



## I've Written A Book – Now What?

THE INS AND OUTS OF SELF-PROMOTION

by Katie O'Sullivan

You've finally finished your manuscript and sent it off to your publisher. Time to put your feet up and relax. Or is it?

No matter whether you are self-published, being published by a small press, or have a contract with a big New York house, today's authors are expected to be heavily involved in promoting their books. This includes everything from online social media to the traditional meet-and-greets at local bookstores.

From the moment their manuscript is finished, authors need to take charge of their marketing and have an author website and blog ready to go. Writers should plan blog tours, visit bookstores, do interviews, visit (author-friendly) message boards, create author pages on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), join Twitter, Facebook and Goodreads and use the online social media to get their message and books in front of as many people as possible.

Nina Roth Borromeo agrees. Writing as [www.pennywatsonbooks.com](http://www.pennywatsonbooks.com) Penny Watson, she publishes light, paranormal romance with The Wild Rose Press and considers promotion a big part of her job.

"The most important thing for first time authors to remember is don't sit back and assume someone else is going to do the work promoting you," she says. "Even if you have a big-name New York publisher, it is still your responsibility to sell your book. No one cares as much about your success and the success of your book as you do."

Promotion, explains Nina, is essentially about making connections, both with other authors who will support you and your career, as well as with readers. An author also needs to reach out and make connections with booksellers, reviewers, agents, editors, publishers, contest judges, bloggers...the list goes on.

"The more connections you make," says Nina, "the bigger your circle of friends and colleagues becomes. Having a network in place really pays off when it's time to promote your books."

One way to increase your network is to get involved with local author events. Cape Cod author [www.quillsandbrushes.com/1.html](http://www.quillsandbrushes.com/1.html) Elizabeth Moison created the monthly "A Book In Hand" evenings to allow local authors to network with one another.

Held on the second Monday of each month, at the Jacob Sears Memorial Library on Center Street in East Dennis, "A Book in Hand" showcases two prose authors at each gathering (no poetry, sorry.) Authors read from their works and answer questions from the audience about their books, their writing processes, and their journey to publication.

Although busy promoting her own book, Master of the Sweet Trade, [www.amazon.com/Master-Sweet-Trade-Bellamy-Hallett/dp/1440158959/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1292090053&sr=1-1-spell](http://www.amazon.com/Master-Sweet-Trade-Bellamy-Hallett/dp/1440158959/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1292090053&sr=1-1-spell) Elizabeth also organizes other author events, like group book signings and seminars for local authors. On Saturday, February 26th she's hosting a Book Awareness and Promotion seminar from 2-4 pm, also at the Jacob Sears Memorial Library.

Says Elizabeth, "Getting 'out there' doing events with a good book that has an attractive cover is only part of the game. How to convince people that they not only want your product [book] but they need it, and can't live without it, is the mysterious clincher."

Twenty local authors participated in a group book signing in December that Elizabeth put together. I was privileged to share a table with local author Marie Sherman. An excerpt from her book, **SAY I DO**, was featured in the [Spring 2010 Issue of CapeWomenOnline](#), but this was the first time we'd met in person.

A former court officer and Justice of the Peace whose book is about her experiences performing over 1,000 weddings, Marie says she has the most fun meeting people at book signings, receiving checks in the mail, and getting the phone calls from shops saying, "We're out of your book - can you bring us more?"

"It was a relatively easy sell for me to get my book into bookstores and gift shops," says Marie. "People are

intrigued with wedding stories, and there was no other book out there with its unique content." She also recommends asking bookstores if they'll let you do a book signing. "Don't be shy," she insists. "It's publicity for their business as well as for your book."



Katie O'Sullivan and Marie Sherman promote their books at the Shelf Space event, held at the Cultural Center of Cape Cod

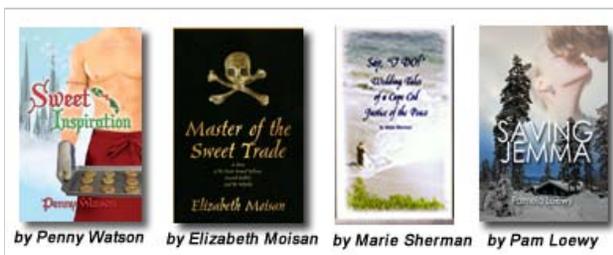
At the December event I also met <http://pamelaloewy.weebly.com> Pam Loewy, a romantic suspense author from Plymouth who, like Nina, publishes with The Wild Rose Press. Like my new novel, her book--**Saving Jemma**--is available as both a paperback and an e-book.

"It's such a changed world for publishers and writers," says Pam. "My first grandchild was born this June; I suspect that by the time she's an adult, physical, paper-based books will be a rarity. So one piece of key advice for fellow writers is to make sure your work is available electronically."

She adds that many of the marketing resources she consulted stressed the importance of "making yourself a 'brand,' like a tube of toothpaste or a lipstick. I really dislike that idea - I'm selling a book, not my soul. Well, maybe a bit of my soul; I think good writers do put pieces of themselves in their work."

Another piece of advice she offers is to take advantage of online resources like Vistaprint and Snapfish to create your own low-cost marketing materials such as postcards, business cards, and posters. "I'm on a very tight marketing budget, and so far I've found (Vistaprint) the most cost-effective solution."

"My biggest piece of advice," adds Nina, "is about manners! Be polite. Send thank you notes to contest judges and reviewers. Reciprocate for authors who host you on their blogs. Follow the rules for message boards. Reach out to folks in a friendly and polite manner. What goes around comes around. If you establish a solid network of readers and colleagues then, when it's your turn to release your book, they are eager to help spread the word and help with your success."



Katie O'Sullivan is the editor of this magazine. Her second book, **Perfect Strangers**, was published in November 2010.

Her favorite part of marketing is making connections with readers and other authors, and loves to talk about books and the writing process.

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