

Learn how to create book press kits that get results.

**Putting It On Paper: The Ground Rules for Creating  
Promotional Pieces that Sell Books**

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“Whether you’re an aspiring author or already published, this is the one resource you need to guide your book’s promotion. Dawn’s no-nonsense advice will help authors generate a press kit that produces results.”

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“As a national publicist, I receive calls from many new book authors who have no idea how to promote themselves or their books. *Putting It On Paper* is the answer authors have been waiting for. Dawn has taken the mystery out of successfully creating book promotion materials by outlining the essential steps authors need to take. This is the most concise, informative book I have ever read. Congratulations, Dawn, on an outstanding job!”

~ Karen Ammond, President, KBC Media Relations

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~ Dan Smith, President, Smith Publicity

“Dawn’s book came just in time for my students to publish their book on Shakespeare. This easy, practical approach puts publishing within our grasp.”

~ Jerry Horowitz, Ph.D., Professor of English, Rollins College

“Dawn Josephson created a book for making promotions simple. Thank you for sharing these generous secrets to propel books to success. With tips like these, any author can create outrageous results.”

~ Jill Lublin, best selling author of *Guerrilla Publicity* and *Networking Magic*, CEO, Promising Promotions



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**A Part of The Ground Rules™ Series**

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# **Putting It On Paper**

The Ground Rules for Creating Promotional  
Pieces that Sell Books

**Dawn Josephson**

**Published by  
Ground Rules Press  
A subsidiary of  
Cameo Publications, LLC**

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# Dedication

To everyone who has ever had a dream...  
and has dared to pursue it.



# Acknowledgments

“How many people does it take to write a book?” The answer to that question may seem obvious: one. Writing is, after all, perceived as a solitary endeavor, with one person, one keyboard, one idea.

The reality is that writing a book is much like directing a stage play. You have main characters, protagonists, antagonists, supporting actors, and stagehands, all of whom help you along the way. The writer is, in a sense, the play’s director, taking the input and contributions from all these people to create a written piece.

With that in mind, I would like to thank my own “cast of characters” (in order of appearance).

To my mom and dad, Sylvia S. Bigit and John T. Bigit. Thank you for always allowing me to express my creativity, whether it was through my pink hair, my tie-dye clothing, my neon shoes, or any one of the other hundred expressive “styles” I happened to come home with. You taught me that I could do anything I wanted in life. It’s one lesson I learned well.

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To my many clients, past, present, and future. Thank you for the trust you have in me. I honor and appreciate each of you.

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter One:</b>	
<b>Media Kit, Schmedia Kit ~</b>	
<b>Why You Need One .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Chapter Two</b>	
<b>The Cover Letter ~</b>	
<b>How to Make Your First Impression Count .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Chapter Three</b>	
<b>The Press Release ~</b>	
<b>How to Sell Your Ideas in 350 Words or Less ...</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Chapter Four</b>	
<b>Mock Book Reviews ~</b>	
<b>Tell `Em What to Say.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Chapter Five</b>	
<b>Author Bios ~</b>	
<b>A Time to Toot Your Own Horn .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Chapter Six</b>	
<b>Book Sell Sheet ~</b>	
<b>Your Book's Birth Announcement.....</b>	<b>91</b>

**Chapter Seven**  
**Catalog Sheet ~**  
**Just the Facts Ma'am ..... 107**

**Chapter Eight**  
**Extra Sales Materials ~**  
**Everyone Loves Chachkis ..... 119**

**Chapter Nine**  
**The Article ~**  
**Back Door Selling ..... 137**

**Chapter Ten**  
**Putting it All Together ~ ..... 155**

**The Last Word ~ ..... 161**

**Index ..... 163**





# Introduction

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*“Writing is an adventure. To begin with, it is a toy and an amusement. Then it becomes a mistress, then it becomes a master, then it becomes a tyrant. The last phase is that just as you are about to be reconciled to your servitude, you kill the monster, and fling him to the public.”*  
—Winston Churchill

---

You’ve published a book. Congratulations. Now it’s time to get your book into your readers’ hands. Whether you’ve self-published or gone with a traditional press, marketing your book is *your* responsibility, so you need to start your book promotion activity as soon as possible.

