

# Marketing and Sales Guide for Authors

*"Publishing is a business, able to perpetuate itself only by making money. That is the real agenda for us all."*

-Mardi Link, *Small Press Magazine*

Welcome to the family of authors at Mountain Press Publishing Company. Whether you are a first-time author or a publishing veteran, this guide will inform you about what you can expect from Mountain Press and what we, in turn, expect from you.

The job of the sales and marketing department of Mountain Press is to expose your new title to as many interested markets as possible, with the ultimate goal of creating sales. However, it is not *only* our job, but also yours. From the inception of a signed contract, the author should be preparing to market and promote the book. You will need to put as much time and effort into your book's promotion as you did into writing it.

## A Brief Introduction to Publishing

The business of book publishing and marketing has changed dramatically in the last few years. We encourage you learn more about the process. The following publications, which we recommend you read, will give you some ideas of what you can do to help promote your book:

- *Publishers Weekly* and *American Bookseller* (trade magazines available at your local library or bookstore or online at <http://www.publishersweekly.com/> and <http://www.bookweb.org>)
- *1001 Ways to Market Your Books* by Jon Kremer, Ad-Lib Publications, ISBN 0-912411-32-5 (call 800-669-0773 to order direct)
- *The Writer's Workbook: A Full and Friendly Guide to Boosting Your Book's Sales* by Judith Appelbaum & Florence Janovic, Pushcart Press, ISBN 0-916366-69-3

As you learn more about publishing, you will realize there are hundreds of things that can be done to market a book. Our staff will not be able to do them all, nor will you, but together we'll do our best to generate as many sales as possible.

Please print out, complete, and return to us the **Author Information Form**, which will help the sales and marketing department plan their marketing strategy. We appreciate complete, but succinct, answers to these questions as this invaluable tool gives us our initial feel for you and your book. Your answers to the questions on the form are essential for adequate marketing of your book. You will find other helpful information in **Author Resources, Ten Things You Can Do to Promote Your Book, Interview Tips, and Speaking Engagement Tips**.

In a nutshell, here are some of the ways we expect our authors to promote their book.

*Before the book is published:*

- Read all the marketing documents on our Web site
- Fill out the Author Information form and send it to Mountain Press

- Send us a biographical sketch and black-and-white photo
- Find experts or other well-known people to review your book and offer testimonials that may be used on the book's cover
- Talk to local bookstore managers about stocking your book
- Create a mailing list of friends and supporters for announcements and event invitations

*After the book is published:*

- Set up book-signings with your local bookstores
- Offer to do presentations with clubs and organizations interested in your topic
- Contact local radio and TV stations and newspapers for possible interviews
- Attend book trade shows and conferences
- Develop a Web site for your book and link it to Mountain Press's online bookstore
- When planning a trip, schedule book-signings, speaking engagements, and interviews where appropriate
- Carry flyers promoting your book
- Keep a box of books in your trunk for events and individual sales
- Talk to friends, neighbors, and colleagues about your book

Remember: *You are always the best promoter of your book!*

Your title, when introduced to the market either in the fall or spring season, is considered frontlist. For approximately six to eight weeks from the time it becomes available in Mountain Press's warehouse, your book will receive its greatest infusion of time, attention, and money from the sales and marketing department. Once we introduce the next season's books, your title becomes part of our backlist. Your help and promotional efforts during those crucial weeks of frontlist time are extremely important to the success of your book.

We will keep your book in print for the whole of its "natural life," that is, as long as it continues to sell in profitable print-run quantities. We will continue to promote your book in each new trade or specialty catalog and other appropriate venues. We expect you to continue whatever promotions, signings, or speaking engagements you can do, and we look forward to considering any new book projects that fit our publishing niche.

## **Marketing**

With so many markets available, we try our best to cover the most important and lucrative ones. Reaching these markets is the objective of our publicity and marketing strategy.

### **Promotions**

Promotions are a relatively inexpensive way of gaining attention for your book. They include reviews in trade publications (*The Library Journal* or *Publisher's Weekly*, etc.), regional newspapers and magazines, bookstore newsletters, prepublication blurbs from well-known people who endorse your book (used in press releases and book jacket copy), TV and/or radio interviews, and author appearances (bookstores autographings, readings, slide shows, etc.). These strategies may result in publicity, but they do not always generate large sales.

