



IDEAS

to get holiday

BOOK SALES

12 Ideas to get Holiday Book Sales

Make the Most of the Season with
Book Promotion, Marketing, and Sales.

BY STEVEN SPATZ



Whatever your flavor of celebration, the end-of-year holiday season is a great time to sell your self-published eBook or printed book. After all, it's a \$3 billion business for booksellers over the holidays, and according to Dominique Raccah, CEO of [Sourcebooks](http://Sourcebooks.com), 25% of trade books are bought as gifts.

How do you get your share of these holiday sales?

In the spirit of "The Twelve Days of Christmas," I have a dozen tried-and-true sales and marketing ideas for the holiday season. These are 12 of the most effective plans, strategies, and tactics we've seen BookBaby authors use to hit it big at the cash register. Of course, this means you have to have your book ready for the market by the end of the summer, along with your author platform—including social media accounts, your author website, Amazon profile, and all your marketing materials. Only then can you truly launch into the holidays with a winning book promotion plan.



Make a timeline

On the first day of Holiday selling, you need a timeline.

Writers hear all the time that creating and publishing a book is a marathon, not a sprint. Guess what? It's the same for holiday sales. And time is on your side: self-published authors have a HUGE advantage with the holiday calendar. Turn on the TV in November and you'll see Black Friday sales all over the place. In December it'll be even louder with Cyber Monday and all the rest. As Santa gets ready to jump into the sled, it's all about last-minute shopping.

Meanwhile, you get to sit back and consider YOUR calendar, because if you plan this right, your best sales could come AFTER the 25th. With people getting new reading devices, Amazon gift cards, and gift cards you market, you could see sales coming in for your books throughout January.

But this requires planning a strict timeline for promoting your books, and it's not too late to start. It's important to prepare a marketing plan that spans October through February. The cash register doesn't stop ringing on Christmas Eve, so let's cash in.

Pre-Thanksgiving through Black Friday

Your customers are thinking: "Gimme some turkey and Black Friday deals!" Uncle Ed is snoring; time to check email.

Your plan: Send a special email on Black Friday around noon. Discount your eBook titles to the lowest you'll go—from free to \$1.99. Offer bundle deals for print + eBooks from your own website. You DO have your own website, right?

Black Saturday to Cyber Monday

Your customers are thinking: "I wonder what the Amazon deal-of-the-minute is?"

Your plan: Don't swim upstream: Amazon owns the day and we all know it. Send an email to customers pointing them to your Amazon page. Then send another one later that night. This is the time to hit your social media list with links to Amazon.

*Prepare a
marketing plan
that spans
October through
February*

Early December

Your customers are thinking: “OK, time to find something for that hard-to-buy cousin.”

Your plan: Here’s where you get creative with your inventory. Bundle some books together. Offer a buy-one-get-one special. Go in with other authors on mixed boxed sets. Maybe you have some swag you can bundle or sell. Free gift wrapping is always appreciated!

As the holidays approach

Your customers are thinking: “Dang, those shipping deadlines are fast approaching.”

Your plan: Point out that delivery of eBooks is immediate. Go all-out promoting your eBook gift certificates for that last-minute holiday push. Don’t be afraid to mail to your list at twice your normal rate. This is the time where you can bust out the social media posts that seem too salesy during other times of the year.

Post-holi-daze

Your customers are thinking: “What the heck am I going to do with all these gift cards? And what should I put on my new Kindle?”

Your plan: This is where you might want to break out some money for an ad budget. After the holidays, ad prices tend to go way down and you can get better placement. Look into Facebook, Goodreads, and Kindle ad opportunities. It’s time to get creative with messages to your list again to get your share of the gift card dollars.

New Year and beyond

Your customers are thinking: “I’m so glad the holidays are over! I finally have some spare time.”

Your plan: Hit them with messages about making reading a priority in the new year. Self-help books are especially hot during this time of year.

