**Marketing Your Nonfiction Book!**

**Grab Your Planner! Get a Marketing Plan!**

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Every bestselling author knows that you don’t wait until the day of your book’s release to start promoting it, and you don’t stop marketing your book after the official launch. Instead, you find creative and consistent ways to share about your book and its amazing content, and you use traditional holidays, wacky holidays, seasons, important anniversaries, national and international days of recognition, and evergreen events, to formulate your marketing plan. In this class, Michelle teaches how to effectively market your book before, during, and after its release using a calendar.

**#1 Get a Planner System & Begin Marking Off Promo Opportunities for Your Books**

I like The Happy Planner but there are lots of planning systems to choose from such as: the Hobonichi Techo Planner (great if you want a compact planner for on-the-go); the Papier To the Moon Foiled 2023 Planner (This one features weekly overviews with a lot of space for notes and doodles); The Passion Planner (This one is great to help focus on what really matters); The Very Busy Planner (This planner helps keep daily routines organized with lots of space for all of your planning needs); and Erin Condren planners (So pretty and functional!), to name a few.

\*Grab a Wacky Holidays Calendar or use one online such as brownielocks.com or timeanddate.com or nationaltoday.com

\*Begin marking the obvious days in your planner that relate to your book. For example, to market my “Dachshund Through the Snow” picture book, which is a Christmas children’s book, I obviously marked reminders to promote during the holiday season. (The 12 Books of Christmas blog, for example.) Also, I made sure to highlight the week of June 21 because that’s the longest day of the year in honor of the longest dog of all—the doxie. It’s National Dachshund Day!

>Knowing that National Dachshund Day was coming up, I made a cute meme of me in a dachshund pool raft and promoted a 40 percent off coupon code for “Dachshund Through the Snow” for that one day only!

>Try to find more than just one lesser known/offbeat holiday to promote your book. In the case of my dachshund book, I also targeted the following days to promote my picture book: National Pet Day (April 11), National Spoil Your Pet Day (August 10), National Dog Day (August 26), the dog days of summer, and National Dog Week (the last week of September).

**#2 Pick out themes and topics from your children’s book/themes from each chapter of your nonfiction book/themes throughout your fiction book…**

\*Make a list and then begin searching for national holidays—both traditional and not-so-well-known—as well as seasons, months, evergreen events, etc.

For example, when my children’s book, “Love Connects Us All” debuted this past Spring via Wren & Bear Books, we identified themes for my book and every End Game Press title. For my book, we came up with family, adoption, foster families, belonging.

At the Children’s Pastors Conference this year, the conference ran a video before the main evening session that Victoria Duerstock (owner of End Game Press) had submitted. It featured all of our children’s books, set to music, with those themes listed beside each book cover. Right after the session, we were bombarded with people wanting to buy. We had a line 30 deep. They’d say, “I want to order the book for adoptive families.” Or “Show me the book that’s perfect for families who foster to adopt.” This happened for every single title that was featured, and the interested buyers couldn’t always remember the title of the books, but they always knew the theme, and that’s how they asked for the book.

So, what can we learn from that experience? If you show readers what they’re looking for based on themes, they will buy and share with others, because you are meeting their needs/desires. We sold out of many of our titles that night!

>For “Love Connects Us All”—Some of the dates I have been able to post during or join an existing conversation include: May is National Foster Care month; National Foster Care Day is May 2, 2023; National Family Day is Sept. 26, 2023; November is National Adoption month; National Adoption Day is Nov. 18, 2023.

So, knowing what we know from that experience, figure out the themes/topics from your book(s)…now you’re ready for step three.

**#3 Create promotional materials using your book’s themes/topics and have them ready to use on the holidays that you’ve already identified that go along with your book’s message/themes.**

\*What kind of promo materials?

>**Reels:** People are much more likely to watch a short video of you talking about a theme from your book and how it relates to that holiday than a long video, so keep it short and sweet.

Or you can do like Victoria did—use your book cover, some music, and your themes—and create a short, beautiful, informational video using Canva or a similar program.

>**Memes:** Again, I use Canva most often, but there are many options out there. So, I had the cutest picture of my granddaughter Wrennie Roo holding my book, “I Love You Bigger Than the Sky” which has a pretty red foil heart on the front, so I created a few memes using that picture of Wren and my book cover for Valentine’s Day. I think I said something like, “Tell the littles in your world just how much you love them this Valentine’s Day…” and I included the link for purchasing.

>**Blog posts (Micro blogging on Instagram):** This works especially well if you already have a very successful blog or a very engaged following on Instagram. Create copy highlighting the holiday and then mention your book. Here’s an example. A few years ago, there was a traveling animatronic dinosaur exhibit making its rounds through the United States, and it was coming to the Hoosier state (where I live), so I highlighted details about that exhibit, which happened to fall around the time of National T-Rex day. So, I encouraged readers to celebrate National T-Rex Day by going to the exhibit, and if they wanted to learn even more about dinosaurs, I suggested that they buy my book, “Dinosaur Devotions” which I put on special for that one day.

