

# Some Things I Learned at the San Diego State University Writers Conference – 2010 and more things I know and share with you!

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“Connecting readers to authors is the Primary Goal” here for this weekend!

## TAKING A LOOK AT PUBLISHING:

- You must have a good concept and/or a great story first.
  - Readers have a lot to choose from and demand good work.
- You must have good writing skills.
  - Readers are an educated and intellectual – give them what they want!
- You must know the market – our readers are a savvy bunch.
  - Research with interviews, online, library sources and personal observation.
- You cannot quit – be resilient and persevere.
  - If you write, you have to write.
- You must be open to suggestions from various sources.
  - The best information comes from surprising voices – be open.
- You must be professional in all you do.
  - Do not take short cuts; take time to do it correctly up front.
- You must be genuine in the writing and promotion.
  - You get what you give out, give it your all.

## TAKING A LOOK AT YOUR MANUSCRIPT:

- It must be clean and revised several times before the editing process.
  - Don't throw your book together in haste, show the editor respect.
- It must be enough for a book - consider first a short story.
  - Take a hard look at your topic then do your outline and table of contents.
- It must be more than a regional piece if you have lofty goals.
  - Honor our global society and allow yourself all the opportunities out there.
- It needs goals, objectives and strategies in a well written plan.
  - Write out the steps you will take to your destination and the action needed.
- It needs an author who is willing to take risks to make it a success.
  - Remember launching a book means always believing in your project.

- It needs to find a place beyond its initial comfort level on your blog.
  - Respect the audience is looking for what you have to say – so say it!

#### TAKING A LOOK AT YOUR MARKETING:

- Research every aspect of the niche, primary and secondary markets.
  - Understand you have readers you may be unaware of, give it some thought.
- Prepare a synopsis of the book chapter by chapter.
  - Be prepared to share your work when called upon by an agent or the media.
- Write an Author's Platform for your book – regardless of genre and topic.
  - See my blog for a sample – a good practice for all of us!
- Prepare a Book Proposal – regardless of how you plan to publish.
  - Decide if it will be independently or traditionally - this helps you get organized!
- Always have a couple of fully revised chapters ready for review.
  - Remember, somebody may agree to do a peer review for you – be ready.
- Develop a full Marketing Plan – this is your product.
  - Request this outline from me and get started; no one else will do it for you.
- Read reviews of books currently coming out regardless of genre.
  - Peruse the newspapers everyday – you will learn from these commentaries.
- Compare your book to current titles to know where to position your book.
  - Don't be afraid of the 300 books published every day – just be ready.
- Determine immediately what is unique and different about your book.
  - Practice your 30 second commercial so it rolls off your tongue easily.
- Extol the virtues of your book and how it will entertain, inform or educate the reader.
  - Do something to be competitive – readers want value for their time.
- Toot your own horn - no one else will do it as well as you will.
  - Forget shyness – you are now promoting a product and yourself.
- Be fully aware of who is the reader/buyer of your book.
  - Do surveys, interviews or give away chapters for feedback to learn more.
- Be very clear on the angle and/or twist of the book.
  - Be sure it is clear to you, so it is even clearer for the reader – keep it simple.
- Be unwavering on why we “need” to buy your book and read it.
  - Remember you want readers to read the book and tell their friends about it.
- Be absolutely sure of where the “hole” is that you can fill in the market.
  - Address this quickly, step back and take a strong approach to your plan.

#### TAKING A LOOK AT A MARKET ANALYSIS:

- Who is the true audience for this book?
  - Is it broader than first anticipated; has a new trend come to light?
- How big is that audience?

- What are the demographics, the statistics to back your information?
- Who is the target market for the book?
  - Have you considered all options for the first line of readers?
- How will you find them?
  - Are they online, in bookstores, at events, in organizations or in corporations?
- Are you being brutally honest with yourself about your market impact?
  - Is there more that you can do to make yourself successful?
- What genre will this book fall into first?
  - Have you had a peer review to be sure you are seeing the big picture?
- Where will bookstores shelve this book for the best sales?
  - Peruse bookstores and visualize your book on the shelves and ask booksellers.
- Are you willing to role play your approach to bookstores?
  - Practice with a book seller; tell them your book will be out soon. Take notes.
- Do you have all the questions and objectives, all the answers prepared?
  - Practice dealing with “no” and with “yes” – anticipate the situation.
- Do you understand the market trends playing a part in your book launch?
  - Read the newspaper – research online – understand the book business now.

#### TAKING A LOOK AT THE PR/MARKETING PLATFORM:

- How will you create “Book Buzz” – word-of-mouth FREE marketing?
  - Can you write a Hot 100 Hit List of close friends and contacts?
- How will you share your expertise to enhance your book’s PR?
  - Do you have a credibility statement on yourself?
- How have you become an authority in your writing?
  - Why did you choose your topic? What made you knowledgeable?
- Are you willing to speak to groups with your book?
  - Be preparing a talk – even 20 minutes for a non-profit to boost sales.
- Are you willing to blog faithfully about your writing or your book?
  - Be keeping a log of blogging ideas that relate to your topics.
- Do you have a current bio, website and/or business card to enhance your image/PR?
  - Start collecting these from other authors and visualizing the same for you.
- What is the angle you will use to get good PR immediately?
  - Review PR and media releases on other author websites in your genre.
- What is distinctive about you and your book that would make for good PR?
  - Begin journaling while writing the book or promoting it – talk to yourself.
- Do you have a critique partner you trust to read all your PR/marketing materials?
  - Join a writers group and critique group - trust other writers.
- Are you willing to attend writing/publishing conferences to improve yourself?
  - Do at least one or two a year – and be a writer/author.

- Do you read at least a dozen or more books a year in your genre?
  - Read to write – no excuses; if you don't read, your readers won't read either.
- Are you willing to show your passion for your book by doing all of the above?
  - Pace yourself – pick three for the first month and add as you go – good luck.

#### GENERAL REMINDERS FOR ALL OF US:

- Think of your book as a business or commercial entity.
- Pick a subject you have expertise in and write on it with fierce abandon.
- Inform yourself on how many books are written on your topic.
- Create an audience for yourself.
- Understand what your book means for other people.
- Study “smaller” competition too – not just the best seller list.
- Write what you know.
- Listen to advice you hear again and again.
- Trust your writer's path, the stories that haunt you, the unique stories.
- Believe these stories pick you; you are here for a reason, so write to some degree daily.

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