Of course, your timeline will vary from these guidelines. Whatever you create, do your best to stick to your plan all the way through the end.





Make a budget

On the second day of holiday sales, make a budget and stick to it.

It's easy to get caught up in the frenzy of the season and pour ad dollars into any endeavor that shows a tiny bit of promise. Be disciplined!

Of course, working from a marketing budget should be a year-round assignment, but for the sake of this exercise, let's assume you have some additional cash to rev up sales for the holidays. Where should you spend it?

Make sure you have a great website

All BookBaby authors receive their own free [BookShop pages](#) that have all the selling and marketing features you need to push your titles. For your [author website](#), research some low-cost options.

WordPress

Hosting a basic website through a service like WordPress will cost \$18 to register a domain and \$13 per year to maintain it after that. Creating and hosting the site on WordPress ranges from no charge for a [basic free site](#) to \$8.25 per month for a [premium template](#) that allows for additional audio, video, and more. Premium themes that are mobile friendly and SEO optimized go for \$80-\$100—a huge bargain over the lifetime of your book. Best of all you can set it up over a weekend with time to spare.

Next, I would investigate self-publishing-centric ad opportunities.

All BookBaby authors receive their own free **BookShop** page.



Kindle Direct ads

With over 75% of all books bought online, Amazon is the place to test your advertising spends. I've heard both good-luck and hard-luck stories from authors using [Kindle Select ads](#). It's worth exploring during the holiday season.

Goodreads

[Goodreads](#) can be a great source for book marketing in some of the more popular genres. They make it very easy for authors to create ads and set up daily/weekly budgets.

Facebook

It's the most powerful advertising platform around, and now it's the most user-friendly because of its laser-targeting abilities. Unless you have a special-interest or business book, Facebook is probably where your readers can be found. You can find many tutorials and articles on the best practices to using Facebook ads for your book sales.

Just like for your regular book promotions, your holiday budget should be a realistic one. This will help you determine which paid resources are essential and what can be eliminated. When you look online for low-cost or no-cost marketing tactics, you'll find a lot of tempting offers. Beware: this is usually a case of getting what you pay for. The fact is, you will need to make a monetary investment to run a successful marketing campaign. Beyond the dollars, what you get out of your promotions will be determined by the time and effort you put into them.



*Avoid putting
your marketing
dollars into:*

- Broad, untargeted advertising (on any medium/channel)
 - Press release blasts or any form of mass mailing and communication
 - Buying friends, fans, or followers from suspect online companies
- 



Take it to the streets

On the third day of holiday marketing, it's time to hit the streets.

It's time to meet the public. Get out your calendar and phone. Put on your boots, coat, and scarf. Grab a box of books and swag. It's time to take your message to people in as many ways as you can think of for the holiday season.

Holiday fairs and bazaars

These events are everywhere during the holidays, from churches and retirement homes to schools and community centers. Lists are available in the local media. People go to them with the expressed interest of finding different, unique, and locally-sourced gifts. Are there ways you can package or market your book to cater to these kinds of events?

Libraries

Contact the libraries in your area and ask if you can set up a table outside to sell. It's where the readers are going.

Get creative

Think of where people congregate during the holidays. Finding space to sell your wares in malls and retail outlets is probably out of your price range, but what about partnering with local businesses, restaurants, and coffee shops?

As long as you're talking to the store owner, maybe you could partner with a local business

and work out a deal where they give out your book this year as their holiday promotional item instead of the same boring imprinted pen or calendar.

For example, perhaps the owner of your local diner will buy 100-500 copies of your book if you're open to selling it to her at a discount. Offer to sign all the books so their customers can get a signed copy.

Don't forget to approach specialty stores, particularly those that might have a tie-in to your subject or theme.

Be open to bringing your book to stores and letting them sell it on consignment. They'll likely return any books that aren't sold, and you'll get paid for those that do sell. Seal the deal by offering to pick up the unsold inventory so there won't be a question about who covers the return shipping costs.

