

My book is published by a small press that only prints a limited number of copies. What can I do to help further my sales?

Q: My book is published by a small press that only prints a limited number of copies. What can I do to help further my sales?

You can use the same methods of publicity and promotion as you would to promote a book from a larger house, but you need to focus your efforts in areas where your publisher has distribution. This can either be segmented geographically (Is the book available nationally or regionally?), or by market (Is it available at retail, just to teachers and librarians, or in special niche markets?). When you know where the book is available, you can determine where to invest your time, or consider ways of expanding the reach.

For example, if the book is sold at retail nationally but the print run is small, you'll need to talk with your publisher about ways that consumers you promote to can easily order the book. This information should be incorporated into any publicity or promotion that you do, so people don't get discouraged if they don't find the book on their local store's shelf.

You may even be able to provide additional options by having people obtain the book through you by establishing yourself as a distributor and servicing orders yourself. This can be done by mail or by setting up your own "800" number (which can be done inexpensively through AT&T).

Books that are distributed regionally should be promoted locally where you know the book can be found in stores, and where booksellers will be familiar with the publisher. The same kind of niche marketing applies when you are promoting a book available only in special markets. So, if your book is only being sold in the institutional market, you should concentrate on trying to reach teachers and librarians. "Consider joining the International Reading Association, so you'll have access to lists of state reading councils and other organizations that want children's authors as speakers," recommends children's author and Universal Press Syndicate reviewer Cris Peterson. 4:5/95