



How to Become Your Own Publicist

My name is Ella Curry and I am the owner of EDC Creations Media Group. We specialize in marketing and promoting authors with the use of Web 2.0 technology. Everything that I am about to share with you, are tried and true measures I used to promote my company and my clients.

During this online workshop, I will discuss creating a publicity timeline of your book release, using technology to become your own publicist and everything that goes with marketing and promoting your book—reaching your readers, touring online and off-line, special social networking mediums, building partnerships, how to track promotions, and exploring new options that can provide an increase in sales. This document is the handout. Please adjust the zoom, for your viewing pleasure. I will post more detailed explanations on the actual conference site. Ask any questions that you may have in the comment section below. Over the course of the next few days, I will post valuable links and reference tools to validate the things I am saying in the handout.

What is a Publicist you may ask?

A publicist is a person whose job is to publicize information or events; often hired to promote a cause, individual, or product by generating free advertising (by bartering) and publicity. Publicity means to have essays, editorials, articles or interviews in newspapers and magazines, and to have interview segments on Radio and TV, or on the Web. My goal today is to give you a summary of what it takes to become your own publicist. This is by no means the end all be all of publicity work. EDC Creations offers 13 weeks of coaching to cover the material fully. However, determination, a willingness to learn and the passion for writing will prevail.

Your goal as a publicist is to share information with the public that will benefit you as the author. Before you can start working as your publicist, there are a few things that need to be determined, such as: 1) the marketing message. Determining what information is important to share about the author, the book and what this book will do for the target audience; 2) defining who the audience is, what they see, and how to reach them effectively; and 3) ways to distribute viral information while attracting new customers and retaining the older readers. I will give more details on these as we move along.

As your own publicist, you and your dream team will identify which bits of information are worthy of coverage, by the media, book clubs, and/or bloggers. Many people are not aware that the media is also a part of their target audience. The media is the primary group to receive the author's information and they decide how, when and if to distribute it to their audience, fan base, subscribers, readers, listeners or viewers. Reach out to them in the first leg of promotions.



Today the media sources now include bloggers, Internet ezines, professional newsletter editors and Internet radio hosts. Include these people in your target audience.

Once you have determined the basis for the three things named above, the next step is determining the information which will be given to the public to help promote and sell the author and the book. This information will also become part of the "branding" of the author and playing a pivotal part in future marketing strategies.

The media— radio, newspapers, magazines, TV, Internet publications, RSS feed readers— provide distribution for the marketing message, marketing materials and any other information deemed for the target audience. You can become your own publicist by laying a strong foundation, creating a dynamic marketing plan, preparing professional marketing materials and by building lasting relationships.

The most important areas to cover as your own publicist are:

1. The Importance of Developing a Pre-Release Marketing Plan
2. How to Target, Reach, Maintain and Retain Readers
3. How to Implement a Media Outreach Campaign
3. How to Build a Strong and Lasting Brand

I want to repeat: The information that I'm going to share with you today, is merely laying the framework for you. You will have to spend time doing your research, brain-storming with your network and looking deep inside yourself to become your own publicist. To become your own publicist, you will have to be able to accept the word NO and not become offended, prepare for change and become flexible, be focused and dedicated to the cause. It takes alot of determination and follow-up to become a successful publicist for yourself or others.

LAYING YOUR FOUNDATION

Authors, to become a top seller you need a great book or product. But a great book doesn't lead to success by itself. You need to have a strong foundation backing the book and powerful relationships to create the buzz surrounding the book and you!

I learned three things about marketing that have been the foundation for EDC Creations: 1) You can have the right product or service, for the wrong market and not reach your goals. 2) You can have the right product or service, for the right market and still fall short because no one knows you exist or your marketing message wasn't clear. 3) You can reach the highest peaks and wake up one day to find that the market has vanished or changed and you haven't followed suit. You have to stay focused on marketing at every stage of the game.

The perfect book to read about this subject is: *Who Moved My Cheese* by Spencer Johnson, MD. This is a must read for any business owner or author! My company has grown by leaps and



bounds because I spend a great deal of time adapting and creating change. I also recommend that you read *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz. You will need both of these books to develop characteristics needed for a public relations representative.

The first step that I take with my EDC Creations coaching clients is to have a session where we look at the strengths and weakness of the author, the book and their lifestyle. In order to effectively launch any campaign, you have to recognize what you already have, what you need and what you can eliminate. Keep in mind the list I am about to give you is an outline, but here are the things you need to have in place to lay your book promotion foundation:

∴ Determine if you want to be a bestselling author or a top selling author! Also determine if you can really afford to become either one! Set reachable goals at first. Determine your long term goals and how you can reach them. Think about the legacy your book will leave behind for future generations.

