



**50** *Secret*  
**TIPS**

*to* **Market Your  
Book During** *the*

**HOLIDAY**

**Shopping Season**

# Ways to Use and Sell Your Book During the Holiday Shopping Season

Order your Author Copies in September so you have them on hand when opportunities arise during the holiday shopping season. You will need plenty of physical copies of your book for signings, giveaways, and, of course, selling on your own. The ideas below could require hundreds of books to fulfill them all, but 50 copies is a good place to start, since you will receive free shipping at that quantity level. If you've got big plans, larger orders will save you even more – up to 50% off your author price. The bigger the discount you get, the more you make selling each copy and the more room you have to negotiate with retailers willing to sell your book. **Keep copies of your book on hand at all times.** You never know when you'll have that perfect opportunity to share your book with someone you meet. The goal is as much to raise your brand awareness as it is to sell books.

**PUT YOUR “LOCAL” STATUS TO WORK!** Your hometown crowd will be inclined to give you opportunities you might not otherwise get, simply because you are a local!

1. **Independent Bookstores:** Yes, your neighborhood still has independent bookstores - rumors of their death have been greatly exaggerated. Mom and pop shops, especially ones in your hometown or local community, are often far more receptive to independently published authors, especially local ones, than the giant chain bookstores. Give them a free promotional copy of your book and a sales sheet, so they can determine whether to carry it. They'll get a better margin ordering directly from the [Outskirts Press bookstore](#) than if they order from Ingram. And they'll get the best deal if you leave them a stack on consignment. Owners of independent bookstores must compete with larger chains, and one way they do that is by offering their customers perks -- like meeting a local author! *Hint: You'll find the bookstore proprietor will be much more willing to host your event if you offer to share the promotional responsibilities.* Ask if you can leave bookmarks (which advertise your book) at the registers which the store can give away to shoppers.
2. **Libraries:** Your community has a library (sometimes several). Go talk with the librarian (be sure to bring a copy of your book). November 18 which is *High-Five a Librarian Day* is a great day for this task. Introduce yourself as a local published author and ask what resources are available to share your book with the community. Offer to do a book signing or reading event. If nothing else, offer to leave a copy for the library to display in the lobby and/or put into circulation and bookmarks (which advertise your book) at the checkout stations which patrons can take home for free.
3. **Writer's Groups:** Attend local writer's group/guild/association meetings. Offer to read from and discuss your book. Network with members who have information or contacts that can help you increase your sales, and be ready to give copies of your book to people who may be able to pass it along to important power players, or who may simply be interested in reading it in exchange for an online review (or both!).
4. **Book Clubs:** Reach out to local book clubs (via Meetup and social media) and propose your book for their monthly read. This is a great way to sell 10+ copies of your book at a time. For information on how to create a Book Club Kit check out our [How to Make a Book Club Kit](#) TipSheet in your Author Center. *Hint: Offer to lead the discussion at one of the meetings. Book*

*clubs rarely turn down a chance to read books where they are certain to get the chance to meet the author personally.*

