

How to market your book to major retailers.

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A Self-Publisher's Insider Guide to Book Marketing

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Selling Seasons

You might be wondering what I mean by “selling season“. That’s understandable. Most people don’t think much about when they buy except during the Holidays but we all shop heavier during certain times of the year. These are the “selling seasons” I am referring to. There are seven, give or take. Some retailers have more, others less. The ones I am about to cover are for the book business. As you review the list ask yourself “where or how can my book fit here?”

The seasons are:

New Year/New You

Love and Sex (Valentine’s Day)

Easter/Mother’s Day/Spring is Here

Dad’s and Grads

Summer Reading

Back-To-School

Happy Holidays

New Year/New You: These books cover the many different resolutions we all make at the beginning of the Year. Books covering Diet, Exercise, starting a new business, finding a new partner or improving some aspect of yourself do well at this time. Many spiritually related titles also sell well now. This season runs from Dec. 26th through late January.

Love and Sex/ Valentine's Day: Everything seemingly is red and covered in velvet. Books on Love, Sex, beginning a new relationship, ending an old relationship or finding someone to relate to, all sell now. This is a very short season, running from late January until Feb. 14th.

Easter/Mother's Day/Spring is here! Mother's Day is the biggest selling season outside of Christmas. Think about it; who doesn't buy something for Mom? This begins after Valentine's Day and runs through most of the Spring. The signage may change from Mother's Day to a Spring Theme but the sales opportunities are awesome. Books on just about any subject will fit here. In the early part of the season, the emphasis is on Mom so lots of things are soft, romantic and pastel in theme. Books about Mother-Daughter relationships, light weight romances and light spirituality do well now.

As the season matures it moves to a more spiritually related feel as Easter and Passover approach. Mark Easter Sunday on your calendar. An event on that day can do incredibly well because many people go to church then come to the bookstore after. Obviously if your book has a religious theme it will do well here. As the season progresses and becomes Spring Is Here, titles related to gardening, lawn care, arts and crafts, and even about maintenance begin to do better.

Dads and Grads: This is another short season, running from mid May to Mid June. The title tells it all: Father's Day and Graduation time. Graduation

includes High School as well as College. The most popular title is Dr. Seuss's Oh the Places You'll Go. A lot of non-fiction books sell here. For Dad's, History and Biographies do well. For Grads, nearly anything dealing with growing up and taking care of yourself are the winners now. Also many grads may be getting their first laptops or other personal organization devices. If you have a "How-To" covering these subjects, this might be your time.

Summer Reading: Kids are out of school, many people are headed for vacation and the long, sleepy days of summer have begun. This can be your time to really shine! The kids may have reading assignments but they will want something fun to read as well. Parents will need something to distract the kids and to treat themselves to a reason to ignore those kids. Vacationers like to know the local history of the places they travel to or would like to take something that talks about where they are from to give to the friend they are going to visit.

More gardens need to be done and the Barbecue Grills are coming out to play. Serious, business minded women are indulging in the guilty pleasure of "chick-lit" or "bodice rippers" and the men dream of restoring cars they don't have (or may have but haven't started yet!). More Homes need Improvement, more Golf swings need practice time and more beaches need discovering. Surely your book can fit here somewhere! This is one of the longest seasons, running from mid-June through August. It overlaps our next season.

Back-To-School: Summer is almost over and it is time to get serious again.

High School Grads are heading to college and the undergrads are scrambling to finish the summer assignments that have been sitting in the bottom of their book bags since school let out. “How-To’s” win again.

Happy Holidays! This is the one season that doesn’t need any explanation. It officially begins in November and runs through to the end of December. Keep in mind that if you intend to have a signing or other event during this season, you need to contact the events coordinator in the stores you want to be in as early as June but no later than August. The Holiday calendar of the event coordinator is usually full by mid-September. Occasionally an exception is made but your book has to be something that is an awesome fit for the time frame for a last-minute booking.

These are the major selling seasons. Some minor ones are: Baseball or other sport, SAT time, Election time and Weddings to name a few. Where do you fit?

Now that you know the “selling seasons” the other question you have to be prepared to talk about is who is your target customer? Who do you think will be attracted to your book and why? If you are coming from out-of-state why would the local people want to buy your book? If you are a local, what organizations or ties to the community do you have that would strengthen the

draw of your event? In other words, why should I spend my time and money on your book? Have the answer to that question lined up and you could be my next big event!

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