

Easy Marketing for Writers

Unit 1: Bios that Work for You More than Once.

'Saw your photo in the paper.'

'Read something about your book at the weekend.'

'Was in the car and heard you being interviewed on some radio station.'

Hazel Edwards

Hazel spends 40% of her time researching, 40% marketing and only 20% writing.



There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake, read by millions, is just one of her 150 books for adults and children. An international conference speaker, Hazel holds the Education portfolio for the Australian Society of Authors.
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Generally it takes three media mentions before most people will buy your book.

Often publicity opportunities such as radio spots or interviews are last minute possibilities. So you need to have your bio, bibliography, cover and author photographs ready for instant e-mailing to a producer or editor. A bio contains facts about you as an author which are relevant for THAT audience. It can also be submitted with the proposal or synopsis before the book is published.

Marketing yourself as an author is not a matter of ego, it's a necessity for the book to be reviewed, discussed and bought. You are a solo operator in the business of creativity and ideas are your currency. And a well written bio giving brief facts about you can help attract coverage.

- A bio needs to be in the third person (he or she) and not 'gushy'.
- Angle it at the potential audience.
- Re-use material but with differing emphases.
- Include your book title(s) and types of writing skills and experience.
- Label computer files to distinguish bio length and versions quickly.

Fill in this section:

Why did you write the book?

How did you choose the title?

Who is most likely to read this book?

Do you have any specialist background which is relevant to this work?

List three target audiences for your book

The publicist employed by the publisher will market the single title. If you have several publishers or projects, it's more energy efficient to market yourself as an author. Your time is limited. Aim for a target audience in one bio. And write a second, generic bio you can use several times.

Marketing yourself must be done with wit, and you must not be seen as 'pushy'. So you need quirky anecdotes, unusual angles or simply the ability to be an amusing guest or interviewee. This must be hinted at in your bio.

Answer these

- What has given you the most pleasure in the writing of this book?
- What past occupations or hobbies are relevant?
- What was the most embarrassing moment in connection with your research?
- To what extent are the settings realistic?
- Are the characters fictional composites or based in part on people you know? (Careful you may be on dangerous legal grounds.)

- How many drafts did you do?
- How long did the work take to write?
- Why did you choose that title?
- What have you written before or plan to write in the future? Any links to this work?
- What is the question you would least like to be asked and what is your answer?

Now you list five questions that are relevant to your book and ANSWER them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Checklist

- Bio available to e-mail?
- Versions for different kinds of markets. Don't gush. Be informative. Have different lengths available e.g. 100 words. 250 words. Detailed CV.
- Any 'anecdotes' (funny mini stories) about the writing of the book for fast use in interviews?

ACTION ACTIVITY

1. Write a 100 word bio about yourself which relates to this specific title/project.
2. Now write a 250 words bio for a more general market.
3. Select an amusing and brief personal anecdote (mini story) about the writing of the book. Practice telling it so it fits within 30 seconds.