If you’re like most authors, you may have had a distinct image of what your post-publication days would look like. Visions of anxious crowds storming the bookstore for your book, thoughts of famous TV and radio talk show hosts begging to interview you on your topic, and notions of the bags and bags of fan mail from satisfied readers may have danced through your head.

But then reality set in, and you realized one important truth: writing and publishing your book was the easy part; marketing and selling it requires work.

Fortunately, it is possible to get your book the recognition it deserves. After all, many authors before you have become household names and have sold millions of copies of their book. You can too.

## Your Book’s Secret Weapon

What is it that sets those successful authors ahead of the pack and places them in the media’s and their readers’ attention? Two words: book promotion. That’s right. The best-selling authors know how to best promote their book for increased sales. Think about it...you can have the best book in the world, but if no one knows about it, they’ll never know to buy it. So the more you promote your book, the better it will sell.

To help you with your promotional efforts, books and other training materials abound on the various ways to promote your book. Some focus on traditional promotion outlets while others gear you towards the not-so-obvious promotional venues. Both approaches are good, and most successful authors focus on a mix of traditional and non-traditional promotional options.

Unfortunately, many of those books, tapes, and seminars that focus on promotional strategies and techniques neglect to teach you one important step that comes immediately before any book promotion activity can take place – how to write your promotional materials and assemble your book’s media kit. This is an important step, because without a strong and persuasive media kit, all your promotional efforts will be for naught. You may be able to talk a good game and get people excited about your book, but when they ask for your press kit and see a measly, uninformative packet with a few clippings and nothing more, all your build-up will fall flat. Your promotional materials won’t live up to your words, and you’ll lose any interest the media, distributors, or bookstores may have had in your product. To keep your momentum strong, you want to create a powerful media kit that gets people begging for more and ultimately buying your book.

## Get the Facts

“But *my* book will sell itself,” many authors proclaim. No, it won’t. In 2002, over 135,000 books were published in the United States alone. Your book is in competition with each of them – even those not on the same topic as yours. Realize that readers have only so much time to devote to reading. If they’re interested in numerous topics, from business management to gardening, and debating between various books on each topic of interest, your book could very well be in competition with books you would normally consider unrelated to yours. Remember, you’re selling more than your book’s idea to your potential readers; you’re selling the fact that your book is worth your readers’ precious time. Therefore, regardless of the promotional outlet you choose, you need to set your book apart from the more than 134,999 others published the same year as yours.

An easy task? No. But is it doable? Absolutely. And that’s exactly what this book will show you.

---

In the following chapters you'll learn everything you need to know to create a powerful media kit that will draw attention to your book. From cover letters to press releases to book sell sheets and everything in between, you'll learn how to create and write the various promotional pieces so that they generate interest and show off your book's potential. You'll also learn what to do with the various written pieces and how to use them for the maximum results. Along the way you'll see real-life samples of what powerful promotional pieces look like and gain the insider secrets on how to write each piece like a promotional pro.

Armed with your new media kit and the knowledge of how to effectively update it through the coming months of promotion, you'll be able to follow any promotional program with resounding success.

So let's get started. Your book's public awaits...



## Chapter One

# Media Kit, Schmedia Kit ~ Why You Need One

---

*“He who does not expect a million readers  
should not write a line.”*

*–Johan Wolfgang Von Goethe, German writer and poet*

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After investing months or perhaps years to complete the perfect book, your job now is to get the word out about your creation to your awaiting audience. Promotion is important, because even if you think your book is destined for the best-seller list (and it very well could be), no one will buy your book if you don’t market it and set up the appropriate distribution outlets.

The first step in book marketing is to create a press kit, or media kit, for your book. (Note: for the purposes of this book, the terms “media kit” and “press kit” will be used interchangeably.) Think of the media kit as your book’s resume. While each kit will vary in complexity depending on the book’s subject matter, the overall goal is to highlight what your book is about, why your message is important, who you are as an author, how you will help your readers, and how you’re marketing your book.

