

Award Winning Author

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An open book is shown from a top-down perspective, with its pages fanned out. The pages are illuminated from within, creating a bright, golden glow. Above the book, various lowercase letters and numbers are scattered in the air, some appearing to float or drift. The background is dark, making the glowing elements stand out. The overall effect is one of magic and inspiration.

**Promotion
Before
Publication**

**Getting
Known**

Three reasons an aspiring writer needs to
"get known" prior to publication.

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Promotion Before Publication

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Getting Yourself Known

by

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PROMO BEFORE PUBLICATION

The myth of getting a book published runs something like this: I don't need to worry about promoting my writing because once an editor reads my wonderful book, she is going to knock herself out getting it published, give me lots of money for promotion, and line me up for a nationwide book tour. All I have to do is show up and sign my books.

I'm not saying the above scenario never comes true for any writer, because it has. I'm saying the

Promotion Before Publication

chances of it coming true for every writer rate up there with winning the Mega Millions lottery. In fact, winning the lottery is probably easier. I know, people win, but how many people bought lottery tickets and didn't win?

In her book, *Get Known before the Book Deal*, Christina Katz says “It isn’t about how talented you are, rather it’s about what you do with how talented you are.” (While this book was published in 2008, it still contains helpful information for writers. Ms. Katz now offers online courses in this subject.)

Rather than spend time dreaming about the success of your Great American Novel, why not do something to help ensure its success?

Build a Platform Before Publication

First of all, what is a platform? A platform is nothing more than all the the ways you make yourself visible to your future, potential, or actual readership. There are steps you can take prior to

publication to help build your platform as you proceed through your writing career. You may wonder why building a platform now is important to an unpublished novelist. Is there really a need to establish yourself as a serious writer before publication? There is, because today's agents and editors are very interested in this part of the package.

Why?

Because they want writers who can interact with the public, especially writers who are knowledgeable about using the Internet and social media to interact with the reading public.

Why?

Because these editors work for publishing companies who are in the business of publishing to

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make money. They are not in the business of stroking your ego.

Now that we've established the why, let's look at the how. How can an unpublished writer get their name on the reader's radar? There are a lot of ways, the book I just mentioned is full of them, but I'm going to just discuss three that I think are within the reach of most writers.

Three Ways to Build a Platform

1. Get your name out there via face-to-face meetings.

For example, attend a writer's conference or workshop. There are conferences and workshops streamlined to fit every type of writing. They run the gamut from one day to week-long retreats. Choose wisely. On a budget? Economize. Share the cost of the gas and lodging with a writer buddy. Make a

Ginger Hanson

conference part of a family vacation. Find a nearby one day workshop.

What do you get out of a writer's conference or workshop?

- Knowledge of the writing craft from experts in writing, publishing, and marketing, depending on what type of conferences you chose to attend.
- The opportunity to meet other writers who share your interests. Writing is a lonely business, it never hurts to connect with those who share your passion.
- The chance to interact with editors and agents, pitch ideas, learn what they are looking for.

Here's a helpful tip: Volunteer to help out at the conference because it gives you an even better chance to meet writers, editors and agents

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2. Get your name out there via your writing.

You don't have to sell an article to a national magazine to get your name out there. You can start on a local level. I unintentionally built a fan base when I wrote a humor column for the local weekly newspaper.

- Newsletters—if you are in any organization that has a newsletter, write articles for it.
- Write book reviews. Any number of book review sites need book reviewers who can write a good book review.
- Enter established writing contests.

3. Get your name out via the Internet.

- Establish a website. Buy your domain name now to ensure it's available. Make sure it's a

Ginger Hanson

mobile friendly website which means the site is easy to navigate with smaller devices such as cell phones.

- What can you put on a website?

Samples of your writing for agents and editors to see.

Share any final or win in a writing contest.

Resources for writers or readers.

Updates on your current work-in-progress.

4. Blog

If you don't have time or money for a website, start a writer's blog with Blogger or Word Press. These are free. The drawback with a blog, or operating any promotional site via another company, is that it can evaporate without warning. It's more difficult to backup the content or have any artistic control over this type of Internet access, but it is the

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cheapest way to get online. Showcase your writing, be professional. This is where you can send interested editors or agents. Keep in mind that a blog needs to be updated regularly.

5. Social Media

There are many choices for social media these days. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter, etc. My suggestion would be to chose the one or two you enjoy, but remember social media can be a time-away-from-your-writing drain. Again, be aware these companies can change their rules without warning.

Conclusion

Instead of relying on myth to achieve success in your writing career, be proactive and get your name out there using any one of the routes I've suggested. Or you can dive deeper in ways to promote your writing before your book is published. Writers' blogs

Ginger Hanson

abound with suggested paths to promotion for the aspiring writer. Remember, one goal is to have samples for the editor or agent to review when the time comes and your first book is finished. A second goal is to connect with potential readers.

One last tip: join an established writers' organization. Look for one that matches your interests. The information you will learn from a mystery writers' group will be quite different from the information you will learn from a science fiction group.

Be proactive. Get your name out there now!