### **Press Release/Press Kit**

A press release is a one-page document that sums up you and your book in a way that is attractive to the media. A press kit may include your photograph and biographical sketch in addition to the press release. A press kit also includes interview questions and answers that are provided by the author (see the Author Information Form). We send press releases or kits to appropriate reviewers of various consumer or trade magazines, journals, and TV and radio stations who might be interested in your book.

Once your book has been printed, we send a copy of the book and a press release or kit to a targeted media list that has been tailored to the subject of your book. For example, if your book is about birds, we will send information to selected outdoor and book review editors at magazines and newspapers around the country, as well as to the producers of birding TV and radio shows. Everyone likes a local story, so we place special emphasis on sending information to your local media. To help us promote you, the Author Information Form asks you for the names and addresses of individuals who you think should also receive information about your book.

If appropriate, we may send your book to major national media outlets such as the *New York Times* or *The Seattle Times*. Do not be disappointed if they do not review your book. On average, they receive more than 60,000 new books a year; they review only a tiny percentage of them. If you know a writer or reporter at a national magazine or news program, send them a personally signed copy of your book. This may get your book noticed. It is also possible that a review of your book may not appear until a year or so after the review is written!

Some major media outlets need information before the book is printed, so we may send portions of the manuscript to select reviewers a few months prior to a book's publication. This can lead to reviews (in newspapers, magazines, journals, newsletters, or other media) that coincide with the release of the book. Do note that not all books are appropriate to send out in galley or manuscript form. Heavily illustrated books are seldom sent out prior to publication.

### **Pre-publication Testimonials**

Having testimonials from well-known experts in your field enhances your book. We use testimonials on the jacket or cover, in our Title Information Sheets for the sales reps and wholesale buyers, in press releases, and more. Your effort in providing us with the names of well-known people to supply these testimonials is extremely important to the promotion of your book. We need these names at least three months prior to publication.

### **Author Appearances**

Book signings, public speaking engagements, slide shows, and appearances at regional book trade shows and/or academic and professional writing conferences are among the most important ways you can promote your book. Not everyone is able to promote in this manner, but personal promotion generates sales.

Mountain Press does not support major media tours across the country. We do, however, support events in your locality or the in region relevant to your book. Independent bookstores, chain

bookstores (such as Barnes & Noble and Borders), clubs, and organizations in your region are all possible venues for signings and events. For instance, you might know of a birding store that would like you do a presentation, or we may have a chain store that requests your appearance; or the sales rep for a college bookstore may ask if you're available for a booksigning. There might even be TV or radio interest. We ask that you provide us with your schedule of availability for appearances, and that you let us know in advance about all events you arrange yourself.

We will assist the author with coordinating these events, if needed, and will send information to local media once the event is arranged. In order to ensure attendance at a local booksigning or other event, we ask you to create a mailing list of your friends and supporters to whom the store or hosting organization can send a mailing publicizing your event. Sending these invitations has proven to be one of the best ways to guarantee a successful signing. If the store or organization is unable or unwilling to do this, we strongly recommend that you do it yourself.

**Since books must be available for an event, we do not schedule anything extremely close to or before the estimated publication date.**

There are a few different options in providing books for sales at any author event. In general, the following arrangements seem to work best:

- Independent bookstores (Tattered Cover, Powell's Bookstore, etc.): We help to arrange these events, and we make sure that books are in stock when you arrive. We require the stores to buy extra quantities, but they may return overstocks if necessary.
- Chain bookstores (Barnes & Noble, Borders, etc.): We help to arrange these events, and we make sure that your book is available.
- Private clubs and organizations: Often the author arranges these events. In most cases, we prefer that you buy the inventory at an author discount and sell books at your discretion, and at whatever price you choose. Most authors keep a supply of their books for such events. Overstocks from events can be returned to Mountain Press.

Whatever the case, it is imperative that you keep us informed of your schedule to make sure we have books available and can ship them in time. It is always a good idea for you to check in advance to make sure there will be enough books at an event, especially if you have scheduled the event directly. Please keep the sales and marketing staff at Mountain Press informed of your efforts so that we don't duplicate what you have already done.

### **Trade and Specialty Catalogs**

Our seasonal (spring and fall) trade catalog mailings bring excellent sales results. Your book will be featured prominently as frontlist and will continue to be displayed in an attractive and informative manner long after it is a venerable member of our backlist. Trade catalogs are produced twice a year (approximately 1,500 per cycle) for distribution in January (spring list) and May (fall list) to book distributors, wholesalers, bookstores, other retail accounts, sales reps, librarians, and more.