∴ Have a full, open and honest view of what you have to spend, how much time you can dedicate to your campaign, what you need help with and what areas you are not really strong in at this time. Determine if you need training in using the Internet and Desktop Publishing applications.

∴ You will need a pre-book release marketing, publicity and selling plan. Include in these plans, a system to gauge your marketing successes, performance, sales and advertising results.

∴ A Web 2.0 Internet presence is essential, complete with social networking, content distribution and a means to build your database. Web 2.0, to sum it up, means interaction with your readers. We will discuss this later in the comments.

∴ Well prepared, edited, attractive marketing and promotional materials and ways to distribute them after completion, are fundamental to book promotions.

∴ A marketing strategy that leaves room for growth, new developments and that will include products, services and speaking engagements stemming from the book, is a vital part of your foundation.

Authors, by skipping steps, neglecting to thoroughly research your industry and your market, you are short changing the key components that help you become a bestseller. You can skip them now, but in the end you will spend unnecessary money and waste valuable time. Yes, it is time consuming to study and research, but it is so worth it as you reach readers who are waiting to ready your book.



A sad reality is many self-published authors don't realize the importance of these keys until it's too late. Fifty percent of my clients come to me after taking a huge loss because they didn't do their homework. Why not start out with a plan clearly in your mind, including the need for setting up a "publicity and selling plan" before the book hits the shelves. A weak or non-existent foundation will make or break you!

Here are Ella's 3 Marketing and Publicity keys, which I want you to always keep in mind: Pick the right target market, determine the best way to reach them and make everyday a learning experience. Let me break these down:

Pick the right target market. This audience may expand and it may change, but at least start off with the correct group of readers. You may have a non-fiction book that can solve many problems for a wide-ranging set of readers or you may have a fiction book that would appeal to a lot of folks, but you are not going to be able to reach everyone at the same time. Some readers will be more ready to buy from you than others. You also need to know how to reach this audience. You need to know before hand: do they shop online, will they come out to poetry readings, will they pay \$50.00 for a conference, where do they hang out online, etc.

Research your market and pick your niche, before you start spending big bucks. It is better to have a small supportive group, than a mass collection of people who think you are the worst spammer on the Internet! When picking this target audience, think outside the box. Do not focus entirely on one group to become your supporters. Find all the audiences who would like the subject matter, plot, writing style, genre, environment and overall message of your book.

Once you find out what your target audience likes to read, you must read the same materials. Use sites like Mashable and BlogCatalog to find new markets. Shelfari, Amazon's Listmanias and other reader based sites will also give you a good idea of what people are reading.

You have to get inside the mindset of your readers for a moment. Go to your local bookstore and look at the book covers and the shelf placement for your genre. This will give you a start. Visit social networks or communities where your readers are hanging out. To use this group or community for publicity, see if you can contribute articles or do a link exchange with them to obtain a spotlight. Networking is a key factor in your marketing efforts. Networking should be free, but involves bartering too. One sure fire way to find out where your audience is located, is to go find the bestselling author in your genre. Visit their website, fan-clubs and Google their names. You will now have the best path to your future readers. The object now is to create something so phenomenal that they can now see you too!

Determine the best way to reach your potential market. When you've done your market research and created a good product for the right market, it is easy to believe the readers are just waiting to buy your book. It doesn't usually work out this way. Don't follow that trickle down



methodology, thinking I will reach millions and hope thousands will buy my book. Don't think because your book is on a shelf in a bookstore your work is done—it has only begun!

Don't wait on your publisher to help or the book stores to promote you. You will have to define your audience, if you are going to invest time and money into a project. The age, education, location, financial status and social class of your readers may have a lot to do with how they will go about purchasing or finding out about your book. For example: if you were to create a book, right now, exclusively for Kindle, with no other distribution. You would miss out on several readers who have poor vision, who do not like ebooks, who can't afford the Kindle or they may not have accepted the change in times. Whereas, if you use diverse distribution outlets, the Kindle could become a valuable tool for reaching those readers that travel a lot, but don't like the clutter of books, magazines and newspapers in their bags. For the techno-savvy and gadget addicts, your book may become a bestseller overnight! You have to keep an open mind, prepare for change, but truly know who you are trying to reach and where they shop, live, socialize and share information.