5. **Coffee shops:** Local coffee shops are great places for holiday-themed book readings and signings. Set up a festive table to give the customers something to look at. Ask if you can hang a poster of your book in their window or pin a postcard of your book on their announcement board. Ask if they will consign your book as a point-of-sale purchase. Or offer to leave copies for patrons to read while they sip their coffee/hot chocolate. If customers become engrossed in the story, they may go to Amazon to get their own copy to finish at home.
6. **Genre Retailers:** Book signings and talks on your book don't have to be at a bookstore. Yoga studios/gyms are great for health books, kitchen gadget and independent grocery stores are great for recipe books (think yummy samples), toy stores are great for kids' books, and lingerie stores work for romance novels. Be creative. The low price point of books make them great holiday gifts, be sure to give the store owner ideas of their products to pair with your book for that perfect gift for party hostesses, secret Santa exchanges, neighbors, extended family, coworkers, etc. *Hint: You'll find the store owner will be much more willing to host your event if you offer to share the promotional responsibilities.*
7. **Art galleries:** As a writer you *are* an artist – your medium is just words instead of pigment. If you can tie your book into the gallery's (even if it's just that you're local) they may be willing to consign your book. Ask if you can hang a poster of your book in their window so holiday shoppers see it as they walk by.
8. **Restaurants:** Restaurants are great venues for book events and great places to display your book poster. We've even seen local restaurants with books at the tables for patrons to read while they wait for their food. Holiday group get togethers at restaurants increase visibility for your book when people are most on the lookout for gifting ideas.
9. **Radio and TV Stations:** Send a pitch packet, including a copy of your book, to local radio and television stations offering to do interviews and live segments. Offer to donate a portion of book sales profits to a charity during the month of your segment (this is particularly effective if the charity is one the station already supports).
10. **Newspapers:** Your community most likely has its own local newspaper. Small-town publications regularly feature news briefs and announcements on everything from church events to student achievements to business openings. It's not unusual for local newspapers to write feature stories on newly published books from local authors or to publicize book signings or local events. Become fast friends with the editor; it will pay off ten-fold! Leave him/her a copy of your book when you take him/her out for coffee. In addition to a feature story, ask if the newspaper has a book review section. Leave another copy of your book for the Book Reviewer. If the newspaper has a holiday shopping guide, see if you can get your book listed in that edition with positive reviews to encourage holiday book buyers to try a new (local) author.
11. **Gift Shops:** Check with local gift shops to see if they are interested in carrying copies of a local author's book. Especially ones that are dedicated to your city or state or that have a strong tie to your book's genre/topic. Offer to do a book signing at open house events too. Inexpensive point of sale items like books are great for register displays during the holidays. Be sure to also provide bookmarks (which advertise your book) which the store can give away to shoppers.
12. **Church:** If you are a member of a local church, you will often find a receptive audience among fellow members of your faith. Check the bulletin boards for reading circles, post information about your book on announcement boards, or leave a few copies in the common areas, along with some promotional materials. You could even take out an ad in the bulletin. Have copies of your book on-hand at church sponsored holiday shopping events to follow-up on your previous promotional efforts. Like everything else, this works better for some books (especially religiously-themed books) than others.

13. **Book Signing or Launch Party:** Host a holiday themed Book Signing or Launch Party! Invite everyone you know, coworkers, neighbors, fellow parishioners, sports teammates, your kids' friends' parents... Make sure your book is on display, or give copies away as party gifts or prizes. For ideas on hosting a successful book launch party, read the [10 Rules for Hosting a Book Launch Party](#) TipSheet in your Author Center Book Marketing Resource Center. It's important during the holiday season to be cognizant of people's party schedules and select a time for your event that doesn't compete with those social events (which typically happen in the evening).
14. **Retirement Communities:** Visit local retirement communities and read your book to seniors. Be sure to bring copies to sell once you've gotten them hooked! If your book is on a topic where you could offer a class or demonstration or group activity, that's a great way to get them engaged in your content.
15. **Salons/Barber Shops:** Contact local salons and give patrons something to read (other than the same old boring magazines) while they're sitting under the dryer or waiting their turn.
16. **Holiday Bazaars/Markets:** Create a gift package (including your book) to sell at holiday bazaars/markets (and on your website). Read this [Shopify](#) article for tips on how to get started selling your book at outdoor markets.
17. **Co-Ops and Boutiques:** Have a recipe book? Bundle it with baking mixes and utensils. Have a children's book? Bundle it with toys. Have a fiction book? Bundle it with bath items. Sell your bundles at local co-ops and boutique stores. These bundles/baskets make great holiday gifts for party hostesses, secret Santa exchanges, neighbors, extended family, coworkers, etc.
18. **Health Food Stores:** If you have written a book about nutrition or health, organize a free workshop at your local healthy grocery **store**. If it's a healthy recipe book be sure to bring samples of a recipe that could be used at parties or holiday gatherings.
19. **Free Little Libraries:** Donate your book to the Free Little Libraries in your community. See [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org) for a map of locations.
20. **Networking:** Reach out to other local authors and see about doing a group book-signing event. This is a great way to network and trade tips and secrets. You'll each bring a different audience to the event which means new buyers for all of you.
21. **Reviews:** One of the most important things that you need to do is get reviews of your book. People are not likely to buy your book unless it has reviews on Amazon and/or Barnes & Noble. This is usually the most successful when performed in person, when you literally hand a copy of your book to someone you know and say something like: "If you enjoy this, I would really appreciate it if you could post your review on Amazon." Offer to sign it. Not everyone you give your book to will write a review for it, but this has a high ratio of success. Obviously, the better you know someone, the more likely it is they will write a review. You can limit the number of free copies you give away by only offering copies to people who will appreciate or value your book.
22. **Waiting Areas:** There are lots of local businesses that are prime "drop-off" locations for your book. Where do you often find yourself sitting around waiting and grabbing the nearest magazine from a coffee table? The doctor's office? The tire shop? The dentist? The mechanic? Wherever there is a waiting room (or couches and magazines), there is an opportunity to leave your book for other patrons. If a patron becomes engrossed enough while they are waiting, they may go to Amazon to get their own copy.
23. **Custom T-Shirt:** Crawl inside your book, literally! Create a custom t-shirt featuring your book cover and wear it whenever you go places with large groups of people. Holding a copy of your book while wearing your book shirt will give people the tie-in they need to ask you about it. Have additional copies on hand to sell if more than one person asks you about your shirt.