Do some legwork and find creative opportunities to market and sell to your community.





Be conspicuous

On the fourth day of holiday selling, authors simply need to be found.

What does that mean? You need to maximize the chance that readers can discover your books. That extends to the type of products you offer and your distribution plan.

I've been involved with marketing different kinds of products for years before helping launch BookBaby. We marketers have a favorite saying: ***Make it easy for customers to buy.*** For authors, that includes the formats of your books. It's vital that you offer both eBooks and printed books.

With the invention of the Kindle, iPad, and eBooks, readers suddenly had a new way to consume books. Our fascination with new and trendy electronics caused some so-called experts to make wild predictions, but the early claims that print was dead were vastly overstated. As digital books have been adopted around the globe, reading preferences have now been established and we have a clearer view of the new publishing landscape.

Approximately 25% of readers ONLY read eBooks.

That figure is probably lower in the US but much higher in emerging economies that rely heavily on smartphones as the dominant tech.

About 40% of readers ONLY read printed books. Give them the tactile feel of ink and paper!

That leaves 35% of the reading public who toggle between both formats, depending on price and availability. Independent authors—especially those who are new and relatively unknown—cannot afford to limit their potential audience. If you only have eBooks, make print. If you only have print, make an eBook.

**25% of readers
ONLY read eBooks.**



**40% of readers
ONLY read
printed books.**



**35% of readers
toggle between both.**

This advice works for sales during every season of the year.

The other half of being found is about your book distribution plan. I wrote a post for the BookBaby Blog titled "[The #1 Mistake of Self-published Authors for Worldwide Book Sales](#)" that described the worst mistake a self-published author can make: Do not ONLY sell your books through Amazon (or any

ONE channel). To mix our holiday metaphors, don't put all your eggs in one basket.

Mind you, Amazon is a very BIG basket. It's the biggest and most important online bookstore in the industry with approximately 67% of the eBook and printed book market share in the US. It's a given that you must have your eBook and printed books in all the Amazon stores around the world.

But there are many other baskets—stores where millions of eBooks and printed books are sold in the US each year, including iBooks, Google Play, Barnes & Noble, and dozens more.

To reach every single potential reader, go beyond the Amazon jungle and put your book in dozens of stores.



Here's where your **eBooks** should be sold:

- **Amazon**
- **iBooks.** Apple's premier eBook destination for iPad and iPhone owners in over 50 countries around the globe.
- **Barnes & Noble.** Your eBook can be easily purchased by millions of NOOK owners around the world.
- **Google Play.** Google is a rising star in eBook sales.
- **Hoopla.** This digital on-demand service makes your eBook accessible to North American public libraries.
- **Kobo.** Kobo owns about 20% of the worldwide eBook market and is the leading eBook retailer in many countries, including Canada and Japan.

Here's where your **printed books** should be sold:

- **Amazon**
- **Barnes & Noble.** B&N is the largest retail bookseller in the US, with over 650 bookstores throughout the country, plus 700 college bookstores.
- **Books-A-Million.** BAM! is the second largest book retailer in the nation with over 250 stores in 31 states and the District of Columbia.
- **Ingram.** As the world's largest distributor of books, Ingram can get your book into practically any store, making it available for sale in over 39,000 online retailers.
- **Baker & Taylor.** Baker & Taylor distributes books to more than 36,000 libraries, institutions, and retailers in more than 120 countries.





Attract attention

On the fifth day of holiday marketing, attract attention.

Now that your eBooks and printed books are available in stores around the globe, **self-published authors must work hard to attract the attention of would-be readers**. Two major considerations are your book cover design and your book metadata.

Your book cover design

A great book or eBook cover design is one of your best sales tools, instantly conveying the key thoughts, messages, and images that sum up your book. On those crowded online retail sites, it's essential for you to stand out from everyone else. An eBook or printed book cover created by a dedicated [book designer](#) will ensure you make a professional impression.

