

# Book Promotion



## The Bare Basics

*By Karen Cioffi*

Every author has thought it, said it, and heard it: promotion is the roll-up-your-sleeves, and dig-in part of writing. It's the much more difficult and time consuming aspect of writing that every author needs to become involved with . . . if he wants to sell his books.

To actually sell a book, you need to have a quality product. This is the bare-bottom, first rung of book promotion . . . the foundation.

## The Foundation - Create a Quality Product

The very first step in book promotion is to create a quality product. Hopefully, you noticed I said create a *quality product*, not just a good story. What this means is that all aspects of your book need to be top notch.

### ***1. The Story***

To start at the very beginning, the first factor to be dealt with is to be sure your story has all the essential elements. According to Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, there are five major elements of a story: characters, setting, plot, point of view, and theme.

All the elements of a story should complement each other, should move each other forward, draw the reader in, and end with a satisfying conclusion. They should work together to create a story that will be remembered.

Suppose your story is action packed and plot driven, but it lacks believable and sympathetic characters, it will fall short. The same holds true if you have a believable and sympathetic character, but the story lacks movement. Again, it will be lacking. As with all things in life balance is necessary, the same holds true when writing a story.

**Here are four articles that will help you in this area:**

Balance in Writing: The Major Elements

<http://www.dkvwriting4u.com/2009/12/balance-in-writing-the-major-elements/>

Theme and Your Story

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/07/theme-and-your-story.html>

Creating and Beefing Up Conflict

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/05/creating-and-beefing-up-conflict.html>

Adding More Dimension to Your Protagonist

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/03/adding-more-dimension-to-your.html>

## ***2. Join a Critique Group***

Yes, this is part of creating a *quality story*. Even experienced authors depend on the unique perspective and extra eyes that each critique member provides. They will help find: grammatical errors, holes in your story, unclear sentences and paragraphs, overuse of particular words, and weak verbs, among other elements.

They will also provide guidance and suggestions.

**Check out this article for more information about joining a critique group:**

Critiques are Essential

<http://www.karencioffi.com/2010/08/critiques-are-essential/>

## ***3. Editing***

Yes, again, this is a necessary step to take to ensure your manuscript is in the best shape possible before it becomes a book. Look for an experienced and qualified editor to help tweak your manuscript. But, before you send it off to be edited, self-edit it first. There are a number of articles out there in cyberspace on self-editing. Take the time and read a few, then go over your manuscript.

**Here are four articles that will help you self-edit your manuscript:**

Ten Tips Checklist for Self-Editing – Part 1

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/04/ten-tips-checklist-for-self-editing.html>

Ten Tips Checklist for Self-Editing – Part 2

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/04/tips-5-10-of-10-tips-checklist-for-self.html>

Final Stages of Self-Editing – Part 1

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/04/final-stages-of-self-editing-part-1.html>

Final Stages of Self-Editing – Part 2

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/04/final-stages-of-self-editing-part-2.html>

## ***4. Cover and Design***

This step is more relevant to those who decide to self-publish, or use a Print-on-Demand (POD). The cover is the first impression a reader will usually have of your book, next is the interior design. These aspects are just as important as the story itself. I'm sure you're familiar with the expression that you only get one shot at making a good first impression. Well, you can relate that to your book cover.

Don't skimp on time, effort, or money when coming up with your book's cover and design.

**Tip:** If you are writing a children's book, do not do your own illustrations unless you're a professional illustrator.

**Here is additional information on Self-Publishing:**

Before You Self-Publish Part 1

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/02/before-you-self-publish-part-1.html>

Before You Self-Publish Part 2

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/02/before-you-self-publish-part-2.html>

## **Create Visibility and a Platform** *(Visibility Through Inbound Marketing)*

The second step or rung on your promotion ladder is to create a platform and brand for you and your book. This is accomplished through visibility. A platform is a means to let readers know what your area of expertise is. You may be shaking your head and thinking you don't have an area of expertise, well this is how you create it.

### **1. Create a Website/Blog**

#### ***A. Choose a Website or Blog***

There's no way around this one – you must create a web presence. The first tool in your visibility toolbox is a website, and it should be created before your book is published. You can choose a website or a blog; you can get either for free from sites such as Wordpress.com or Blogger.com.

If you find the thought of having to create a website daunting, go for Blogger.com; it is very user friendly and good for beginners. And, with its updates, it has features like a website.

#### ***B. Your Domain Name***

Choose your domain name carefully and think ahead. Marketing experts always advise using your name for your domain name. You can always create sites that are specific to each of your books or a particular niche, but your *name* should be your main or central site.

### ***C. Simple is a Better Strategy***

Marketing expert Mike Volpe of Hubspot.com points out that it's more important to spend time, and money if necessary, on content rather than a flashy website design; simple works. In fact, simpler usually leads to a higher conversion rate. The conversion rate is the ratio of visitors who buy your book, product, or product.

Volpe also stresses that you should have control over your site. This means you should be able to manage it. You don't want to run to a web designer for every little change you want to make to your site, or to do something as simple as adding content.

To reinforce this *simple is better* strategy, Google says that milliseconds count in regard to your page load time. If your page is slow to load, you'll get a poorer score with Google.

**Tip:** Should you decide you do need help to create a site, don't hire an expensive web designer. Look for someone who wants to establish themselves as a website creator, or someone who does it in their spare time, you will pay much less. And, try to make arrangements that will include the designer teach you how to manage your own site. This will make updates, changes, and posting much easier.

