

## **Introduction**

Events are a potentially great way to increase exposure and sales. The events discussed here require a lot of work in preparation for the happening. Some events may also require funding.

Topics to be explored in this chapter include:

- ◆ Physical launch party
- ◆ Webinars
- ◆ Twitter chats
- ◆ Video chats
- ◆ Online launch party
- ◆ Book giveaways
- ◆ Physical book events

These activities will be problematic for many authors because events are quite different from the other marketing tactics. Many of the events will require personal appearances and public speaking. This can be a traumatic experience for first time authors if the author is:

- 1) shy or introverted.
- 2) not accustomed to public speaking.

For those authors, I can offer some advice. Never forget, you are the expert on the book you are speaking about. No one in the room knows as much as you do. No matter how nervous you are, talk and act like an expert and you have a great chance of getting through the event. You may even learn that you enjoyed the experience.

If this isn't enough, I'd recommend you join an organization such as Toastmasters <https://www.toastmasters.org>.

## **Physical Launch Party**

A physical launch party is usually held for print books since the main purpose is to sell copies of the book. <https://blog.bookbaby.com/2018/10/10-tips-for-hosting-a-successful-book-launch-party/> has a number of tips on hosting such a party.

The date of the party is selected to coincide with the book's availability date. This requires a bit of advanced planning and organization. For instance, prior to the date, you will have to order a supply of books to sell at the event. Since this is a 'party,' it is customary to have refreshments at the event. This could be pastries and soda or wine and cheese.

In the case of traditionally published books, the launch party is usually held in a book store and is organized by the publisher. If your book is self-published, you will have to do this. Probably, local books stores won't be interested in hosting your party unless you have name recognition from some other activity such as being a war hero, a famous politician, a notorious felon and so forth. Without the claim to fame, the book store will rightfully conclude you won't attract a crowd and hence, it won't agree to allow you to hold the event in the store.

In this case, the next best thing is to hold it in a local library. Libraries are more open than book stores to allowing self-publishing authors to hold such events. The library will also promote the event in their newsletters or email announcements.

Once the event starts, the author becomes the focus of everyone's attention. This can be traumatic for shy authors who aren't used to speaking in public. In the case of a novel, the event usually consists of the author reading scenes from the books. Personally, I hate to read scenes aloud! I find it boring to me and to the audience. I prefer to talk about the novel's background and the main characters. Non-fiction books are a lot easier to talk about than a novel. Presumably, the non-fiction book addresses a problem unless it is a memoir or a biography. If it addresses a

problem the author can talk about the problem and how the book solves the problem.

After the reading, the audience — in theory — lines up to throw money at the author in return for a signed copy of the book. This may or may not happen. Being an author is a tough job.

### **Webinars**

If you have a non-fiction book other than a memoir or a biography, you can hold a webinar. Rather than simply pitching the book, you provide information or a demonstration about solving a problem, a problem that is addressed in the book. To use the example of a book about plumbing repairs, the webinar could explain how to repair a leaky faucet.

To host a webinar you will require an online application that allows you to share the screen. This will permit you to show slides or videos to your audience. Without this screen sharing capability, the webinar will consist only of your mugshot and whatever you can hold up in your hands.

Besides the application software, you will have to promote the webinar in order to attract an audience. Your social media accounts will be useful for this purpose. In your posts, you will have to announce the time and a URL link.

At the conclusion of the event, show a copy of your book, either physical or virtual and provide by-links where the audience can grab a copy. You can also offer a deal for a limited time discounted offer.

With a memoir, the webinar is about the person in the book. You. If you aren't famous or notorious, the webinar will have a limited appeal may people. The same is true about a biography.

Hosting a webinar for a novel is different and difficult for the same reasons mentioned under the launch party section.

### **Twitter Chats**

Twitter chats are a unique way to engage with others on the social media platform. A chat can be organized around almost any topic but it should have some connection with the book you are selling.

There is a lot of material on the web about how to organize a Twitter chat so I won't repeat it here. You can visit this website to learn how to do it and to see if this type of event is something you want to do: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/a-step-by-step-guide-to-twitter-chats/>

### **Video Chats**

A video chat is similar to a webinar but is less formal and is more suitable for a novel. You'll need a chat software application such as Zoom, Google Hangout, Facebook Live or a different one. You'll also need a promotional plan to spread the word about the event.

During the event, you can talk to the audience similar to what you would do for a launch party. You can also have a question and answer session.

As with webinars, show a copy of your book at the end, either physical or virtual and provide buy-links where the audience can grab a copy. You can also offer a deal for a limited time discounted offer.

### **Online Launch Party**

If your book is an ebook only, you can choose to hold an online launch party. This is similar to a webinar or a video chat, except it is held to celebrate the ebook's availability. Instead of providing refreshments, you can offer gifts such as a free copy of the book, or some swag you ordered in advanced. The swag could include keychains, coffee mugs and so forth. This of course will involve postage costs. One way to implement this part of the party is to use Etsy to buy and ship the swag. [WWW.etsy.com](http://WWW.etsy.com).

The launch party will have to be organized in advance and you'll have to promote the event on social media including the party's URL.

Here is a link to an article on virtual launch parties: <https://authorunlimited.com/blog/virtual-book-launch>.

Here's a link with creative ideas for the launch party: <https://www.peerspace.com/resources/creative-book-launch-ideas>.

### **Book Giveaways**

One way to gain readers is to give away copies of your book. Giveaways are different from running an ad promoting a book that is free. Giveaways are much more targeted.

