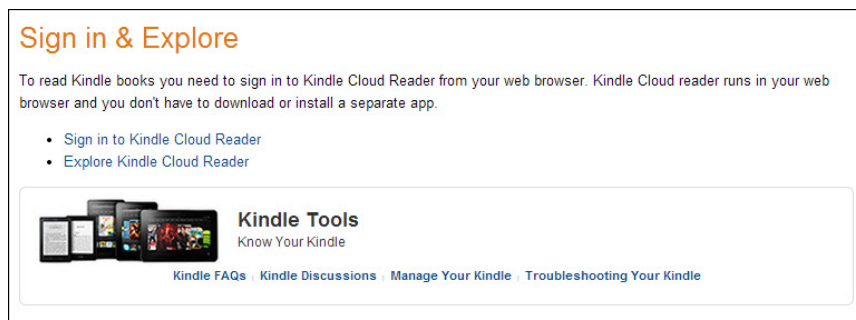
## 5. Create a Marketing Plan

Don't just leave your book sales to chance. Choose your methods with your target reader and the platforms they use in mind. Make a plan for:

- Pre-launch – Getting reviews and feedback; tweaking anything that needs to be edited, making last-minute changes before making your book go live.
- Launch – Plan to build up excitement and do your best to make your book launch successful
- Post-launch – Don't just let your book sit there once the initial excitement has waned. Plan promotions throughout the year, and take full advantage of your five give-the-book-away-for-free days if you've enrolled in KDP Select.
- Tie in promotions with seasonal holidays or national news, if appropriate.

## 6. Embed Kindle's Cloud Reader on Your Website

Many potential readers ignore Kindle books because they don't own a Kindle or don't know they can read Kindle books on their iPad, iPhone, or Android device — and they don't realize they can still download eBooks and read them right on their computer by installing the free [Kindle Cloud Reader](#).



How do you promote Kindle Cloud Reader? Write a "How to get it" post on your blog and/or upload a "How to get it" video on YouTube. Include a link to buy your book on that blog post or in your video description.

Someone interested in your book who doesn't want to pay for a physical copy might be interested and willing to purchase a lower-priced digital version.

## 7. Get Pre-Release Reviews

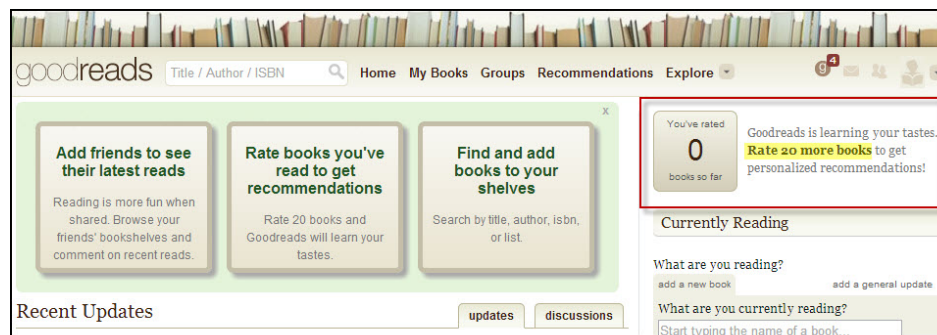
You probably want at least one professional editorial review from a recognized media outlet to use in several places for marketing. You can use your review(s) or pull-quotes from them on your front or back cover, on your book Amazon sales page in the Editorial Reviews section, and in your outreach marketing. A good review from a reputable book review company is social proof to new readers that someone thinks your book is worth buying and reading.

The three major outlets for pre-release reviews are [City Book Review](#), [Kirkus](#) and [Foreword](#). There are more, but these three have a lot of experience and aren't in the business of doing vanity reviews. See [Fee-For-Review versus Vanity Reviews](#) for more information.

City Book Review starts at \$199 for an 8-10 week turnaround and, for a review within 4-6 weeks, prices start at \$349 with their [Sponsored Review](#) program. They have multiple brands, so you can get more than one editorial review

Kirkus and Foreword start at \$499 for an 8+ week turnaround.

## 8. Use Goodreads



Make sure you create an author account at [Goodreads](#) early in the process. Join open groups related to your book's topic or genre and be active. Make an author page for yourself and add your book(s). Don't only talk about your book in groups. Be engaging and helpful, and people will notice.

Review and rate other books you've read and enjoyed. If you have a blog on your website, post it on Goodreads as well. Once you develop a circle of friends and acquaintances, approach them about your book, asking if they'd be interested in reading a pre-release copy of it. If they are interested, send it to them, and then follow up a week or two later for feedback. If they liked it, ask for a review both on Goodreads and on Amazon. If you have friends who have read

and enjoyed your book, also encourage them to go to Goodreads and review and rate your book as well.

### **9. Research and Contact Amazon Reviewers**

Search for books that are in your same genre and subject. Create a spreadsheet of the reviewers of those books, using the title of the book, reviewer name, and link to the reviewer's Amazon page. With this, you can sort your list by reviewer name and see the ones that are most active in your genre.

