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How to Market Children's Books in Schools



I'll be the first to admit I don't know much about how to market children's books, so I am thrilled to have Melissa Williams share her expertise in this guest post.

Children's authors are always looking for ways to get their books into the hands of their audience . . . the children! Advocates for literacy hold the key to every door in this business, so naturally school visits are the number one way to reach your young readers and sell children's books. When developing your marketing strategy, don't forget the obvious, your "think outside the box" attitude and always plan ahead. When doing your research, librarians, teachers, and principals should become your best friends. You should be working and collaborating with them before your book even goes to print.

Build Your Visibility

To establish your credibility and visibility to market children's books, start by joining organizations and attending literary conferences. Present yourself to teachers and librarians at local and national library conferences by becoming a speaker. While at these events, share a booth with other local authors and be available for networking, questions, and feedback. While starting to build your credibility as a public speaker, offer free author school visits as often as possible. You can even start with readings at your local library and bookstores for practice.

How to Schedule School Visits

Organize your visit to meet the needs of the school. Many teachers and librarians will not follow through with an author visit if it becomes more trouble than what it is worth. Have a plan. Remember their schedules are full, and they must allow time for you to come. Give them day and time options, clear and precise details, the grades you specialize in, equipment needs, and the number of groups you are willing to work with.

Pre-Orders and Sales

Pre-orders allow for your book sales to run smoothly. Provide a book pre-order form to the librarian or teacher that may be sent home with the students the week before your visit. Take time to personalize the form for the particular school. Don't worry about technicalities with the form; a simple document with name, price, quantity, book image, and contact info will suffice . . . and don't forget to ask for the name of the recipient for your autograph.

Referrals and Callbacks

If the school enjoyed your visit you will see the referrals come in. Consider these three benefits as the focus of your school visit: Promoting reading and writing, offering the students a fun and educational experience, and keeping the students attentive and involved. Yes, that means being entertaining. Be sure to show your personality and relate to the children while using "teacher techniques" to maintain control of your audience.

Becoming a Productive Speaker

The best way to master the necessary teaching techniques of being an author and speaker is rolling up your sleeves and spending some time practicing around large groups of children. Never underestimate the experience gained from being a youth leader, Sunday school or substitute teacher, or camp volunteer. Your market is children, so make necessary time to surround yourself with your audience.

After Visit Sales and Follow Up

After your school visit, give the students and teachers one more week to order your books. Sales usually double after the children have heard the author read their book. Make it easy for the school by offering free shipping and allow for additional orders to come in via email. Always ask for feedback to perfect your presentation. Authors are creative people, so the presentation should be just that . . . creative, fun, and entertaining.

School visits can be a great place to market children's books, if you plan ahead and follow these tips.

Melissa Williams is a children's author and public speaker. She is the author of the children's chapter book series, [Iggy the Iguana](#), and the owner of LongTale Publishing. She is a children's columnist at [The Westside Story Newspaper](#). To connect with Melissa visit her [blog](#) or follow her on [Twitter](#).

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Excellent information (and timely, since I have an author visit in two weeks!) Thanks for sharing your experience, Melissa.

Posted by: [cherie](#) | [September 25, 2009 at 09:12 AM](#)

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