Every book, whether it’s a novel, a children’s book, a memoir, or a business book, needs a press kit. You will give this kit to three distinct groups of people:

- 1. The Media** – This includes magazine editors, book reviewers, and radio and television producers. These people will write about you or your book or feature you or your book on their program. This is called publicity.

- 2. Book Distributors** – This includes distribution houses such as Baker & Taylor, Bookazine, and Ingram. Major bookstores, libraries, and other retail outlets purchase books from various distributors, not from individual publishers or authors. The distributor is the middleman between you and the major outlets.
- 3. Individual Bookstores** – This includes small, independent bookstores and specialty shops. These smaller niche markets typically order direct from the publisher or author.

You'll need to send a media kit to people in each of the above categories. Rarely will the buyers or decision makers spend time talking with you about your book, nor will they seek you out. You must search them out and give them your information in a concise and orderly packet that showcases your book's major highlights and selling points.

## Preparing the Kit

Before you begin creating your media kit, you need to determine specifically how you're going to use it. Using the categories from above, are you using your press kit to entice editors to review your book? Are you using it to get guest spots on radio or TV? Are you using it to solicit book signings at bookstores? Are you using it to persuade a features editor to write an article about you or your book? Are you using it to get a contract with a distribution house? Whatever your goal, you must gear your entire press kit to accomplish that goal. Hence, you will likely have multiple versions of your press kit, each targeting a specific audience.

Regardless of how you slant the kit, each press kit you create will have some basic components.

They are:

- 1. A Cover Letter** – A one-page letter that entices the reader to open your kit. Your cover letter should highlight why you're contacting this particular person or organization, as well as state why the contact is justified.
- 2. A Press Release** – Usually one page long, the press release describes your book or the angle you're pitching in two or three paragraphs. It also includes important information, such as your book's price, page count, ISBN number, and your contact information.

3. **A Mock Book Review** – A one to two-page overview of your book that gives the highlights. Rather than read your entire book cover to cover, many reviewers will pull material from your supplied review.
4. **An Author Biography** – A one-page document that introduces your credentials for writing the book and that highlights your educational background.
5. **A Book Sell Sheet** – A one page flyer for your book that gives ordering information and sell copy.
6. **A Book Catalog Sheet** – A one page information piece that gives the technical details, such as how many books come in a case, the book's sales handles, the author's publicity campaign, etc.
7. **A Novelty Item** such as a postcard of the book's cover, a bookmark, a counter card, etc. – Including a novelty item makes you memorable. It also showcases some of your marketing efforts.
8. **An Article Pertaining To The Book** – Since you are an expert on your book's topic, an article will help establish your credibility.



## The Ground Rules

In order for your recipients to take your press kit seriously, you need to follow some basic ground rules.

### ***Ground Rule #1: Keep it simple.***

Sure, your computer comes with all sorts of innovative fonts, but this is not the time to try them out. Stick with a simple font, such as Times New Roman or Arial, in a 10, 11, or 12-point type.

**Ground Rule #2: Don't crowd.**

Always double space your text and use one-inch margins throughout. If you have to single space or get rid of your margins to make all your text fit, you're saying too much.

**Ground Rule #3: Keep it neutral.**

Only use white or off-white paper. If you think using outrageous paper colors, such as neon yellow or fuchsia, will gain attention, think again. Hurting someone's eyes is not the way to gain attention.

**Ground Rule #4: Make it easy to contact you.**

Always have all your contact information prominently displayed on each printed piece. This includes phone, fax, e-mail, web site, and snail mail.

**Ground Rule #5: Present it professionally.**

Package all your materials in a two-pocket or presentation folder. If possible, customize the front cover with your book's cover design.



## Frequently Asked Questions

Now that you know the basic media kit ground rules and why you need to create a customized kit, it's time to learn how to create each of the specific marketing pieces. Before we do, let's address some of the more common questions regarding press kits.