24. **Everywhere:** Whether you are sitting on the beach during your holiday vacation, waiting at the airport for your flight, or walking around a holiday bazaar, be sure you are seen with a copy of your book and be ready with an "elevator speech" — a short, compelling summary of you and your book that will make a reader want a copy right that minute. More importantly, be ready with a copy of your book! Once you've gotten their interest, ask them if they'd like a signed copy and offer them a discount. They may take you up on that right then and there. If they don't, weigh the pros and cons of offering them a complimentary copy in exchange for a review on Amazon. Stress the importance of their review so they know how important it is to you. After all, that's why you're willing to give them a copy. Giving away one copy for one positive review on Amazon may turn into 2-3 online sales -- after all, reviews sell books.

**PUT THE WORD WIDE WEB TO WORK!** Use social media and your book's website to promote and sell your book in creative ways!

25. Sell Autographed copies of your Book on Amazon. Why sell autographed book copies? For any author, successful bookselling relies on creativity—and the flexibility to offer buyers multiple book formats and several easy ways to purchase. The author's personal signature is often the final nudge a buyer needs to make a purchase decision. A book is a good gift, a book signed by the author is a great gift. Check out our TipSheet on [How to Sell Autographed Copies of Your Book on Amazon](#).
26. Open an eBay store and sell copies of your book. It is easily searchable on Google by your book title and author name. You want to be everywhere shoppers are during the holiday shopping season.
27. Children's books make great additions to holiday gift boxes. Package your book in a pre-made holiday gift box that people can buy from your website.
28. Can your book tap into the idea of exploring new interests? Is your book educational? Parents need ideas to occupy and educate kids during the holiday break. Blog about how your book can help them and be sure to link to your book's webpage.
29. Do you have a holiday book? Run a themed quiz on your social media or ask your fans to post their favorite holiday moments. Then give a signed copy of your book to one lucky contributor.
30. Tie in your book to a holiday blockbuster. Post your book video trailer and engage your readers to post an alternate ending to the movie for a chance to win a signed copy of your book.
31. Write at least 30 Tweets to post during the holiday season. Be sure they incorporate hashtags relevant to the season, holiday, or current events.
32. Did you write a cookbook? Make a holiday meal menu from your recipes. Once you have your menu, publish it across the Internet. Post it on social media platforms. Make a video featuring pictures of your menu items and post it to YouTube. Always be sure to mention you and your book by name, along with a link back to your author webpage.
33. See if you can tie your book into one of these monthly national "events". Post excerpts of your book on social media. If readers love it, they'll buy the full version to find out what happens next. Tie into social media chatter around these events to promote your book. You could even offer a chance to win a free signed copy to one lucky contributor.

**October** is Church Library Month, National Book Month, National Cookbook Month, National Reading Group Month, the first full week of October is Mystery Series Week, and the third week is Teen Read Week.

**November** is National Novel Writing Month, National Life Writing Month, National Family Literacy Month, Picture Book Month, the first Saturday of November is Book Lovers Day, the

first is National Authors Day, the sixth is National Nonfiction Day, the twelfth is National Chicken Soup for the Soul Day, the third full week is National Young Readers Week and National Book Award Week.

**December** is Read a New Book Month and in Iceland, Jolabokaflod, also known as the Christmas Book Flood is a veritable book buying frenzy.