There are a number of reasons to run a giveaway. First, some of these readers may post a review. Second, the giveaway may enable you to grow your list of emails. Third, it increases your name recognition. Finally, it can lead to future sales.

If you give away a print book, you'll incur both production and postage costs in getting the books from the packager, and then you'll have more postage costs when you send it out. If you give away an ebook, it doesn't cost you anything. Ebooks don't have production costs and they don't have postage requirements. However, print book giveaways will attract more interest; especially if you sign the book with the reader's name.

Here are a few ways you can give away the book.

You can write a blog post stating that you're giving away X copies of your new book in a random drawing to people who sign up via an email form. You can use Mailchimp for this effort. Mailchimp has a simple email signup form you can use and you'll get a notice every time someone fills out the form. At the end of the signup period, select the winners and attach the ebook to an email. Ask the winners to write a review if they enjoy the book.

Spread the word about your giveaway on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and wherever else you have accounts.

You can commission an online raffle using a site like Rafflecopter: <https://www.rafflecopter.com>. This site has a paid monthly subscription plan. Sign up for it if you plan to run a lot of raffles, otherwise use its free trial offer. Use your social media accounts to promote the raffle.

If you have your book on Smashwords, you can change the price of the book to a free download and run this sale for a limited period of time. Promote the freebie using social media.

If you have your book on Kindle and it's enrolled in Kindle Select you can offer your book for free five days in every quarter. Promote the offer using social media.

The disadvantage of using Smashwords and Kindle as the way to give away your book is you don't know who downloaded it. In this case, your chances of gaining reviews are next to nothing. A reason for this is the capacity of ereaders. It is virtually unlimited. Readers can (and many do) download every interesting free book they come across. They may read your book some day, but that day could be far into the future. In other words, the benefits of this book giveaway are marginal at best.

Another tactic many authors use is to permanently list their book as a free download. I don't believe this action has any benefits. An author should want to sell his book, not give it away forever. Running an occasional giveaway has some benefits to the author. Offering a permanent free download has few, if any, benefits.

### **Physical Book Events**

Ebooks are sold almost exclusively on the internet. Print books are sold via the web, in bookstores and at events you attend or organize. Libraries are another potential market for print books.

### *Book stores*

Book stores are a tough nut to crack for self-published authors, especially if it's a first book and the author has no name recognition. Most book stores in this country use Ingram as their distributor. If your book is distributed by Ingram, is returnable and has the industry standard discount (55%) there is a chance book stores will order your book and put it on their shelves for a while. However, book stores will not know about the book's existence unless you tell them about it. Contacting book stores one at a time is a mind-numbing activity, especially if you pursue out-of-area and out-of-state book stores. The only cost-effective way to query these stores is by using email.

Just because your book isn't on a shelf in a book store doesn't mean the store can't order a copy if a customer requests one. Barnes & Noble and other book stores can order a print copy of the book just by entering the ISBN number or the book title into their computer system. Within a few days, the book will arrive ready to be picked up by the customer who ordered it.

If your print book packager is Kindle, there is no, nada, zip, zilch, not-a-prayer of the book store ordering a copy of the book to put on its shelves. Kindle will not allow returns, and that is a deal breaker as far as the book store is concerned. Although the book store won't put the Kindle book on its shelves, it can and will order a copy if a customer requests it.

Assuming you get books into a book store, does that mean the store will arrange a book signing or a launch party for you? Probably not. If you're an unknown author, the book store owner may feel he is wasting his time because few people will come in to see and hear an author they never heard of.

### *Libraries*

Most libraries rely primarily on Baker & Taylor as their distributor, but they will also use Ingram. If your book isn't distributed by one of these two

companies, you have very little chance of getting the book onto library shelves unless you give them a free copy.

Once you get the book into a library (start with your local ones), ask if they will arrange a book reading and signing. A library may be more receptive to the signing than a book store will be. They'll usually put a blurb into the local paper, thus increasing your exposure. Make sure you have a supply of books to sell. This should be a budget item that you fund if you have a print edition of your book.

Some libraries may want a slice of revenue if they allow you to sell books at the reading. My experience is they'll want ten percent of whatever you make. I think it's a great deal. Libraries need all the financial help they can get.

### *Consignments*

Consignment selling means the book store (or the local drug store) will take copies of the book, but the store will not order them. They will only accept copies of the book that you order and pay for. This relieves the book store from initially paying for the books and handling returns later on. In other words, it improves their cashflow and transfers inventory management to the author.

Under consignment deals, the book store will keep a percentage of all book sales and the author gets what's left. Typically, the book store will want 25% to 40% of the sale revenue.

A consignment deal typically will last three to six months. At the end of the period, you settle the payment issue and walk away with the unsold books under your arm and a check in your pocket. If some books were sold, the book store may agree to renew the deal.

Consignment selling requires a contract that is signed by the author and the store. The contract will contain the book title, number of books in the deal, the book price and the store's percentage of sales.

You can find blank contracts at a number of websites including Legalzoom: <https://www.legalzoom.com> and Rocketlawyer: <https://www.rocketlawyer.com>

There is one thing to keep in mind with consignment deals: ask whether your book will be displayed on a shelf or dumped in the storage room where no one will ever see them. If your books are slated to go into storage, you may want to rethink the consignment deal.

### *Book Events*

Book events are gatherings such as book fairs where readers go to peruse tables staffed by authors and loaded with their books. These are often run by libraries, at least around where I live.

Other book events are street fairs and flea markets. In these you may have to rent a table from the event's organizers. That means for you to make a profit on the event, you first have to sell enough books to cover the cost of the table.