- Q.** I know you say not to use bright colored paper to make my kit stand out, but if I don't do something outrageous like that, how will my kit stand out from all the others?
- A.** Your kit will stand out based on its content. Create a kit that's nothing but fluff, and you'll get zero response. However, if you create a kit that is filled with helpful information and is extremely targeted, you'll gain the maximum results.

- Q.** Mailing press kits can get expensive. Can't I just e-mail people about my book?
- A.** Your average editor or buyer receives approximately 200 e-mails per day, *and* he or she usually won't open an attached file from an unknown source. So there are two strikes against e-mail right there. Now, if you're mailing your media kits to people at random, then yes, it will get expensive. Smart book promoters target their mailings to only those people who can make the decision to buy the book, such as corporate buyers for independent bookstores or chains, or those people to whom the book pertains, such as editors of magazines whose readers match your book's demographics. So keep your mailings targeted to get the highest payback for your investment.



## Key Points

- ☑ *All* books need a press kit.
- ☑ Your book's media kit is its resume.
- ☑ Tailor each press kit to the intended recipient.
- ☑ Follow the basic ground rules *every time* you create a media kit.



## Chapter Two

# The Cover Letter ~ How to Make Your First Impression Count

---

*“The strokes of the pen need deliberation  
as much as the sword needs swiftness.”*

*–Julia Ward Howe, writer, poet, reformer, and author of  
The Battle Hymn of the Republic*

---

“Do I really need to write a cover letter for *every* media kit I send out?” the novice book authors often ask (or rather, whine).

The answer is yes!

Your cover letter is the friendly yet subtly persuasive introduction to your kit. Consider your cover letter your kit’s “Hello! My name is...” sticker. With it, you appear friendly and approachable – someone who belongs at the party. Without it, you’re just another sourpuss hanging out in the background who is only there for the free booze and food.

A good cover letter entices people to open your kit and actually read it. It also showcases your writing skills, your professionalism, and your creativity. The key word to remember here is “entice.” Your cover letter should not give every detail – that’s your media kit’s job. The cover letter is merely the introduction.

## Customization is Key

Whether you’re sending your kit to an editor, a buyer, a distributor, a producer, the media, or other promotional outlet, you must customize *every* cover letter. Yes, that’s *every*! An editor won’t appreciate receiving a cover letter that’s geared for a distributor, nor will any recipient react favorably to a form letter. Following is a sample form letter that will squash your credibility in an instant.

## What Not To Do –

**Form Letter Example** (an actual letter with the book title changed to protect the amateur author)

Dear Editor, Reviewer, Buyer, or Producer:

Enclosed is information about my newest book, *My Book Title*. It would be a good feature in your publication, on your show, or in your bookstore. Please note that I am also available for interviews or book signings. Should you have any questions, please call me at the number listed below.

Sincerely,

Ima Amateur

Not customizing your cover letter or using a form letter accomplishes only one thing: It destines your kit for the infamous “round file.” It also shows that you’re lazy, uncreative, and possibly incapable of delivering a quality book. So don’t send one. Customize and personalize every letter for maximum results.



## The Ground Rules

Every good cover letter will have some key features, regardless of the book’s topic or the kit’s purpose. Structure your letter around these ground rules.

---

***Ground Rule #1: Always use the recipient's correct name and address.***

I know this sounds obvious, but too many authors send out kits to the wrong person, or they misspell the recipient's name, company name, or street address. Such oversights make a negative first impression and alert the recipient to the fact that you're a novice book promoter. If you don't know whom to address the cover letter to or how to spell someone's name, call the person's office and ask. While you're at it, verify the street address and company name. Again, it may sound obvious, but many people send perfectly good media kits to companies and either misspell the company's name or the recipient's name, or they write the address inaccurately. Editors and buyers look at those items to get a feel for your attention to detail. And editors, especially, think negatively of someone who can't even get the magazine name right. A word of caution here: when you get someone on the phone, you can certainly tell them that you're sending a media kit, but do not go on and on with your full presentation. These people are on deadlines and are very time oriented. Respect their time and they'll respect you.

