

How an author can make money marketing books to libraries.

How to Market Your Book to Libraries

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What is a Library?

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, a library is a collection of books used for reading or study, or the building or room in which such a collection is kept. The etymology of the word is interesting. Library is derived from the Latin liber, "a book," whereas a Latinized Greek word, bibliotheca, is the origin of the word for library in German, Russian, and the Romance languages.

A study of ancient libraries is a fascinating and rewarding effort and will help the author see the importance of library systems and writing to history and culture. Libraries have always served as archives and depositories of what mankind knows, and what man has achieved. Libraries reveal the essence of what our society and we are.

Nineveh, the capital of the ancient Assyrian Empire, is said to have created the first organized library. Books were inscribed on clay tablets in cuneiform, the writing of the Assyrians, and placed in the royal library. Topics inscribed on the clay tablet books included astrology, history, grammar, geography, literature, law, and medicine. These libraries also collected letters, prayers, poems, hymns, incantations, oracles, dictionaries, chronicles, deeds of sales of land, business contracts and law records, and numerous other subjects of general and specific interest.

There were other famous ancient libraries as well. Some of these libraries are considered to have been wonders of the ancient world. In the famed library at Alexandria, books were

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on papyri in Egyptian hieroglyphics or Greek. In the famed libraries of Pergamum and Ephesus, the books were probably made of parchment and vellum. The monastic scribes of the Church continued to collect and manufacture great stores of classical and spiritual books, filling the shelves of their libraries with illuminated manuscripts. One can see that the contents of libraries of the past were much like libraries today. Unfortunately, the contents of many ancient libraries have vanished. When our world lost some of these ancient libraries to fire, catastrophe, or war, we forever lost countless and irreplaceable pieces of literature.

All great civilizations seem to have had great libraries. Libraries have served church and state, kings and commoners. Additionally, libraries have advanced scientific knowledge. For example, the great Arabic libraries helped spark Europe's Renaissance and restore the knowledge of Greek to the Church who had somehow lost that language during the Dark Ages.

Libraries have long attracted the attention of great men and women. In the early days of writing and libraries, books were sometimes worth their weight in gold and enjoyed only by a few wealthy, literate people. Thankfully, that has changed. Books are now readily accessible to all, and though many complain of the high price of books today, there is really no comparison to their cost in the past. As literacy and book affordability increased, so did the number of libraries.

The thoughtful author values libraries. They are shrines to his or her craft, depositories of man's knowledge, insights, and thoughts. Consider your own personal library. Your personal library is a diary of your life, a record of your

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passions, where you have been, what you have learned, and what you want to learn.

Today, a library is more than just a collection of books. Libraries are extensions and representations of the communities they represent. Along with books, libraries are now storehouses of music, art, databases, microfilm, CD-ROMS and other audio-visual collections relating to one's society and culture. However, a library's purpose is still to make information available to its community and the public. The work and programs of libraries are designed to promote this goal. In short, libraries are still centers of learning, schools for the curious, the ambitious, and the diligent. To describe the modern library, Carlyle's words are still fitting: "The true university of these days is a collection of books."

Historically, the librarian is an influential figure. So influential, in fact, that in history they became political targets and victims of those in governmental or societal power. History is replete with examples. Consider Hypatia, the female head of the Great Library of Alexandria, who was killed by a band of fanatical anti-Platonists. I should also mention the Soviet librarian, Yuri Vladimirovich Got'e who was the head of the Lenin Library. He chronicled the Russian revolution, yet in spite of his devotion, he later was exiled as a reactionary. These examples illustrate how librarians are often not politically correct and function as the mouthpieces and models of free expression. The conscientious librarian is opposed to censorship as a matter of principle.

Many famous people have actually worked in libraries-including Seutonius, Casanova, Friedrich Engels, Henry Wordsworth Longfellow, Benjamin Franklin, Philip Larkin, J.

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Edgar Hoover, Golda Meir, and Mao Tse-Tung, the philosophers David Hume and Emmanuel Kant, writers such as Jorge Luis Borges and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and at least six popes.

Yet, librarians are more than book lovers or custodians of books. They are specialists in locating, acquiring storing and retrieving information. In our technological age, projects of librarians that once required years to complete, can now be accomplished with blinding speed. Is it any wonder that these great men and women who served in libraries also changed our world? Is it any wonder that the relationship between librarians and authors is so strong?

Think of the great projects that have been accomplished in libraries. Think of the self-development that can take place in a library. Think of the writers (like Karl Marx) whose hours in libraries resulted in the creation of books that have forever changed the world. Malcolm X is said to have read every book in his prison library in his quest to improve himself. Louis L'Amour was himself a haunter of libraries. His memoir, *Education of a Wandering Man*, relates how visiting the library became part of his daily routine. He says, "I went into the Reference Room of the Portland Public Library and settle down to some serious reading. From that time on, for months, I was there nearly every waking hour that the library was open and I was not working." L'Amour was a voracious reader, using the library as a reading room, a center of research, and a writing room. Is it any wonder that his numerous works are so popular and fill the shelves of many libraries?

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That libraries and librarians are an influential, powerful force upon our society is evident. When one considers the prominent role authors give to librarians in fiction, one can see how influential libraries and librarians are. In hundreds of books and stories, librarians are protagonists, villains, mentors, crime suspects, victims, lovers, and mentors or other support type characters. Libraries are used as settings in both fiction and film for scenes of intrigue, romance, murder, and mystery.

For a fascinating study of librarians in fiction, check out <http://valinor.ca/el3.htm> and <http://valinor.ca/waycool.html>. If librarians fascinate you as a writer, do a net search and you will find plenty of very colorful librarians who can provide numerous ideas for your fiction.

Get your book into libraries, and you place your book in a powerful, mystical place where it can really make a difference, not only on your pocketbook, but also on the world!

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