

Partnering With Your Authors

by Lee Hough

How would you like to increase the ministry and sales of your books? You can, by inviting your writers to partner with you in promoting their books. Here are 12 things your authors can do:

1. *Pray!* Ask your authors to pray for God's blessing in the writing and ministry for the titles you are publishing. "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Psalm 127:1).

2. *Be positive.* Writers have a unique contribution for your publicity and sales efforts: they know the product best. Authors can explain how their books are different from and better than similar books on the market. They can explain why the book had to be written and whose needs it will address. No one can state as clearly or as passionately the heart of a book than its author.

3. *Make friends with all the local bookstore managers and staff.* Your authors can visit Christian and secular bookstore managers, introduce themselves, and encourage personal interest in the book. They can volunteer their time to help the bookstore promote their work. For example, they can do an in-store reading of a portion of their book. Authors can also visit their local libraries.

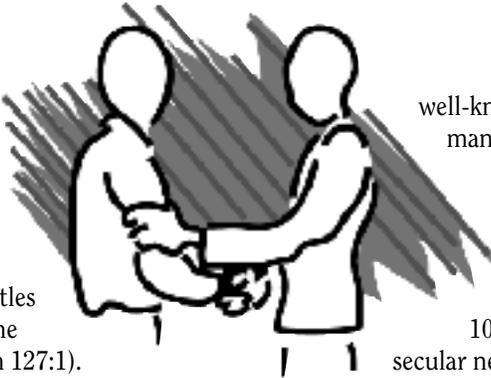
4. *Approach local pastors.* Authors can look for ways they can minister within the church: small groups, seminars, ministry outlets, church training, Sunday school, etc.

5. *Generate local exposure.* Authors can send review copies of their books to local newspapers, radio and television stations. They can contact local businesses and see if they would be willing to display their book in a reception area.

6. *Promote by word-of-mouth.* Ask your authors to think of people, clubs, professional associations, and other organizations they have worked with in the past that may support the book. Ask them to develop a list of ministries whose missions match the heart of their book. Then, have your authors follow-up with these contacts.

7. *Generate a publicity plan.* Your writers can get together with their friends and brainstorm ideas, niche markets, and other outlets to publicize the book. You may be surprised by the helpful ideas that can be generated by a group filled with creative energy.

8. *Obtain endorsements.* Endorsements for the cover or inside of a book play a very important part of promotion. Writers can ask their friends, acquaintances, and other people they deem to be



well-known for comments about the book or manuscript.

9. *Write articles.* Authors can excerpt or adapt portions of their book for articles in magazines, newspapers, or other periodicals to increase public awareness of their ministry.

10. *Write letters to the editor.* Suppose a secular newspaper published an article about how divorces are increasing in your city. If your author wrote a book on strengthening marriages, she can write a brief letter responding to the newspaper article and mention her book as a helpful resource.

11. *Speak.* If your writers have speaking opportunities, encourage them to promote the book whenever possible. Arrange for a book table to be available at their speaking engagements and schedule time for your author to sign books and talk with the participants before or after the event. If they have to travel to a speaking engagement, have your authors ask their host to visit a key local bookstore and leave a personalized copy of their book with the manager. Then, they can follow up with the manager and other contacts they made in their travels. Because they have a worthwhile message to share, encourage your authors to seek speaking opportunities at churches, retreats, banquets, camps, ministries, schools and other venues.

12. *Use other avenues of communication.* If your author has a web presence, encourage him to include information about his book on his web page. If he went to college and there's an alumni association, make sure their newsletter mentions his new book.

As you work with your authors to reach the public and market their books, you are investing in your mutual success. Authors are the best publicity tool publishers have. Partner to expand your ministry together! ❖

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