

Transcript, Session 5

Publicity

Exposing Your Book to Media

What is publicity? Many think of it as interviews, reviews, excerpts and more.

The generally accepted definition of publicity is the notice or attention given to someone or something by the media.

Publicity can come in the form of

Feature Stories

Interviews

Mentions of a person or a product

Essentially this means that anything given free or unpaid coverage falls into the realm of publicity.

How is book publicity distinguishable?

It's the promotion of a book, author, or idea to a broad range of media outlets. This can come in the form of

Book reviews

interviews with the author

mentions of the book in larger feature stories, pull quotes from the book featured in magazines or online, anytime a broadcast or podcast host recommends a book on a program

articles written by the author that tie into the themes of the book

excerpts from the book, and much more.

Many people ask how do books get attention when there are so many books published each year?

This is a serious dilemma in the world of book publishing. As the number of books published each year is increasing, the number of potential traditional media outlets is decreasing. Additionally, the attention of reporters, editors, bloggers and producers is spread thin over a larger amount of material. As an author, it will be absolutely essential for you to capitalize on your specific and personal strengths as a writer and an expert to

explore the media angles your book has. The publicity team at IVP is more than happy to help you work through this brainstorming process.

We will start by going over what types of media can take pitches for your book.

The first category of media is print. When people talk about print media they are usually talking about magazines like *Christianity Today*

journals like *Theology Today*,

and newspapers like *The Washington Post*.

For book publicity, this also includes book trade magazines like *Publishers Weekly*, *Library Journal*, and *ForeWord*, news services like the Associated Press, Reuters, and the Religion News Service, and things like newsletters and online journals and magazines.

Broadcast media is the second type of media we work with in book publicity.

Any interview that's broadcast, live or recorded, falls into this category. These outlets include

radio and television broadcasts, both of which can be local or national, and will either be live or recorded. They can also be Christian or secular, and can be recorded over the phone, Skype or in person. This outlet type also includes podcasts, which are growing in number and popularity. Podcasts are almost always recorded, and the length, formality, and distribution all vary.

The final category of media you'll work with in book publicity is online.

Online media is the most fluid of all the outlet types you will work with, and it has changed a lot in the last twenty years. These changes, however, give it an advantage in that there are always new ways to pitch and publicize your book. Online media can include:

blogs

church sites

larger organizational websites

hosted sites like Patheos

And reaching out to key influencers and writers to post on their platforms online and on social media.

Now you may wonder where does publicity fit into the timeline of a book's publication?

It's an overview that aligns somewhat closely with the general promotions timeline but is slightly different.

Four to six months ahead publicity begins sending catalogs out to media so they can get an overview of what books are coming, what might be of interest, and what's important.

Four months ahead is when publicity starts reaching out to key print media, and sometimes online and broadcast, in the form of galleys or Advance Reader Copies. These media need months of lead time to plan reviews, send books to reviewers and interviewers, and send their own publications to print.

One to four months ahead are when the publicity team works on creating materials that media outlets can use for excerpts, reviewing, interviews and other coverage. These materials are combined in a press kit, and can include talking points, book snippets, details about the author and content, endorsements, and more.

One to three months ahead is the time period when the publicists start to follow up with print media as they receive and review the advanced book copies.

One month ahead of the release date is when books and press kits are sent out to all media outlets, including online, broadcast, and print.

From two weeks ahead of launch until three months post-launch the publicity team will work with you to schedule interviews, follow up on book reviews, help you write original articles, leverage excerpts and more in the normal book release window.

Within the calendar year of your book's release, the publicity team may also feature it in a media-specific annual catalog that features talking points, book details, author bio, and endorsements. This is sent out to key general media each year as a way to garner expertise coverage for each of our books. And publicity will continue as long as your book has interest with the general public, for months and years to come.

Aside from the aforementioned timeline of traditional publicity work, what else does the IVP publicity team do?

We see the job of the publicist as your right-hand-person in terms of reaching out to and making connections with media. We want to make sure editors, writers, bloggers, and hosts are connecting with you and your books content in ways that are meaningful. Specifically, this means

booking interviews

garnering reviews

and planning excerpts, as previously mentioned.

Additionally, we will assist in author signings and conferences where we are selling your book.

We will help you plan author events at the launch of your book.

We will work tirelessly to help you reach out to key influencers, making connections between you and key leaders.

We will provide media coaching along the way, teaching you interview tactics and helping you write short-form pieces.

We will continue to network with media outlets on your behalf for long-term exposure for your expertise and your book.

Given how much time we will spend together working on your book, you might ask how the relationship between the publicity team and author works.

The publicity team will function as a bridge between you and media outlets.

Starting with your book, we will help establish you as an expert with editors and producers, creating a lasting relationship between you and the media.

We also receive continual feedback from the outlets we work with, and in turn we will take that feedback and provide you with specific training and coaching to help you be a long-term expert in the eyes of the media.

All of this helps give your book publicity lift long after its initial launch.

So given that all of this looks like a lot of hard work, why is it important?