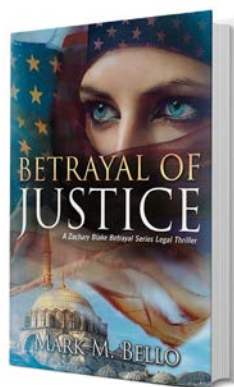
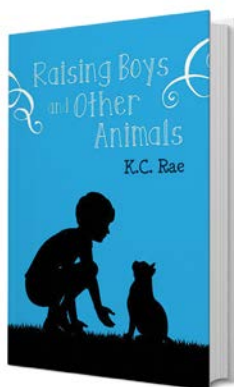
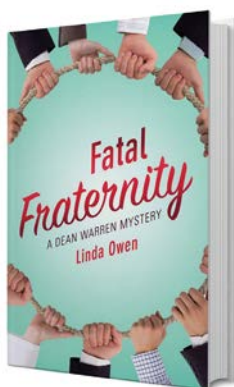
How do you know if you need a new cover? Start out by answering these questions:

- Does the cover include trends and tropes that perform well in your genre?
- Is the typeface professional? Are the fonts current and appropriate to your genre?
- Is the title visible and legible when viewing a thumbnail of the cover?

Of course, a self-analysis can only get you so far. You could ask some of your family, friends, and beta readers for some objective opinions using these questions:

- Based on the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- What is the genre of this book?
- Is the text on this cover easy to read?

We've heard dozens of success stories from authors who made the critical decision to replace their original covers, and sales soared. Your book can experience the same success.



Think of Metadata this way:

Browsing through online bookshelves usually begins with a search. If your metadata does not reflect what someone is searching for, no one will ever find your book, even if your content is a perfect match.

Your book metadata

The other way readers can discover your book is anything but visual. It's called metadata. Simply put, metadata is data about data, and it's crucial for your book's discoverability.

Metadata is one of the least understood components when publishing an eBook, but it's critical to your marketing and sales efforts. Metadata is all the information related to a book, including:

- Author biography
- The genre and subgenre of your book
- Short and long book descriptions
- Keywords that will aid readers searching for your book on Amazon

Here are a couple of things you can do to make sure your metadata is up for the job of showcasing your book:

1) Research retailers. Go to Amazon.com, Apple's iBookstore, or BN.com and look up books like yours. What categories are they in? Study the book descriptions. See what words they've used to describe their books. Then search for books using the keywords you found using the keyword tool.

2) Be consistent. Don't put one book description on Amazon and change it around for B&N. Use similar wording for the boilerplate on your press release, book flyer, etc.

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Every book needs editing—period. End of story. Hiring a professional book editor is often the best investment you can make for your book, and for your writing career.

**Copy editing is \$7 per page and
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Entitle yourself

On the sixth day of selling, I suggest you add one more title to your growing resume: **writer, author, self-publisher, and now... bookseller.** Tell your readers to buy eBooks and print-on-demand (POD) physical books *directly from you and not from Amazon, B&N, and all the others.* If you have your own e-commerce website or web page, or have a free [BookShop](#) page from BookBaby, you can make a lot more money by selling direct. And that's just one reason why it pays for self-published authors.

As I mentioned, it's important to have printed books available on Amazon, iBooks, GooglePlay, etc., but the reality is it's unlikely readers will *discover* self-published authors on large retail sites—especially during the holiday season. The Amazon algorithms don't favor indie authors. Plus, you need to consider the holiday fatigue factor. Searching for different kinds of books takes time and effort. It's awfully easy for readers to take the easy way out and order a bestseller.

How do you get readers to buy your books through BookShop instead of, say, Amazon? In talking with dozens of BookBaby authors and by monitoring sales results, we estimate that **90% of eBook and POD sales are a result of actively driving interested readers directly to a designated retail website.** What this means is that authors take control and direct potential

readers to the places where their books are sold by sending links through emails, texts, tweets, Instagram and Facebook posts, and promotions featured on author blogs and websites. Your faithful readers will follow your instructions as to where to buy.