34. Advertise on blogs that are promoting holiday activities, vacations, and events.
35. Launch an Instagram photo contest: Invite followers to post pictures of themselves engaged in holiday activities with a designated hashtag. Choose a winner and offer them a free copy of your book.
36. Research bloggers who review books in your genres. Most bloggers who review books will include instructions on how to get your book reviewed on their blogs. The Indie View ([theindieview.com](http://theindieview.com)) and The Book Blogger List ([thebookbloggerlist.com](http://thebookbloggerlist.com)) are websites that provide information about bloggers who review books.
37. Rafflecopter, Amazon giveaways, and Goodreads giveaways are great ways to gain followers, visibility, and exposure at little cost to you during the holiday shopping season.
38. Submit your book to book award contests. Some contests offer cash prizes and/or paid travel expenses to locations like New York or San Francisco. Others offer publicity packages, award stickers, or other marketing materials. But regardless of the prizing, winning an award is its own reward because of the legitimacy it grants to you and your book. Nothing separates one book from the piles of others quite like winning a book contest. Being an "award-winning author" of an "award-winning book" is a great addition to your author biography, pitch packet, and marketing materials. The [Top National Contests and Book Awards](#) in your Author Center Book Marketing Resource Center will point you in the right direction to get started.
39. Use Facebook to successfully host a book giveaway with apps like Woobox, Rafflecopter, or Shortstack. Be sure to advertise it on your cover photo space. Or use a video app to create a book video to post on your Facebook Page (or purchase a [book video trailer](#) from Outskirts Press). Show your readers the author behind the writing. People connect with those they can relate to and adding a video of your book will increase interest. Plus, Facebook's auto play video feature will entice users to pay attention.
40. Is your book set in an exotic location? Write (and distribute) a travel essay on that location. Be sure to send it to a travel magazine along with a copy of your book for them to review.
41. As a random act of kindness, give one of your social media followers a signed copy of your book.
42. Review [DaysofTheYear.com](http://DaysofTheYear.com) for special calendar events and timely opportunities that might align with your book during the holiday months. Have a social media event for those days and offer a copy of your book as a gift to one lucky participant.

**PUT YOUR HOLIDAY TRAVEL TO WORK!** Traveling is an excellent opportunity to market your book in new places!

43. Before you go on vacation or travel back home for the holidays, set up a book signing at a local bookstore at your destination.
44. Take time to find out about events in your destination location(s), and be creative about how you and your book might get involved!

45. Ask the hotel you are staying at if you can display your book at the registration desk. Then set up a spot nearby during check-in where you can sell and sign copies.
46. Is your book a beach read? Promote it as a holiday vacation companion.
47. Bring plenty of copies of your book on vacation with you to pitch to gift shops and give away to people you meet during your travels. You're still a "local" in your hometown, even if you don't still live there.
48. Take your book to book fairs and expos, writers' conferences, and literary festivals that offer valuable opportunities for you to promote your book and increase your exposure as an author. [Read.gov](http://Read.gov) provides lists of book fairs by state.

## **OTHER MARKETING IDEAS TO PROMOTE BOOK SALES**

- Create a Twitter account for the main character in your book (with your tweets coming from them, in their voice). Tweet about their holiday activities.
- Leave your custom bookmarks and/or business cards advertising your book everywhere you go!
- Create a "Holiday Book Gift List" to share on social media. Include your book and see if you can help out some other budding authors at the same time.
- Remember to upload all of the pictures of your book/events to your Instagram account. Connect with other authors, reviewers, and book bloggers on Instagram too.
- Are you a fiction or children's book writer? Write a blog about how the characters in your book would spend their holidays.
- Is your book set in a great fall/winter location? Create a Pinterest board with pictures of the location.
- eBooks and audiobooks make great last-minute gifts since they can be purchased online literally moments before they are needed so be sure your book is available in Kindle, NOOK, iPad and audiobook formats to make shopping easy for procrastinators and those who want to save on shipping costs for distant gift recipients.
- Donate a stack of books to the local rescue mission.
- Waiting in line at the store? Wish total strangers Happy Holidays! With everyone in the spirit of the season, you may strike up conversations in which you can suggest your book as a gift. Have book copies-or your book ordering information at the very least-with you and don't be afraid to ask for the sale.
- Place custom auto magnets or window decals on your car to promote your book while you're out and about. There are even business card holders designed for this purpose! Print author business cards with your ISBN, book selling page and other buying information and put them out there for shoppers. Park in the most prominent spot you can find to get the most views.