Stay alert and be ready to adapt, even when your business is growing by leaps and bounds. Learn something new each day! Promote you and your book to at least 5 new people or networks each week. Explore the web or read a new book relating to your market or project. You do not want to become yesterday's news. Keep things current!

Read people, read and be aware of what's going on all around you. You'll be prepared to get the word out about your new offerings in the most viral and effective way possible if you educate yourself. My advice is to set a Google alert on key words valuable to you. That way any time new information comes out, you have it at your disposal. Don't believe your own hype and get complacent when you've achieved some amount of success. The market could change faster than you expect.

Be prepared to adapt your marketing strategy and to reach a new segment of the book buying world. Find out what information or entertainment they want, and provide it. This is the best way to get more traffic, publicity and business for you and to increase your book sells.

If you provide something of great value, that there is a need for, rather than something the market is flooded with, you stand a greater chance of standing out. You have to network, stay visible and vocally to become a top seller. Don't get caught sleeping!

Okay, I have preached my marketing sermon, let's get down to the business of laying your foundation! I will expand upon the following topics in my comment posts.



Pre-release Publicity Plan-the Foundation

Decide from day one, how much money and time you are going to invest in this project!

For the first few months do not deviate from the plan. Stay focused and determined. If you run out of funds or get low on funds, you had better get real creative! Use publicity and not advertising to get the book out there.

Determine a realistic budget you can stick to.

Without good research authors don't know how much money they should be spending on promotions. Do your homework! Organization and prioritizing are very important.

Develop your marketing and sales message

- Create your pitch. Be able to sum up your book in 1 minute
- Create your talking points
- Create a sell sheet and press kit
- Create audio and video presentations for you and the book
- Write mock interview questions and answers
- Create posters, fliers, business cards and brochures
- Determine what your brand is based upon
- What is the overall message you want to convey to readers

Create a strong Internet presence.

Every author needs a website. If you can't afford a designer, obtain a free website. Your website should be constantly updated with new material, events and news. Add a blog to your website so that you will have fresh content for your readers.

Website Development

- Buy a unique domain name
- Host a chat on your site
- Create a media center on your site
- Create a fan club center on the site
- Offer tips and advice for others
- Offer frequent freebies to website visitors
- Register your site with search engines
- Create a Goggle calendar and keep events updated
- Post a news feed from one of your other sites or your newsletter
- Sell your books from your site with a gift to people who purchase from you
- Link all your other profile pages on the sitemap of your main website



Search Engine Optimization

- Submit to search engines
- Label all webpages correctly in the browser
- Make sure meta tags are added to your website's design
- Add your key words in the first paragraph of every post
- Tag and categorize your blog posts
- Get Google Adwords
- Submit all newly created pages to the search engines

Networking on the Internet

- Join the major social networking communities
- Create accounts on major social media networks
- Building relationships with other members
- Create profiles that are mini versions of your websites
- Create a dream team of supporters
- Join a banner exchange or web ring program
- Utilize Blog Talk Radio, LinkedIn, Twitter, Utterli and Izania
- Provide quality content and not constant promotions
- Have banners and graphics created with your book for your postings

Publicity Builders

- Create a online media kit
- Use blogging and blog subscribers
- Use RSS feeds to syndicate content
- Become a Internet reporter
- Write ebooks and how-to-guides
- Run contests and writing challenges
- Start a online magazine or ezine
- Write frequent, news worthy press releases
- Do Internet radio interviews
- Write for Internet publications
- Write editorials and opt-in pieces for your local newspaper
- Write free articles for directories
- Comment constantly to the posts of others
- Tag all blog comments and post
- Join in the Amazon Communities
- Create viral YouTube videos



- Create a news worthy and information filled newsletter; not a promotion
- Submit to Associated Content weekly
- Pay for PR Leads
- Participating on Twitter, Utterli, Shelfari, ShoutLife and Second Life

Email Marketing Campaigns

- Build an opt-in list and start a newsletter
- Create a Feedblitz and Feedburner account
- Agree to promote with other authors by adding each other to newsletters
- Provide quality content; use free article sites
- Archive your newsletters and include them on your website sitemap
- List your newsletter in your signature and on all profiles
- Add your newsletter sign-up box on all profile pages and social networks
- Turn your blog into a syndicated newsletter
- Get Talk Fusion to send video emails
- Let your signature and auto-responders create the latest news
- Develop a eMagazine and add it to RSS feeds to be emailed to subscribers
- Collect emails and business cards at every event-add to your database
- Take a course in viral writing or research it online