You want to find reviewer that will write more than one or two sentences and post something thoughtful, descriptive, and helpful. Luckily, Amazon will help you with that, as they let other readers say if a review is helpful or not.

Once you have your list (and you should try for at least 100 reviewers on your target list), then approach them individually and ask if they're interested in reviewing your book. You can send them your book as a gift (this will let it show up as a Verified Purchase).

### **10. Have at Least 5 Amazon Reader Reviews Before You Promote**

To really take advantage of how Amazon works, you really need to have some reviews (hopefully positive). You can only add editorial reviews to your book's Amazon page before its available, but once your book is available for sale, you can start getting customer reviews (except for books in the Vine program. They can get customer reviews pre-publication.).

If you aren't on Vine, your best bet is to line up several Day One reviews. Work with your Super Fans (you should have been developing fans via social media, personal appearances, and email newsletters). Several weeks before your scheduled release date, start prepping a few good readers to be ready and able to post their review of your book on your launch day. Remember that they can't be friends or family (Amazon seems to have a way of finding out), but regular readers you have a relationship with.

Getting those first few reviews is a great form of social proof for new readers. More reviews means more people are likely to take a chance on your book. And, the more reviews you have, the more likely it is that Amazon will help promote you in search results as well.

### **11. Sign Up for the Amazon Associates Program**

The Amazon Associates program not only helps you make a little more money on book sales, but it also provides you ways to track the effectiveness of your marketing. Once you create your Associates account, you can create tags for different marketing channels.

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You can use your affiliate link on your website and make at least another 4% on each sale (this increases as you sell more books). When you do a promotion online, give them a specific link using a tag to track how effective the marketing was going.

You can include customized Text links, Text-and-Image links, and “Image Only” links to your books. The Amazon Associates page provides tools to get you started.

You can sign up for the Amazon Associates program here: <https://affiliate-program.amazon.com>

And, as a bonus, anyone who clicks on your link gets a cookie set. So, if they purchase anything else on Amazon over the next 30 days, that counts to your commissions. One month, someone bought four commercial rice cookers after clicking on one of our links, and we made an extra \$80.

## **12. Create a Facebook Author Page for Your Book.**

Not only can you build a community and get a buzz going with your Facebook Page, you can also use it to display third-party app tabs leading to:

- Sample chapters
- Contests
- Email sign-ups

You should post new content once or twice a week on all your social media, but Facebook is the major channel to get new customers. You can find articles, pictures, memes, and videos that will be of interest to your readers and audience.

Answer questions about becoming an author, answer questions about your niche topic, and remember to acknowledge and thank people for interactions as you check in daily. This will keep your community well-nourished and happy.

## **13. Create a Contest**

Do this before or after your book is released, and base it on others sharing your book in some way – through social shares, reviews, “Liking” your Facebook Page, and so forth. There are contest tools that’ll help encourage people to share your contest with their friends and on their social media. Something like [King Sumo](#) is a good example.

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Make sure you offer something people really want as the prize (iPads seem to be the gift of choice on marketing forums, when people are asked).

#### **14. Create a YouTube Video**

You can talk about your book on camera or put together a presentation of slides from your book, a sound track, or images that boost your message. Make it short and impactful. (You can also demonstrate one point or method or tip from your book.)

You can spend just a little on a video that highlights quotes from reviews of your book or go all out and make a movie trailer-style video to really draw them in. City Book Review creates [book review videos](#) for authors and publicists that showcases their book in a way that gets it noticed on Internet search engines

#### **15. Upload a Presentation to SlideShare and Other Similar Sites**

This is another often-neglected method of promoting your book. Build the slideshow around your best keywords, and even include quotes and slides from your book, always keeping the focus on the topic – not on your book.

Finish off with an invitation to check out your book (include your Amazon link directly).

#### **16. Upload a PDF Summary and Reviews to PDF Sites**

If you've created a marketing kit (#19), upload it to different PDF sharing websites like [Issuu](#), [scribd](#) and [4shared.com](#). Not only can you share the content in your marketing kit, but you also get links to your website and book sales pages in the description of your page.

#### **17. Start a Genre Group on Goodreads**

Goodreads allows authors to create groups. Start one, not for your book, but for your genre or industry. Send invitations to list members and on your social networks. (Ask others to share the news.) Help direct conversations and welcome new members. Don't use this as a direct method for promoting your book, but as a way to increase your visibility and credibility.

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## 18. Don't Use Promotional Stickers on Your Digital Book Covers!

By “promotional stickers,” we mean banners running across your cover image with a “deal” or price emblazoned on or starbursts containing pricing or promotional information. It doesn't matter how well these stickers “work” as an in-store promotion, Amazon doesn't like them, and your book will suffer if you use them.