Selling directly to readers can have a big financial effect on your royalties. On many direct-to-reader sites, authors can see increases in both eBook and POD royalties. BookBaby has spent a lot of time and effort to build up its own BookShop program for its authors. Here's how BookBaby authors benefit.

BookShop pays authors more

We pay 85% of the selling price on eBooks and a huge 50% royalties on printed books.

BookBaby pays authors fast

Your sales are recorded and put into your account within a week. Compare that timeline with Amazon (100+ days), iBooks (120 days), and even Smashwords (up to 180 days).

BookBaby promises your printed title is always in-stock

During the busy holiday season, Amazon often has to list POD titles as “out of stock” as its warehouses are swamped with deliveries. That's never a problem with BookBaby: we print the book and ship it out directly to the reader. No time-consuming warehouse issues!



Sell on BookShop™

Get paid 85% of the selling price on eBooks
and 50% royalties on printed books.

Banner Creation

Create a banner link to promote your BookShop page on your personal website.

Overview

Give a brief description of your book in two to five lines—just enough to whet a potential reader's appetite.

See Inside

Give readers a taste of your book with our "See Inside" feature.

Description

This section expands on the overview, adding more detail about why the reader will love your book.

Bio

Who are you? Why are you the best candidate to write this particular story? Are your education, lifestyle, and job relevant to your book? It all goes here.

Other Titles

Showcase your other book titles.

Book Reviews

Add credibility with author-approved book reviews.

Coupons

Use coupons and discounts to bolster your book promotion and drive sales.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the BookShop page for the book "The Empress of Otherworld" by Corey Michael Dalton and Bryland Sutton. The page features a large banner image at the top with the book cover on the left and a stylized illustration of a character's face on the right. Below the banner, the book title and authors are prominently displayed. A "Printed Book - \$11.99" label is visible, along with a "Proceed to Checkout" button. The page is divided into sections: "Overview" with a brief synopsis and a "Read more" link, "Description" with a longer blurb, and "About the author" with a bio and another "Read more" link. On the right side, there is a "Book details" section listing the genre as Juvenile Fiction, subgenre as Fantasy & Magic, language as English, and 224 pages. The footer of the page includes the BookShop logo, "powered by bookbaby", and links for FAQ, Terms of Service, Privacy Policy, Account, Cart, and Login.



Use social media

On the seventh day of selling, it's time to utilize social media.

Just so we're on the same page, let's review: Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue. It's comprised of different channels, including Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, and others that seem to pop up daily.

Each platform works in different ways to connect people, and each caters to its own unique audience that can be matched to the type of books you've written. Facebook is a great relationship builder, Twitter reaches new readers if you follow other authors and readers regularly, Instagram and Pinterest are good for brand building, and Goodreads can build community (if you have time to invest in it).

Of course, these popularity-driven systems can change rapidly. What works today might not work tomorrow, given the fast-paced tech environment. Despite these hazards, social media can be an incredibly effective way to get the word out about you, your books, and all your literary pursuits—and the holidays are a perfect time to put that plan into action. But

remember this one tip: Don't take on more than you can handle. If that means just having one social media profile, then that's what you should do. I advise authors new to social media to pick one platform, conquer it, and then select another network. Find time to learn about one or two platforms your readers use and start posting information.

Many of us feel the strain of social media overload, especially during December, but studies show that all the effort is worth it. Your readers are on social media: recent Pew

Research shows 74% of all Internet users are active social media users. If you aren't actively promoting on social media, you are missing potential opportunities.

Chances are your audience will be on social media during the holidays, often taking part in several

activities when they shop online. They review products, look for gift ideas on Pinterest, seek product referrals from friends, and more.