In addition to trade catalogs, Mountain Press produces direct consumer catalogs two to four times a year with print runs of 70,000 to 120,000. We mail consumer catalogs to Mountain Press's house list and to rented mailing lists.

## **Mailings**

In addition to catalogs, sometimes we produce special flyers, brochures, or postcards to promote a book. At your request, Mountain Press can provide you with a one-page flyer for your use. You can mail flyers as a book announcement or use them as an order form at any non-retail book signing (when books are not available or have sold out). It is a good promotional piece to send to your business and personal contacts to get the publicity ball rolling.

In addition to catalogs, we often produce brochures from cover overruns and may send out anywhere from 500 to 1,000 depending on the market and the nature of the title. This usually works best for paperback books that are a 6-by-9-inch format.

## **Space Advertising**

We make every effort to place our ads where they will count most, and generally advertise only frontlist titles. Space ads are placed in trade magazines, wholesaler catalogs, bookstore newsletters, book review publications, and consumer "special interest" magazines. These ads can be extremely expensive and it is very difficult to track results. However, we review every request made by an author and weigh the costs against the possible results. We do not have any set rules about where we will spend our advertising dollars, but we have found certain publications, wholesaler catalogs, and other venues that work well for us. On your Author Information Form please let us know if you are a well-known contributor to publications that offer advertising and/or reviews.

If you arrange to do a book signing or other event with a store, Mountain Press will help advertise the event. We will participate in cooperative advertising with the store. We match advertising dollars up to \$100.00. For example, a store hosts a book signing for you and spends \$200.00 in space advertising and radio announcements. Mountain Press will contribute \$100.00 towards the store's costs. Following the event, we give credit or reimbursement to the store.

**NOTE: Cooperative advertising must be approved prior to the author event.** Copies of invoices and ads must be sent to us before we will reimburse or credit a store.

## **Trade Shows/Conferences/Book Festivals**

Mountain Press attends anywhere from fifteen to twenty trade shows and conferences each year, from history conventions to regional trade shows, museum shows, library shows, and book festivals. These entail a major investment of time and expense, and generally do not result in direct sales, but are of utmost importance in creating trade visibility for our books, especially new titles. When such shows take place in your region, you may be invited to make an author appearance.

Major shows we attend are:

- American Library Association (ALA) - twice a year
- Public Library Association (PLA) - every two years
- School Library Association (SLA) - every two years
- Association for Partners of Public Lands – annual
- National Association of Interpreters – annual

- Geological Society of America(GSA) – annual
- State Library Association Shows - mostly annual
- Regional Trade Shows - annual

## **Sales**

There are numerous channels of distribution for books today. Following is a list, by no means complete, of channels through which we may sell your book.

### **Book Representatives (Sales Reps)**

Mountain Press has an experienced and effective national sales force of approximately twenty-five book reps. To find out who represent our books, please see to the last page of our trade catalog, or see the section of our Web site titled For Booksellers.

A month or so before each spring and fall publishing season, we provide our reps with new trade catalogs, order forms, and detailed information on all our new releases. Reps receive a packet from us that includes a detailed Title Information Sheet providing information about you and your book, a table of contents, a chapter excerpt, and other pertinent materials. The reps promote both you and the book. They need to know where you live, if you are available for signings, and whether you can do a slide show or special presentation. The information you provide on your Author Information Form is an important resource for sales reps.

Upon publication of a book, the reps receive a copy of your book to show to buyers in their region. Some buyers will buy a book sight unseen, while others must see a final, published copy.

### **Traditional Sales Channels**

*Large chain:* Barnes & Noble, Borders, Waldonbooks, etc.

*Specialty chains:* Discovery Channel (Nature Company Stores), REI, Rand-McNally , etc. These stores tend to buy very selectively, and produce some of their own publications, but they do buy nonreturnable and in large quantities when they feel a book fits their specific niche.

*Independent bookstores:* Fewer and fewer independent bookstores exist. Our sales reps generally call on the independent bookstores once a season. Initial orders for frontlist are usually placed directly with us; reorders typically go to national or regional wholesalers. Most independent bookstores order one or two copies of any title.

*College and university bookstores:* College and University bookstores order general books as well as textbooks. Sales reps handle most general book orders.

*Institutions:* Museums, zoos, aquariums, arboretums, etc. Mountain Press has many of these accounts on our house list. If your book covers a topic that a particular institution features, let us know the name of the institution.