Publicity is one of the only ways for you to create a lasting brand beyond the publishing your book. The important content of the book becomes the brand you wear as an author, and it helps producers and editors recognize you and seek you out for continued interviews and coverage.

Publicity helps you to be known as an expert on a specific topic, and media outlets love relying on experts they know and trust to help them understand what is happening in the world today.

Ongoing publicity, which can last for years after the book's release, is one of the only ways to continue sales and interest in your book.

Continued publicity coverage can also help you land your next book deal, speaking gig, or career move.

Overall, publicity is important because it is a low-cost and effective way to get your message out to a broader audience.

So what can you do?

The publicity part of the book publishing process starts as early as contracting your book, and sometimes earlier. As outlined, it can continue for years after your book's publication. This means that you should have a long term, healthy, trusting relationship with your publicity team. And it also means that your involvement is part of a continued strategy for a book's success well beyond the launch of that book. The one thing any publicist will tell you is that communication with your publicity team is crucial to the success of your book.

Keeping that in mind, it's good to let the publicity team know when

You have any new publicity ideas

You have questions about the publicity process

If any crises come up

You establish or connect with a new media contact we can help you reach out to

Just keep in mind that we are here to help you with this process.

As for what you can do, let's start at the contracting stage. There's a lot that you can do throughout the entire process, but contracting is where you can really start to establish yourself as an expert in the field in which you are writing. To do this, you can:

Continue to build and develop platform through social media, writing, and networking.

Start blogging or using social media more actively

And finally, start thinking through how you want to be known as a brand, and what that might look like.

Just before the launch of your book, you should:

Work with the publicity team to brainstorm media pitch ideas

Start practicing your interview technique. Record yourself and get feedback from your publicity team or someone you trust to give you an honest assessment.

Start writing talking points for your book, working with the publicity team to have questions ready that might work well in an interview setting. Also come up with answers that will be focused and on topic, working on committing them to memory.

Pull some creative and interesting excerpts from your book to have ready in case a magazine or blog requests one. You can work with the publicity team on these to make sure you have the right permissions line for sharing.

After you get all of that content prepped and ready to go, what can you do right after and around the launch of the book?

Clear some time for media interviews—most will not all be on the same day or in the same week, but make sure you clear out some regular blocks in case the publicity team needs to schedule a big interview last minute.

Creatively engage with your book's content online. You can do this by seeking out other experts in the field and dialoging with them on social media or websites. You can also write blog posts of your own, or guest blog posts on others blogs around the content in your book. Generally it's a good rule of thumb to stay up to date on all the latest conversations that might relate to your book's topic.

Start sharing content similar to yours. This can be done through social media or whatever other platforms you employ, whether that's a newsletter, podcast, or blog. Bring in other experts—remember that if you give them a little bit of platform from which to speak, they might return the favor.

Based on the research you will be doing, continue to craft media pitches. You can send these to the publicity team and they will help you reach out to editors and producers for further interviews and article writing opportunities. We also recommend using other writers as resources—most media outlets love when trends are picked up on or when writers show that they truly understand their field.

And as always, continue to cultivate your brand and expertise.

Now that we've gone over the vast array of possibilities of what you can do for publicity, here are some things not to do:

Never feed the trolls! They won't go away, and getting into arguments online or elsewhere will detract from your book's message.

Try not to go off message during the month before and three months after your book launches. If your book is about racial justice issues, now would not be the best time to launch a new cooking blog.

Try not to contradict the message of your book while promoting it. It's a great idea to acknowledge other viewpoints, but if your book takes a specific stance on an issue, it's best to have answers prepared for tricky questions so that you don't get flustered and end up negating something your book has to say.

Please don't keep your publicity team in the dark about anything that might impact your work with the team. This could include a family emergency, health crises, or issues at work. We are here to help you work through your book launch, but we can't help you if we don't know what's going on.

Now that we've established what not to do, we thought we should address the question of "is all publicity good publicity"

It's an age-old question, but depending on who you ask you might get a different answer. We'd like to break it down a little further

All publicity is an opportunity to talk about your book, which is a good thing!

But negative coverage can detract from otherwise positive book messaging

Keep in mind that critical reviews are an opportunity to listen to and dialogue with differing viewpoints

Negative publicity is inflamed when it's not about your book but that is large enough to detract from the positivity of a book launch.

Our rule is that publicity that is off-message during the launch of your book is not helpful and can waste your very valuable time and energy. So let us know if there is anything we can do to help you stay on message and keep media attention focused on your book and your platform as an expert.

All this being said, publicity is a key part of the promotional strategy for your book

To have a successful book launch, publicity should be a key part of your plans. The publicity team is here to help you with that, and we look forward to working together. The biggest takeaways you should have about effectively partnering with the publicity team on a campaign are:

Have consistent and quality communication with the publicity team

Keep yourself up to date on the conversations surrounding your book's topic

Be well-prepared for interviews

Have pitches and story ideas ready for when the time arises

And always remember that publicity can and should continue long after your book's launch.

We look forward to a lasting relationship with you!