

How do authors get comfortable with the idea of self-promoting?

Q: I feel uncomfortable about publicizing my books. How do other authors handle this?

Every author or illustrator has a different degree of comfort with this. Often it just takes some practice and time to get used to the idea. However, some authors use a pseudonym or a company name to work under when they promote their books (not something I'd advise, or feel is necessary). Others hire part-time help to make calls for them, or contract with an agency to do the work.

Keep in mind, though, that if you were running another kind of business — a store or a service business for example — you would know from the start that you would have to promote it. The key is to market your book in a professional manner.

When doing publicity:

- Call first to get the appropriate editor's, or producer's name. This is often the book or features editor of a newspaper or magazine, or a specific show producer or the programming director at a TV or radio station.
- Mail your book with a cover letter explaining why you think it would be of particular interest to them.
- Follow up with a telephone call a week later to check that the package was received and to find out whether the book has been looked at yet.
- If they have not looked at it, ask when you can call back to check on it. If they have read it, ask if they have plans for coverage and offer to provide more information, or to give an interview.
- Call once more when coverage is planned to confirm that it has been done.

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