***Ground Rule #2: Always include a reason for the correspondence in the first paragraph.***

If you don't say why you're writing to the person, why should he or she keep reading? In every letter, state clearly why you are contacting the particular person. "I am writing to introduce you to my newest book..." "I would like to suggest a new title for your list..." "I would like to recommend an interview with..." Too many authors bury the reason for their correspondence several paragraphs into the letter, or they don't state it at all. But if you don't give people an immediate reason to keep reading, you'll miss your chance to capture their attention. Blind letters that state no purpose get absolutely nowhere.

***Ground Rule #3: Always include a brief overview of your book.***

In one paragraph, state what your book is about, who the audience is, and how the book will benefit them. Stick to the facts. Resist the temptation to make your book sound grander than life. Phrases like "first," "only," "greatest," "most informative," and "revolutionary" typically raise red flags and indicate that you're exaggerating.

***Ground Rule #4: Always give some author information.***

State who you are and why you are an expert who is qualified to write this book and dispense the advice your book contains. Again, facts sell. Be sure to mention any career highlights or awards received. This is not the place to talk about your toy poodle Max or the fact that you won your first grade spelling bee.

***Ground Rule #5: Always make a compelling call to action.***

What do you want the person reading your letter and reviewing your kit to do? Stock your book in their store? Interview you for an article? Add your book to their title list? Whatever action you want to happen, state it here. “I would like for you to review my book in an upcoming issue...” “I would like you to consider carrying my book in your store...” “I would like you to add my book to your list of active titles...” Tell them precisely what you want.

***Ground Rule #6: Close your letter professionally.***

Always end your letters professionally, and include all your contact information. Now is not the time to be cute, artistic, or colloquial. End each cover letter as if you were writing to your most respected business client.

Finally, make sure you put these six components on professional letterhead and that you write clearly and succinctly. Never send a cover letter that’s longer than one page, and always spell-check and grammar-check every word and sentence. In this business, a misspelled word or awkward sentence structure *can* cost you the sale!



Following is the basic structure of any good cover letter:

## Basic Anatomy of a Cover Letter

Recipient's Name

Title

Organization

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear (name):

Type your compelling introduction here. This is where you state why you are writing to this person.

In the next paragraph you give a brief overview of your book. Keep this section to three to seven sentences.

In the next paragraph you give a brief overview of who you are as the author. List your career highlights, credentials, and professional affiliations as they pertain to your recipient, his or her audience, or your book's audience. Again, limit the text to three to seven sentences.

In this next paragraph you close by giving your recipient some sort of call to action. State what you want him or her to do with your information.

Warm Regards,

Your Name

Your contact information



## Some Real-Life Samples

Following are sample cover letters that have produced results. Notice how each one contains the six ground rules previously listed, customized to the recipient's needs and circumstances.

### Ground Rules In Action ~ Cover Letter #1

- ◆ The recipient's name, complete title, and company address are correct.
- ◆ The reason for the correspondence is clearly stated: "I would like to introduce you to..."
- ◆ The second paragraph contains a condensed book overview.
- ◆ The third paragraph contains a strong author bio.
- ◆ The call to action is clear: "I would like to discuss you stocking this title."
- ◆ The close is professional and includes all contact information.

## Cover Letter #1: To a Bookstore Buyer

Anna Book Buyer  
New Vendor Coordinator  
Borders Group, Inc.  
111 Main St.  
Book Central, IN 99999

Dear Anna:

I would like to introduce you to our latest title, *Taming Technology: You Can Control The Beast*, by Brian J. Nicholson, Ph.D. It's the perfect resource for anyone who feels clueless when it comes to technology.

In his new book, technology expert Brian Nicholson shows readers how to grasp the reins of technology and take control of the so-called "beast" before it takes control of them. Filled with helpful advice and real-life scenarios, *Taming Technology* takes a complex subject and makes it simple, helping readers overcome their fears and frustrations and discover their personal technology learning strategy so that they can take full advantage of the technology at hand. With the information Nicholson provides, readers will be well on their way to maximizing their productivity while minimizing technology-related stress.