Cross Promotions, Affiliate Programs and Referrals

- Ask readers to refer you to others by posting their reviews online
- Partner with other authors for tours online and offline
- Reward your dedicated readers with free gifts, exclusive excerpts, or discounts
- Create a street team online or offline to promote you in their city
- Create affiliate programs to provide syndication for your ebooks or content
- Mentor other new authors and share reader information
- Endorse other books by sending reviews or blurbs
- Buy tradeshow tables with other authors

Prepare Your Book Promotion and Publicity Timeline

In the book publicity business, timing and a quality product is really everything. Having plenty of time to publicize your book is essential when launching a new book. If you wait until the last minute you could miss valuable opportunities because you were not prepared. Before you start hashing out the plan keep these things in mind:



- Your publisher is not solely responsible for your promotions
- Think beyond getting your book on bookstore shelves
- Think beyond book reviews from majors, seek your peers
- Think local publicity and media sources first
- Stay tuned to Current Affairs: be in the know
- Promote what your book does for the Reader first
- Promote your expertise and your book second in interviews
- Become more of a writer than an author. Get PR Leads

Build your media contact list. And remember what I said early about the new media people out there. Find your local radio stations, newspapers, and magazines, blogs and visit their websites or call and get the editors name. Introduce yourself and put their name in your database. Do this for each medium you intend to reach. Research any person or media source that you intend to contact and fully understand what it is they offer their audience. They have a brand to protect, like you have a brand to build!

Creating the Publicity Timeline

I am about to give you the generic, publicity timeline. You need to develop a more customized timeline to fit your book and the format the book is released in. Go to Midwest Review's website and explore it to your heart's content. They have a vast source of information. Also explore Dan Poynter's site.

6-8 months in advance of publication date (or longer if possible):

Establish your marketing plan. Solicit long-lead magazine coverage (monthly magazines, journals, quarterlies, such as: Essence and Cosmo) Start reaching out to your immediate network for blurbs and peer reviews, start gathering email addresses from the people around you or at events you attend. Build relationships with these people. Look at the list on EDC Creations eMagazine of all the literary events coming. Prepare for the ones you want to attend. Save money for book promotions and travel.

4-6 months in advance of publication date:

Solicit coverage with book and library trade magazines, major reviewers, and larger major national shows; start building your social network connections. Plan your release parties and Internet book launch. Post articles, blog, start speaking as an expert on subjects and give your book information and potential release event. Refine and execute your marketing plan. Make travel plans. Book your virtual book tours and start preparing the material for the process.

1-2 months in advance of publication date and beyond:

Solicit interviews for your network. Ask other authors to cross promote with you. Partner with others to run contests. Start attending events to network. Work to obtain print media coverage in newspapers, news services, newsletters, internet media, as well as broadcast - radio and television



– media. Start your virtual tour discussing your book. Start your pre-sale contests and promotions. Put into effect your selling plan. The week of the book release, turn it out! You should show up all over the Internet! Make sure to blog about every place you go and to keep a great calendar on your site. Always, always add links to your site for the people who are hosting you!

Tracking the Results of Publicity Campaign and Advertising

- Add Sitemeter to your website and blog
- Learn how to analyze the back room statistics of your website
- Keep track of the costs in marketing and promotions
- Did interview or guest speaking engagements increase
- Did you gain more new clients or customers
- Was more web traffic generated
- Did sales increase or expand your territory
- Did search engine rankings improve

Books to purchase for your research:

- Who Moved the Cheese by Spencer Johnson, MD
- Do Less Achieve More by Chin-Ning Chu
- The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz
- African American Guide to Writing and Publishing Non-fiction by Jewell Parker Rhodes
- How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie
- The Complete Guide to Self-publishing by Tom and Marilyn Ross
- 1001 Ways to Market Your Books by John Kremer
- The Savvy Guide to Book Publicity by Lissa Warren
- The Writer's Market and The Christian Writer's Market

This may all seem like a vast amount of work and appear to be overwhelming, but it isn't. You will need a great marketing and publicity plan and it all falls into place. All it takes is the will, faith and sheer determination. I did it, you can too! If you know me at all, you know I do not consider myself a writer. I hate writing articles. Hopefully my typos aren't too abundant in this document, but that is my weakness. I know I need to work on it, so guess what, in 2009 I am registering for more writing classes at the community college!

EDC Creations offers a wealth of free promotions for authors. Follow the thread below and I will share them with you all. The Black Authors Network Radio Show is always open to authors, keep reading for more information.

Please prepare your questions and comments and I will try my best to answer them.
Ella Curry, president of EDC Creations