

Can I contact mail order catalogues directly to promote my books?

Q: My book is published by a small press. I have contact with various mail order catalogs that carry similar books. Should I contact those catalogs directly and ask that they contact my publisher if they are interested in carrying my book? Or should I expect my publisher to send them sample copies with a cover letter I've written? (I've asked my publisher this question, but have not received an answer.)

Generally, I think it's advisable to talk with your publisher first to find out what contacts they've made for your book, but since you've not heard back from the publisher, I think it's fine for you to query the catalog companies yourself. I'd start by asking if they've received any copies of your book yet and, if not, then offer to send samples. You can then pass along any leads to your publisher. You should continue to try to find out who at the publishing house handles special sales and should talk with them about what they've done for your book and how they want leads handled. 2:3/96