>**Online publications or print magazines:** Here’s an example of how to do this effectively. Now, you have to plan ahead because most magazines and webzines work at least 6 months ahead, and many work from theme lists. (You can find out that important information in any of the market guides or on the magazine/webzine’s website.) Ok, so the dog days of summer are like June, July, and August. So, sometime way ahead of that season, I always pitch an article to various publications about taking care of your dog in the heat of the summer months, utilizing online sources and probably our veterinarian who is also my cousin.  My focus? Safety tips for making sure Fido doesn’t become overheated, dehydrated, or worse, experience a heat stroke during the Dog Days of Summer. I’ll also pitch an accompanying bullet-pointed sidebar about signs to look for to see if your dog is experiencing heat exhaustion or dehydration. Then at the bottom of that article, it’ll list my name and I’ll write my short bio to include my two dog books: “Dachshund Through the Snow” and “Puppy Dog Devotions” as well as promote my upcoming book, “The Dachshund Dash” (2024).

\*Anyone who would read that article is probably a dog lover and very likely someone who would love my books featuring dogs.

**#4 Share Strategically!**

**\*Get the word out…organically, if possible**. It’s not always good to make your post a “hard sell.” In other words, mix it up a bit! Don’t always be sharing “buy my book” posts—but do share about your book on appropriate, fitting holidays/seasons and see what happens.

Here are some ways to do that…

>**Be subtle/think outside the box when it comes to sharing about your book.** For example, I am a member of several dachshund lovers Facebook groups. Last December, I posted about a few school visits I made with my rescue doxie Winnie Sue. I posted pictures of her walking through the school hallways in her Christmas sweater. So cute! I posted pictures of her letting several children rub her belly. And I posted pictures of her with me as I read from the pages of “Dachshund Through the Snow,” commenting on how Winnie knew all of the exact spots when she should bark. Never once did I even mention my book’s title or suggest anyone purchase it. But guess what happened? People started commenting on how precious it was that we were visiting the area schools and bringing the school children some extra special Christmas cheer. And then a few people asked, “Did you write that book?” “Where can I get that adorable children’s book?”

I had my opening then…so I updated my original post with a note at the bottom saying, “Several of you have asked how to get a copy of my book, ‘Dachshund Through the Snow’ so here is that link. It’s actually 40 percent off right now via End Game Press. And if you’d like me to sign your book, I’d be happy to mail you an “autographed by the author” sticker. Just direct message me!”

That next morning, Victoria texted me, “Ok, what did you do? I had like 20 orders come in overnight using your sale code!”

>Using that same tactic, I have also posted in those same groups about my favorite children’s books about dachshunds—because I collect them! And, of course, I included my own “Dachshund Through the Snow” lol. That was such an active post! So many other dachshund owners shared pics of their favorite dachshund books, and we all chatted about those books. There were more than 150 comments on that one post, and yes, I made several sales that afternoon.

>Another time, I posted a picture of Santa holding Winnie Sue and my dachshund book, and I encouraged others to support their local Santa Paws events, since most are put on as fundraisers for humane societies. Again, someone asked about the book, and I sold several copies.

Note: Now, I have been a member of these dachshund lovers Facebook groups for a while. I didn’t just join one day and start trying to sell my “Dachshund Through the Snow” book the next post. I commented on others posts and built a relationship within those groups over several months. This didn’t seem like work to me because I enjoy engaging with other dachshund enthusiasts.

**>Join an existing conversation on social media.** For example, our EGP author Lisa Baker has a book, “Someplace to Be Somebody” that has themes of overcoming racism and finding one’s place in this world. So on MLK Jr. day, she can join the conversation already going on about those very topics. In fact, she can write a series of tweets/microblogs based on her book’s themes and highlight those throughout Black History Month every single year.

**>Where should you post?** The simple answer is this—post where your audience/readers consume. So if you are trying to reach young mamas, Facebook may not be the best place to spend your time. Instagram is probably a much better option for reaching moms ages 20 to 30. If you have a business book, you should hit Twitter and LinkedIn pretty hard with your promotional efforts.

Bottomline, you need to figure out where your potential readers are hanging out. For example, some marketing gurus that I respect very much have stated, “Facebook is dead.” Well, that may be true based on analytics; however, targeted Facebook groups have really been important in my marketing efforts and ultimate book sales. So, find your people. Join those groups. Infiltrate…gain trust, add meaningful and helpful information to others’ posts…then you can begin sharing about your book, brand, and themes that point back to your book.

**#5 Share Before Your Book’s Release…when it releases…and long after**

**\***Holidays, seasons, anniversaries happen every year so that means you can share on those targeted days every year about your book, and you should! Year after year. Keep posting and keep selling.

\*If one of your book’s themes is in the news, use that news cycle to your advantage. Find ways to attach your book and its message to the news cycle. For example, when Fox News reported in July 2019 that patriotism was at its lowest point in the history of the United States, I jumped on Facebook Live and addressed that very fact. Then I shared how I came up with the idea for my children’s book, “What Is America?” (Sort of the story behind the story) and why I think it’s so very important to raise our children with grateful, patriotic hearts.

\*If it’s your book’s birthday, post on that day.

\*For your birthday, or the birthday of your book, do a basket of goodies giveaway.

\*Find days and ways to keep sharing about your book(s).