### **Here is some additional information on Websites:**

Marketing 101: Improve Your Website

<http://www.dkvwriting4u.com/2010/03/marketing-101-improve-your-website/>

3 Keywords Needed to Create an Effective Website

<http://www.karencioffi.com/2010/06/3-key-phrases-keywords-needed-to-create-an-effective-website/>

Keep Your Website Focused

<http://www.karencioffi.com/2011/04/keep-your-website-focused/>

## **2. Social Networking**

This aspect of promotion should also be initiated prior to your book's publication.

### ***A. Join the Biggies***

It's important to become active on sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Author's Den, and JacketFlap. Twitter and Facebook are a two of the biggest and most powerful social networks

available. Posting regularly to these sites offers you the potential of connecting with millions of people.

### *B. Join Pertinent Writing Forums and Groups*

You should also join forums and groups related to the genre you're writing in. If you write science fiction join groups that provide discussions and tips in that genre. If you write for children join groups that are focused on that genre. You get the idea.

**Tip:** Be active on the sites. Offer information and retweet information your find valuable.

### *C. Join Groups Outside of the Writing Realm*

It'd be a good idea to join groups that discuss promotion. You can also subscribe to sites that offer promotional information and tips. By doing this, new content added to the sites will be sent directly to your lists. Newsletters are also available that provide great promotional content.

### *D. Join Forums and Groups That Will be Interested in Your Book*

This is probably the most beneficial strategy in this category. You need to become a part of forums that are interested in your book's topic. If you write science fiction, join sci-fi buff sites. If you write non-fiction cook books, join sites related to cooking. Try to be where the members/readers will find your book of interest and/or valuable. These are the readers/bloggers who are most likely to buy your book.

## **Here are additional articles on Social Networking:**

Marketing with Twitter

<http://www.dkvwriting4u.com/2010/03/marketing-with-twitter/>

Inbound Marketing and Twitter

<http://www.dkvwriting4u.com/2010/01/inbound-marketing-and-twitter/>

## **3. Content Rules**

### *A. Add Content to Your Blog*

Make your presence known by offering information in the form of content on your blog. Content is what will make you an expert in your niche or area. But, just posting the content to your site will not create the traffic you need. Each time you publish content to your site, you need to let your social networks know about it.

Tweet it and post about it to Facebook and your other social networks. Be sure to always include a clickable url link that goes directly to the article. This is a part of inbound marketing – it leads visitors back to your site through an information funnel.

## ***B. Article Marketing***

Once you feel comfortable with adding content to your blog, you can now venture out into the article marketing arena to capture a larger audience. While most article directories have guidelines, they are fairly lenient. Follow the guidelines and post an article to one, two, or ten different directories. Most of them don't require original articles, so you can use article you've posted on your blog.

Usually you will be allowed to include a brief bio in the form of a resource box. Make it short and sweet. Be sure it links back to your website or blog, whichever you want the traffic to go to (if you have more than one site).

Those who click on the link will be creating inbound links to your site which is a feature Google and the other search engines like. In fact, quality inbound links are an important aspect of search engine optimization (SEO).

## ***C. Offer to be a Guest on Other Quality Sites***

Another avenue of inbound marketing is offering your articles to other quality blogs or sites; you become a featured writer on the site by providing a guest article. It might be viewed as visiting another neighborhood. The particular site you are featured on has its own set of visitors, thereby broadening your visibility.

Do your research before you approach bloggers. Make sure the fit is right by checking prior posts on the site. In addition, when you approach the blog owner to ask about a guest post, let him know that you are familiar with his site.

And, be sure to always make it a win-win situation. Let the blog owner know that you will promote your feature post, and you might include that you'll mention his site in your newsletter.

Finally, self-edit your article before you send it off.

**Tip:** Using content to draw visitors back to your site is inbound or organic marketing. It is free, and it works by creating an informational funnel leading back to your site. In order for inbound marketing to work effectively, you need to provide valuable content on a regular basis.

## **Check out these articles for more information on Content:**

Effective Titles for Articles and Blogs

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/11/effective-titles-for-articles-and-blog.html>

Writing for Article Directories: 7 Steps

<http://www.karencioffi.com/2010/05/writing-for-article-directories-7-steps/>

Content Reprint Strategy

<http://www.karencioffi.com/2010/07/content-reprint-strategy/>

Article Directories and Ghostwriters: Strategies to Save You Time

<http://www.karencioffi.com/2010/10/article-directories-and-ghostwriters-strategies-to-save-you-time/>

**You might also be interested in:**

Writing Tip: Great Backup Tool

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/09/writing-tip-great-backup-tool.html>

Benefits of Creating an eBook

<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/2010/05/benefits-of-creating-ebook.html>



### **About the Author:**

Karen Cioffi is an author, ghostwriter, and freelance writer. She is a member of the Professional Writers Alliance, the International Association of Professional Ghostwriters, and the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors; moderator of a children critique group, on the team at DKV Writing 4 U, founder and manager of Writers on the Move (a cross-promotional group), and an acquisitions editor intern.

For more on writing, ghostwriting, freelance writing, and promotion visit: Karen Cioffi.com (<http://karencioffi.com>) or Karen Cioffi- Writing and Marketing (<http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com>). While you're there, pick up your TWO FREE GIFTS, and sign up for Karen's FREE monthly newsletter, A Writer's World; you'll get TWO MORE FREE e-books on writing and marketing. For writing services visit: DKV Writing 4 U (<http://dkvwriting4u.com>)

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**“It’s not what you’ve done that matters - it’s what you haven’t done.”**  
~ *Mark Twain*