## 19. Make a Marketing Kit

You should have a marketing or press kit about your book and yourself available online and in print. When a media outlet requests your book (or you send it to them for consideration), you should always include a press kit. Your press kit should include, at a minimum, the following:

- **Author Bio and Contact Info** – You've be surprised how often authors don't include any information about themselves or how to contact them when they send out their books.
- **Press Release** – Even if you don't sent one out over the wire (#20), include one in your kit.
- **Sample Author Q&A** – What are questions you're most often asked, and what are your answers to them?
- **Information About Your Book** – What makes your book special?
- **Sample Reviews and Links to Media Appearances or Mentions** — Be creative with this. With the number of books that media outlets receive, often, the ones that stand out are the ones with the most innovative media kit.

## 20. Send Out a Press Release

A press release might set you back \$250, but a well-written release can nab you some media attention. You want to have one or two good pull quotes from reviews of your book, a good tie to either local news or an interesting national story (if possible), and a compelling reason for an editor to follow up with you about your book. Find a hook that helps you stand out from the crowd. And make sure you include at least one or two anchor text optimized links back to your website or sales page that will help with your search results.

If your book has been reviewed by City Book Review and received Four or Five stars, you can save \$50 off their [press release service](#).

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## 21. Don't Neglect Your Local Market

Send out press releases to local media presenting your book release as a “Human Interest” or “Local Interest” story, rather than a blowing-your-own-horn story. Tie your book or yourself to the local area with a hook that your local media can appreciate and use.

If your book is printed, send a review copy of your book to your local and nearest “big city” arts and entertainment editors. (Check to see if there is a particular person in charge of book reviews.) Send it to your local librarian and other key people in your niche. Offer to do a book signing for your local independent bookseller, if you can convince them to carry your book. Or give a (niche-related) workshop at your local library. You can do this even if yours is a Kindle book – but it works better if you have copies of physical books.

## 22. Always Be Building Your Email List

Have multiple places on your website that ask for visitors to sign up on your email list. Don't spam your subscribers or add people who haven't asked to be included, but never hesitate to ask people if you can add them.

You can use a tool like [Sumo List Builder](#) to create a popup on your website to get your visitors' attention and combine it with a reason to sign up, such as free sample chapter of your book, an exclusive novella, or a checklist that's relevant to your audience. This article itself is designed to help collect author email addresses.

To send out your newsletters, use a service like Mail Chimp to handle it. It's easy to use, ties in to your website (or your Sumo List Builder), and will also manage your unsubscribes. It's more professional than just sending your announcements via your normal email program and including everyone in the TO field. And you can make more than one list – have a list for your readers and another for reviewer and editors that have expressed interest in your book.

## 23. Create a Google Hangout on Air

This live-streaming video will be automatically recorded on YouTube. You can also do a Facebook Live event; however, better exposure and automatic indexing by Google and YouTube make Google Hangouts the better option.

Anything from a simple “Meet the Author” hangout to invited guests that can bring to life the subject of your book is possible. Find what you're comfortable with and do it. Live Hangouts aren't supposed to be edited or use slick sets or backdrops. They're for conversations that anyone can take part in, and you should enjoy it. Invite your friends and family to view it for extra traffic and fun. Once it's over, your message will quickly be indexed and included in YouTube and Google.

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## **24. Do Some Launch Day Advertising**

Use [Book Bub](#) or Shelf Awareness to get some consideration. There are a number of Facebook or Reddit groups that promote free or discounted books, which can help for reviews and potential readers, but focus on services that have readers interested in buying books, not just getting them for free. You can advertise on book- or subject-related podcasts, newsletters, and websites.

If you have a very focused book, try some Google or Facebook ads aimed at the demographic that's most likely interested in your book. Combine this with your Amazon Affiliate tags (#11), which allows you to see which advertising platforms performed the best and which didn't.

John Wanamaker (1838-1922), department-store magnate, once said, "Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is, I don't know which half." Your affiliate tags will answer that question.

## **25. Consider Hiring a Publicist**

While publicists can be expensive, you can actually find them for almost any budget. A good publicist will take care of promoting you and your book to the media and book review outlets. They can get you scheduled for interviews around the country, find review outlets you don't know about and help organize your marketing efforts.

A publicist typically doesn't focus on helping you sell your book, but good publicity leads to book sales. And if you are writing more than one book, sales of your most recent book usually helps sell your previous books to your newly acquired readers.

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### About the Author

Ross Rojek spent 15 years in retail sales, working from having one store to more than ten over his career and was an early online retailer. Since 2008, he's been helping authors market their books through City Book Review along with his wife, Heidi, who takes his ideas and makes them look good (much like this ebook). City Book Review started with the Sacramento Book Review and grew to include Manhattan, San Francisco, Seattle and Kids Book Buzz. It's also been licensed to the Portland, San Diego, and Tulsa markets.



If you need more help with your book, marketing or website, you can find Ross and Heidi at [CityBookReview.com](http://CityBookReview.com).