Blog about it

Writing content that attracts readers to your blog is a strategy for selling books year-round. During the holidays, readers will be attracted by

If you aren't actively promoting on social media, you are missing potential opportunities.



content related to the season. Book advertising and social media should seek to enlighten and entertain first, sell second.

Focus

Focus your holiday efforts by identifying your ideal reader—and gift buyer. What's your demographic? Who are they? What do they read? What is their age? Income? Write it all out.

Sell, but don't be salesy

I see a lot of authors jump onto Twitter and immediately start pushing their book, but they haven't earned the right to market their products and all they do is turn people off. Here's a better way to attract readers: Write out five (or more) keywords that connect your book with topics you are interested in or passionate about. Blend the two and it will help you connect and interact with those readers.

Give and you'll receive

Share, retweet, and give back to the community in ways you enjoy. Found a blog post you love? Share it. Ask questions—people love to give opinions and talk about themselves—and share quotes or visuals. Be interesting! Tag people you talk about in your posts; it helps people discover your blog. But do so wisely. I've heard of authors who felt pressured into sharing something they weren't comfortable with. If it doesn't feel right, don't do it.

Be consistent

This is important during the holidays: Tweet, share, or pin a few times daily. Consistency in your activity helps your overall social media presence, and that will help your SEO ranking on Google.

Make it easy to find you

Be sure to have all your social media icons in a prominent place on your website and linked (typically, top right).

Follow trends and use hashtags

Spend some time studying up on the best way to use keywords and hashtags and how they can work with social media trends. You might find trends like #HolidayMystery if you've written a murder mystery, whether or not it relates to a holiday. Or it might be a newsworthy event if your book is nonfiction. Trending topics on Twitter can be a great way to push your message out to a new audience and gather more book sales.

Build relationships

Social media is all about building relationships, and people will be more likely to purchase your work if they like you—humans are funny that way.

Social media is one small part of your author platform. It's a great way of driving awareness of books and a must for a comprehensive marketing plan, but if that's all you're using to sell your books, you probably won't sell much. Social media needs to be one part of a larger, coordinated sales initiative.





Use email marketing

On the eighth day of selling, remember the very best sales medium of the digital age: email.

In 2014, McKinsey Consulting released a surprising study that found email is *40 times better than all social media combined* at acquiring customers.

While social media may be good at driving awareness, email is superior at driving sales. This is a cornerstone marketing truth that applies beyond the holiday season. Consider shifting your focus to building a bigger email list and developing effective email campaigns on a regular basis.

Email marketing becomes more effective during the holidays because shoppers are looking for deals in their inbox. Smart retailers know this and use email as a primary marketing channel during the holiday season.

The bottom line: consumers expect to receive more email during the Holidays and they use email to make purchase decisions.

Increase frequency

Don't be afraid to send more emails over the holidays. If you currently send one email a month, you can safely send two emails a month in November and December.

It's all about your book

Focus your emails on [your products](#) (your books!). Readers are looking for ideas on what to buy and now is the time to put your books front and center.

Expand your reach

If you have the budget, use book promotion services that leverage email marketing. BookBub is the gold standard of these services, though it is difficult to gain placement. There are others including BookLemur, Freebooksy, Bargain Booksy, and [many others](#) that capitalize on consumers' receptiveness to emails.



Shoppers are looking for deals in their inbox.

Use email as a primary marketing channel.



Get your timing right

Shoppers wait until the last minute: they're busy, and they also know that the best deals often happen in the days leading up to Christmas. Market most to your current buyers: it's always easier to sell more books to current readers who know and appreciate your books. If you have multiple books—or a new book—you'll most definitely want to let them know via your mailing list.

Never buy lists

If a list is for sale, it probably is NOT going to be of good quality. The most active and engaged subscribers will be the ones who personally opt in to your emails. Prioritize your time and money on acquiring readers who care.