For over 25 years, Brian Nicholson has been bringing people and technology together. Through a combination of academic studies and real-world experience, he has developed three Technology Maxims to help people and organizations maximize the technology in their lives and work. As Founder and Executive Director of TechMatters Institute, based in Houston, TX, Nicholson helps organizations create implementation and learning strategies that enable users to actually use the technology at hand. In addition to writing *Taming Technology*, Nicholson is an accomplished author of dozens of articles for various national and local publications.

After you have had a chance to review *Taming Technology* and the additional informational materials, I would love the opportunity to discuss Borders Group stocking this title. I can be reached at 1-866-372-2636. Please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions or need any further information.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards,

Paula B. Duncan  
Marketing Coordinator  
Cameo Publications  
marketing@cameopublications.com  
1-866-372-2636

## Ground Rules In Action ~ Cover Letter #2

- ◆ The letter's first sentence is great! It shows that the sender did her research and isn't mailing a blind letter.
- ◆ Next, in three sentences, the sender gives a strong book overview.
- ◆ The third paragraph highlights the author's credentials.
- ◆ The call to action is clear: "do a book review, print an excerpt, or print the author's article."
- ◆ A professional close with contact information seals the deal.

## Cover Letter #2: To a Book Reviewer

Edward Book Reviewer  
Yoga International  
PO Box 1234  
Relaxation, PA 18431

Dear Edward:

After reading through your magazine and browsing over your website, I feel prompted to introduce you to Jacki Kwan's book, *Almost Home: Embracing The Magical Connection Between Positive Humor & Spirituality* (ISBN 0-9715739-1-3). It is a fun and insightful read that explains the profound effect humor can have on your quality of life, your passion for tomorrow, and your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Touching and informative, *Almost Home* recounts Kwan's journey to bring laughter into her life and the lives of others. Through the process, she illustrates how humor is the portal to our spirituality and how it transcends language and cultural barriers, enabling strangers to form spiritual connections with one other.

Jacki Kwan is a Licensed Certified Social Worker at the Clinical Level, a Master Practitioner of Neuro-linguistic Programming, a Registered Laughter Leader with the World Laughter Tour™, and a Therapeutic Clown. She is the creator of HA!HA!LOGY®, a multi-faceted therapeutic humor program for healthcare facilities, and leads Laughter Club sessions at nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the Washington, DC area. Jacki has been presenting workshops on humor and health since 1994.

Enclosed you will find a review copy of the book along with other information about the author. Jacki also has an article available for publication. I have enclosed that information as well.

After you have had a chance to review the information, I would like to discuss with you the possibility of *Yoga International* doing a book review, printing an excerpt, or printing Jacki's article. Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards,

Paula B. Duncan  
Marketing Coordinator  
Cameo Publications  
marketing@cameopublications.com  
1-866-372-2636

## Ground Rules In Action ~ Cover Letter #3

- ◆ The introductory paragraph reminds the recipient of the previous conversation and recaps the outcome. “Per your request” shows that the sender is following the recipient’s instructions.
- ◆ The second paragraph details why this book is beneficial to the audience.
- ◆ The third paragraph tailors the author bio to the recipient’s interests.
- ◆ The call to action is clear: “feature the book within the organization.”
- ◆ All the contact information is included.

## Cover Letter #3: To a Professional Association (after initial phone contact)

Jamie Decision Maker  
Executive Director  
The Association for Strategic Planners  
1234 Good Writing Way  
Los Angeles, CA 90025-1200

Subject: *Preventing Strategic Gridlock*®

Dear Jamie:

Thank you for expressing interest in Pamela S. Harper's new book, *Preventing Strategic Gridlock*®: *Leading Over, Under & Around Organizational Jams to Achieve High Performance Results*. Per your request, I have enclosed a review copy of *Preventing Strategic Gridlock*® along with additional information about the author. I have also enclosed a CD, which gives a general overview of the book.

Harper's book will prove to be both interesting and informative to you and the members of The Association for Strategic Planners. As you well know, in today's world strategic planning is crucial, if not essential, to a business's success; however, implementing new strategies can be a difficult process, sometimes creating unnecessary organizational problems. In her book, Pamela S. Harper explains how to prevent these problems before they have a chance to arise.

