How Single-Title Authors Can Create Multi-Book Campaigns

By Brian Jud

Authors may become discouraged after trying to sell their book to non-retail buyers in corporations, associations, etc. In many cases they are making the sale more difficult than necessary. Selling to a prospective buyer with one book and an implied “take it (your book) or leave it” offer generally results in “leave it.” However, if you go to the buyer with multiple alternatives your chances of getting the sale increase significantly. But how can a single-title author do that? Read on.

When meeting with potential buyers do not start by talking about your book. Begin by finding out what problems they want to solve, i.e., their pain points. Do this by asking questions, and here are a few examples.

Q. Have you ever used books as a promotional item?

A. If the answer is yes, ask how, when, what was the outcome, what would they change. In most cases the answer will be no. Here is an example of a possible continuing dialogue.

Q. What do you use as promotional items?

A. Coffee mugs.

Q. How do you use them?

A. We give them to people who visit our trade show displays.

Q. Don’t other companies do that?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you have to store them between shows, then ship them again?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there a lot of breakage?

A. Sure, but that is a cost of doing business.

Q. How many mugs do you usually buy?

A. About 5000 at a time.

Now you know the buyers’ pain points. They do not have a unique promotional item and they suffer recurring expenses for storage, shipping and damage. You also know their budget, since a customized mug could be about $3.00, so 5000 of them cost $15,000. That also tells you how to price your products to get the sale.

Now, make your recommendation to use your ebook as the promotional item. Propose that the exhibiting companies purchase 5000 one-time-use codes for $7500. The exhibit visitor could download your book for free. The exhibitors are more profitable, have a unique promotional item with no additional expense for storage, shipping or damage. And you make $7500 for each company that buys 5000 codes.

But what if the exhibitors like your idea, but do not like your book or want to offer their visitors multiple choices? You can still solve their problem and make money even if the sale does not include your book. How? Find other books that meet the buyers’ criteria. You become a dependable consultant to the buyer, paid by charging the authors or publishers a fee for putting the deal together. Very few of them will turn down a large order that they did not even have to negotiate.

**Where to find appropriate books**?

There are many sources of books you can search to find applicable titles. Here are several for you to explore.

**Your backlist**. If you are a multi-title author or publisher, evaluate your other titles or scour your backlist for appropriate titles.

**Amazon.com**. For example, search (your topic) by price, average customer review or publication date. You can also tailor your search by book format, author, award winners.

**The APSS bookstore** was created so members would have access to other members’ books (to buy or sell). Search over 100 books professionally published by APSS members in over 30 categories here: <http://bookapss.org/books>

**Mastermind groups**, small interactive groups of people who have experienced the trials and tribulations of successful book publishing – and are willing to share their lessons. Membership in a mastermind group can also give you access to the other members’ books. Discover more about the Association of Publishers for Special Sales (APSS) Mastermind Groups: [www.bookapss.org/APSSMastermindGroup.pdf](http://www.bookapss.org/APSSMastermindGroup.pdf)

**The Premium Book Company** (Brian Jud’s company) creates a quarterly catalog used to sell books to non-retail buyers. You can use the catalog as a source of books, too. See their current catalog at <http://www.premiumbookcompany.com/catalog/catalog.pdf>

**Attend trade shows** such as the 2021 virtual US Book Show (replacing BookExpo) as a source of books, or have your books on display there for others to see. More information is at [www.bookapss.org/USBookShow.pdf](http://www.bookapss.org/USBookShow.pdf) The American Library Association (ALA) annual meeting could be another source of applicable titles.

**What’s in it for you**?

Why should go through all this if your book is not even part of the package? Most likely your book(s) will be one of those included in the selection. You would not have advanced this far with the prospective buyers if they were not interested in what you had to offer. However, there are reasons for you to put a program like this together even if yours is not included.

**Receive a percentage of every sale**. You should be compensated for putting the program together for selling others’ books. If you created a sale for six titles (including yours), you could make significant money. Here is how that could be calculated.

Your 15% commission on $37,500 (five other titles @ $7500): $ 5625

Revenue from the sale of your book in the campaign: $ 7500

Your total revenue from the sale $13.125

**Create relationships with other authors and publishers**. If your book is self-published, one of the publishers you contact may offer to publish your book. They will be more inclined to sell your book when the tables are turned, too. You also set the stage for cooperative efforts in the future, making those sales much easier.

**Build relationships with buyers**. Prospective buyers will appreciate your efforts to meet their needs. This could lead to recurring revenue with future projects. They would contact you first to build upcoming campaigns. They could also engage you in work-for-hire projects, utilize you as a speaker in forthcoming conferences, and employ you as a company spokesperson.

**Get experience selling**. Organizing a campaign such as this can improve your self-confidence and skills in selling and networking. These abilities will help you make additional and even more profitable programs in the future.

Not all your sales of to be with or for others. In most cases buyers will choose your product(s) for their marketing campaigns. Utilize the system described here only if your book is not the only product that could be a good fit for their needs.

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