Never send to people who haven't given you permission

Sending emails to people who haven't opted into your list is a sure-fire way to get flagged as spam and generate complaints. Most email service providers have systems built in that record the number of complaints a sender gets, and if the percentage is too high, they will blacklist or disable your account.



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Call **866-707-0024** to get started.





Make a deal

On the ninth day of selling, let's explore some tried and true book marketing tactics.

There's a reason they are familiar: they work! Pick what suits your fancy and push your books out.

Holiday bundle

Buyers love packages, and book buyers are no different. Less shopping, more gifts, right? Create fun packages including your paperback, such as:

- Discounts for buying multiple copies (two for \$15, four for \$20)
- Bundling multiple books together (two-for-one, three-for-two)
- Buy one, share one (one book for you, one for a friend!)

Holiday discounts

With so many gift options available, it's a good idea for new, relatively unknown authors to offer some inexpensive choices so readers can get to know you. Pushing your eBook price down to \$.99 for a limited time is an established winner (your opportunities will be more limited for printed-book titles). You don't have to discount your entire catalog: by offering one or more discounted option, you can sell your latest or your best-selling books at full retail. Although discounting existing books can be a great

strategy, a lot of authors we know think it has an adverse impact on their year-round sales.

Post-holiday sale

Capture the attention of last-minute buyers with special-themed sales and pricing. You can also think beyond the holiday and lower the price of your eBooks right after Christmas to catch all those folks who got a new eReader.

Copycat the retailers

Consider what key retailers offer their customers this time of year: gift certificates, buy-one-get-one offers, loyalty or point programs, and special shopping days for loyalty or point members. Free shipping is always a winner for printed books.





Get tribal

On the tenth day of the holiday selling season, it's time to look to your tribe.

You're one of dozens—maybe hundreds—of authors in your local area trying to sell books as holiday gifts. This is the time to reach out and get creative.

First, you need to recognize you're not in competition with every author. Yes, you're all trying to sell books now, but I don't know any reader who only reads books from *one* author. Your book is going to attract its own unique audience, and joining forces with others in your situation can be a true win-win.

There's no better time to network with other authors than the holidays. Join online groups, go to writer events, or join local author groups. Networking with other, similar authors is not just good business, it can help you brainstorm new ideas. Plus, you'll get a chance to see what others are doing that's working (and what's not working) and expand your knowledge about book marketing and promotion.

You might find authors willing to partner with you to promote your respective books through a special e-message to your respective lists, giving each of you added exposure. You both get to market to completely new fan bases and give readers lots of options for holiday gifts. Be

sure to include a "gift guide" so readers know exactly who on their shopping list would love each book!

A longer term, even more ambitious idea would be to create a book series with another author. It's a massive undertaking, but combining your talents—and reader base—with others promoting the same series can be a great way to generate buzz and sales.

In the fall of 2017, seven romance authors joined forces to create the seven-book series, [*Return to Christmas Falls*](#). Their shared vision was to provide a sweet holiday romance series where readers could spend time with the same characters throughout seven full-length novels. Since the books were released simultaneously, readers didn't have to wait to find out what happens next. And the cross-promotion efforts provided a great way for each author to gain exposure to new readers.

Join online groups,
go to writer events,
or join local
author groups



Try something new

On the eleventh day of the holidays, it's time to try anything and everything!

The most successful BookBaby authors are the ones who truly get creative. Everybody needs last minute gifts—and that could be your book.

Try these on for size...

Bundle your book

Combine your book with something else so the book is one part of a gift bundle. This works well if it's a printed soft cover book to keep costs low. Perhaps add a pair of tickets to a national movie chain or restaurant. If it's a children's book, how about a stuffed animal? If it's a book on how to write better or how to get published, what about including a nice pen or notebook? Let your imagination run wild.

Put your book in someone else's package

Perhaps you know a local vendor who offers gift baskets that would include your book in their holiday packages. Local florists or gift retailers might be the best targets.