Pamela S. Harper is a nationally known consultant and speaker, and is the founder and president of Business Advancement, Inc. Since 1991 BAI has helped leaders transform their business strategies into high performance results. Should you like what you read in *Preventing Strategic Gridlock*®, Harper is available for speaking engagements.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts about the book and discussing the possibility of this book being featured in your organization. If you have any questions or would like any further information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Paula B. Duncan  
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## Ground Rules In Action ~ Cover Letter #4

- ◆ This letter’s introductory paragraph is right on! In two short sentences she shows that she has researched the publication and is stating her call to action upfront: “consideration for a book review.”
- ◆ The second paragraph provides a concise book overview that is to-the-point and compelling.
- ◆ The third paragraph highlights the author’s credentials and expertise as related to the audience.
- ◆ The “per your instructions” line shows that she is following the magazine’s guidelines.

## Cover Letter #4: To an Editor

Frank Editor  
Business and Economics Editor  
The Business Magazine of Choice  
1234 Good Letter Drive  
Reading, CT 06457

Dear Frank:

I would like to introduce you to one of our recently published titles, *Preventing Strategic Gridlock®: Leading Over, Under & Around Organizational Jams to Achieve High Performance Results*, by Pamela S. Harper. Based on what I read on your website, I feel this book meets the submission criteria and I would greatly appreciate your consideration for a review.

*Preventing Strategic Gridlock®*, published in October 20--, deals with issues such as strategic planning, organization, and communication within a business or corporation. In her book, Pamela S. Harper explains why strategies and initiatives that looked good during planning often end up mysteriously snarled in a tangled web of persistent organizational problems during execution. She then discusses steps that can be taken to avoid those problems.

Pamela S. Harper is a nationally known consultant and speaker. Founder of her own company, Business Advancement, Inc., she has helped leaders all over the country transform their business strategies into high performance results. Her approach is based on 20 years of experience as an internal and external consultant to leaders of entrepreneurial, mid-sized, and Fortune 500 companies.

Per the instructions on your website, I have enclosed a copy of *Preventing Strategic Gridlock®*, along with additional information about the author. If you have any questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards,

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## Frequently Asked Questions

- Q.** I don't understand why I have to bother with a cover letter. I'll just send a kit without one. People will open anything they receive, won't they?
- A.** No, they won't. Sending a kit without a cover letter is like barging into someone's office without knocking. It's rude, and it rarely sets the stage for a successful and positive outcome. Even if by chance the person does open the kit, read it, and actually like it, how will he or she know what you want if you don't say so in your cover letter? A good cover letter gets your foot in the door much more quickly and effectively.
- Q.** What if I don't know who to address the letter to? Can't I just send it "to whom it may concern"?
- A.** Sure, you could do that, so long as you don't mind your kit going into the slush pile (equivalent of the circular file). If you don't know who to address the letter to, call the organization and ask. They will tell you, and no one will flag your kit as coming from someone uninformed. Sending a kit "to whom it may concern" is impersonal and makes you appear too lazy to do a little simple research.
- Q.** I wrote an awesome cover letter to a distributor. Why can't I use it for every kit, regardless of who it's to?
- A.** Congratulations on writing a great letter! No matter how good it is, though, you'll have to customize it for each recipient. Now, this does not mean you can't use snippets of your great letter in other cover letters to different audiences. By all means, do so. But realize you'll likely have to do more than change the "to" line. Use the sentences or paragraphs that make sense, but still customize the remainder of the letter so it makes sense to your recipient.



## Key Points

- ☑ *Every* media kit needs a cover letter.
- ☑ A good cover letter entices people to open your kit and actually read it.
- ☑ You must customize every cover letter you write.
- ☑ Every good cover letter will have six key features, regardless of the book's topic or the kit's purpose:
  - 1) The recipient's correct name and address.
  - 2) A reason for the correspondence.
  - 3) An overview of the book.
  - 4) Author information.
  - 5) A call to action.
  - 6) A professional close.

Learn how to create book press kits that get results.

**Putting It On Paper: The Ground Rules for Creating  
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