*Parks and visitor centers:* U.S. Forest Service, national parks and monuments, state parks, etc. Each site requires a finished book to review, and the book may go through one to five committees before being accepted or rejected. Serving these outlets entails sending out a number of free non-royalty copies and direct follow-up.

*Membership clubs:* Costco, Sam's, etc. These stores' book departments tend to buy a title and sell it for a few months, then drop it in favor of something new. They do not stock a title continuously, no matter how it sells. They want something new that will produce a certain amount of money per square foot. They are very selective due to space limitations and expected turn rates.

*Discounters:* Target, KMart, Wal-Mart, etc. Mountain Press does not sell directly to discounters. Various wholesalers service these accounts.

*Libraries:* Public, university, and school. Libraries look for titles that fit their collection development goals. Many smaller libraries purchase directly from Mountain Press; larger libraries purchase through library wholesalers. Do note that many libraries host author events. Ask your local library if they'd like to host a reading and/or booksigning for you. We often arrange library events to work as fundraisers for the hosting library.

### **Nontraditional Sales Channels**

There are hundreds of possibilities, and we will scour the market for those that would be appropriate for your book. These buyers are extremely selective and usually require a review copy.

- Nature, gift, travel, rock stores
- Garden centers, holistic food stores, herbal products stores, nurseries, botanical gardens
- Outdoor/fishing/camping stores
- Farm & ranch supply stores, western wear & supply stores
- L.L. Bean, Campmor, Hearthsong and others that direct mail catalogs to consumers
- Corporate customers such as realtors, banks, and others

### **Mountain Press Direct Mail**

We email over 200,000 Mountain Press catalogs each year to individual consumers in special markets.

- Individuals (direct consumers)
- Specific targets: elementary and secondary schools, teachers, university professors, foresters, geologists, etc.

### **Internet**

We sell books on our online bookstore ([www.mountain-press.com](http://www.mountain-press.com)), as well as on Amazon.com, Barnes&Noble.com, Borders.com, and other online retailers. We research and link with other high-quality Web pages on the Internet that relate to our titles. Please let us know of any Web sites that you are familiar with that may be a good link for your book.

If you don't already have one, consider developing a Web site for your book. Be sure to have a live link to the Mountain Press online bookstore, and tell us your Web address so we can refer

readers to your site. Current search-engine technology boosts the number of hits for Web sites with links to each other.

### **Wholesalers**

Wholesalers are channels of distribution to both traditional and nontraditional markets. Retailers (bookstores, gift shops, etc.) rely on wholesalers to consolidate their orders of various titles from many publishers at one time. Although this one-stop shopping is efficient for the retailer, it prevents us from knowing which retailers have purchased specific titles and when.

There are general wholesalers such as Ingram Book Company and Baker & Taylor, regional wholesalers such as Treasure Chest and Partners, and specialty wholesalers such as Common Ground and Four Winds Trading. Currently, we work with over fifty wholesalers. Approximately 95% work on a returnable basis, with returns ranging anywhere from a small percentage up to 50% annually, making it difficult to predict final sales.

### **International Distributors**

Lone Pine Publishing Company distributes Mountain Press books in Canada. At this time Mountain Press does not have designated distributors for other international markets.

### **Subsidiary Rights**

Occasionally other rights opportunities arise: A foreign publisher may want to translate your book for sale in its territory; a photo in your book may lend itself to a Web site illustration; or a book club is interested. These rights may be held by you or by Mountain Press, depending on your contract. If we retain the rights, we negotiate the deal and collect payment. A percentage is passed on to you as the author. Rights sales may be a modest source of additional revenue for both publisher and author.

### **Book Clubs**

Many months prior to publication, we may submit your manuscript to an appropriate book club. The Science Book Club, the History Book Club, the Military Book Club, and others offer their members books at discounted prices. We make very little money in a book club sale, but a book's status as a "book club selection" is always great advertising.

## **Other Helpful Information**

As a Mountain Press author, you may purchase your book, and any other Mountain Press book, at a 50% discount plus freight costs. Your payment terms are net 30 days unless you make other arrangements. You can, for example, pay for books out of your royalties. Book orders can be placed by calling 800-234-5308, ext O.

Mountain Press has an operator available from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Mountain Time, Monday through Friday. An answering service takes calls on off hours and on holidays.

Our marketing/sales department will communicate with you directly regarding promotional events and other marketing/sales issues. Please direct all other questions to your project editor,

including those about editorial issues, publishing schedule, content, reprint changes, or your next book project.