

What should I look for in selecting a PR agency?

Q: Can you provide detail about finding a publicity agency, and what they typically can do for an author? I have an eclectic mix of books and am wondering if a publicist is a realistic avenue for someone who is not a best seller or higher end sales prospect? In our experience, work varies quite a lot from client to client. Agencies also vary in what they offer, but I've found that authors usually approach us via referral from other authors, media contacts or publishers. Most are looking for media attention beyond what the publishers are doing, and they don't feel comfortable doing media outreach for themselves. They also often have broader marketing objectives like reaching out to organizations, getting help with websites and social media or even career planning, but media outreach is the most frequent reason for inquiring. There's also a difference between book campaigns and work done in long-term relationships, which evolve over many years.

The notion in the short term is to gain attention for the author and new book. In the long term, it's to help raise the author's profile in a variety of market areas to achieve career objectives.

With regard to your specific situation, an agency would likely use your new book as the lead in the campaign and then incorporate backlist as appropriate. One of the benefits of using an agency is that your larger story gets told and, if work is ongoing there's a cumulative effect. We've worked with some authors when they have their first book and others who are on their fiftieth. They feel the time is right to push for attention, raise the bar on what they've been doing, and invest either for the short- or long term. 5:6/10