

Are You Selling a Book, or Selling a Benefit

Contributed by Sid Smith
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Writing a book? Well, if you want it to sell, you'd better start thinking about the benefits of your book today, and not after your book is finished. Why? Find out in this article...

Book Marketing Tips: Selling a Book, Or Selling a Benefit?

When you think you want to write a book, especially if it is a nonfiction book, you need to start thinking immediately about the benefits of the book. Why? Well, book marketing 101, of course!

Tom Nixon on his SmallPress Bloc (<http://smallpress.typepad.com>) said that, "We are not in the business of selling books. We are in the business of selling information that people need. If you want to sell a book, you need to talk about what the benefit is to the reader."

When you think about it, doesn't his advice also apply to fiction? What, for example, is the benefit of the Harry Potter series? One benefit, of course, is that the books are entertaining. They stir the imagination. Another benefit has been to involve a whole new generation in the pleasures of reading a good book. The middle-school book market is booming as a result.

Mystery novels might provide a benefit of engaging the reader in using both sides of their brains, something most of us rarely do in our day jobs. It's an exercise for both the creative mind and the analytical mind. Romance novels stir the emotions and inspire dreaming and perhaps passion.

Selling a Book... or Marketing a Book?

When you think in terms of the benefits of a book, you're providing the marketing muscle for the eventual sale of the book. In the marketing world, we emphasize benefits instead of features. The features of a book, for example, might be that it's 236 pages in a large, readable typeface. The benefits are that it helps the reader overcome his or her long-term fear of heights, sex, or rock & roll. A feature of a book could even be the well-known author, but that's not a benefit. The benefit is to the reader is that he trusts the information and therefore is more willing to act on the recommendations in the book and finally complete his dream of crossing the Sahara on foot.

The marketing and selling of a book begins before you even write the book. The exceptions to this rule are the book that simply has to be written or the author who already has a good track record and whose books will sell as a matter of course. Perhaps you have a novel, story, or experience that you must get down on paper. If you don't care that the book is ever published, then by all means write it without regard for marketing.

But if you're a first-time author (which is likely if you're reading this article), then it would be in your best interest to consider a book marketing plan before you write the book. This will require you to think about the benefits to the reader before and during the writing process.

Your thorough knowledge of what your reader wants, craves, desires, and secretly longs for will help inform your writing. You will write to satisfy her lusts and deeper emotional needs. Then, when your book becomes public, the reader will instantly be drawn into your world, which becomes his or her world. There's a connection because you started the book with a connection.

This is perhaps the easiest way to market a book - to write it with the benefits to your audience in mind. And, thinking about benefits is particularly important for nonfiction books.

How to Determine the Benefits of a Book

If you're writing a nonfiction book, then this we're back to basic Book Marketing 101. It's something you should have already defined. Imagine one person who fits your target market. What does he think or dream about? What are her fantasies, hopes, wishes or desires? What worries him the most, or keeps her up at night, unable to sleep, tossing and turning into the wee hours of the morning? What's the one thing that would make him or her satisfied and happy beyond belief?

The same process applies to a novel. First, you're writing something that is meaningful to you. But is it meaningful to your audience? Who is going to read your book? What will get them emotionally involved in your story?

See, if you want your book to sell - to the public and a publisher - it has to have that emotional appeal that will attract a certain crowd. So, like it or not, you'll have to do a lot of reading. What books are most popular in your genre? Why? What makes them so popular? What is it about the most popular authors that makes their books so appealing?

Dig deep for the emotional appeal, even with nonfiction. People buy on emotion, then justify the already made purchase with logic. It's a basic tenet of sales and marketing, and it is in your best interest to understand this.

So good luck with your book. Let me know how it's going.
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