Give and receive

Link up with your favorite charity and give a portion of your proceeds for every book sold. If the charity is local and your donation percentage is big enough, ask if they will promote it to their list. You can announce the news via an online

news release, your website, and your social media accounts.

Your book genre or topic might lend itself to some natural tie-ins. For example, women's fiction books could support a local women's shelter; YA writers can promote a teen center; writers with animal-themed stories can back the local pet rescue; those writing about war may want to support local veterans.

Any and every book can promote literacy. Offer a copy of your book, and a reading if applicable, to your local library and blog about it. Partnering with a charity sells books, but it also fuels the holiday spirit of everyone you touch and can draw even more positive attention for your favorite cause, something that will make you feel great all season long (and isn't that what the holiday season really IS all about?).

Wrap it up

Offer free gift-wrapping for any books sold from your website. Offer to sign your book and provide a personal message to the gift recipient.

Have a murderously good holiday

By now you're filled with the holiday spirit and motivated to sell. But what if you only sell dark romances or bloody detective novels? You can use this time of year to promote those "dark" alternatives to the cheer of the season. Some people aren't in the mood for Rudolph and want something different. You'll want to appeal to those people in your Twitter feed, Facebook page, and any other promotions for these books. Emphasize the dark side of Christmas: the long nights and the cold days. To be sure, it's a smaller audience than those who want holly and mistletoe, but it's one that shouldn't be ignored—even during this time of year.

Give unto others

Why not give your book to someone you think will enjoy it as a Christmas present? Who knows, they may tell a friend or two how great it is and encourage them to support you by buying a copy for themselves. People who love your book may also think it's a great idea to buy for their family or friends.



Free guides!

Arm yourself with information on how to write, publish, market, promote, and sell your next book. Check them all out [here!](#)





Get ready for next year

On the twelfth day of the holidays...

well it's not a holiday tip at all. This is about planning for the future and how the holidays are not always the only (or even the best) time to be promoting your book.

The days before and after Christmas are slow news days, and those who are left running the paper or website will be more likely to give your book a plug if you can tie it into the season. Send out a news release about your book and if you can tie it into local interest, the season, or tips for holiday shoppers, it might catch the local media's attention.

I use the time between holidays to plan out the next year for my work, home life, and writing. I encourage authors to start their book marketing efforts for the new year by investing time into looking for publicity opportunities. Here are two great sources.

Help a Reporter Out (HARO)

Sign up for [HARO](#), a three-times-a-day free newsletter. Check it over for publicity opportunities that are right for you and your book. Even if it's not holiday-related, if the online or print newspaper article quoting you or mentioning your book is published before the holidays, the added publicity might help inspire more holiday book sales. But you need to jump when the opportunity presents itself.

Competition in every HARO media inquiry is fierce. Dozens of pitches are usually received for each media request, so this is a long shot, but it could still be worth a try if you're quoted.

Pitchrate

You can pitch your book to bloggers and media looking for books to feature for the holidays through [pitchrate.com](#). Sign up for the free newsletter and you'll get a daily email of the new media requests about interview opportunities as well as requests for books to be sent for holiday roundups that are still being finalized by bloggers, newspapers, and other media. Once you sign up, you can also go to the website and do a search of your own.

These two sources may not lead to sales right away, but you can make a difference if you start planning your promotional activities for next year right now. Being proactive rather than reactive is sure to pay off.

Make a list of all the events you'd like to participate in during the upcoming holiday season. Start gathering contact information of the event organizers. Now is the time to secure a table at the big book fair in town, and any other events you think will be good places to showcase your book. Many of the more popular events actually start booking a year in advance, so get your place in line.

It's a marathon, not a sprint

Finally, remember, if you didn't have the time or weren't prepared to promote your book *this* season, don't worry. In fact, I wrote a piece for the BookBaby Blog titled, "[Summer Readers Are A Key Market For Booksellers \(And Self-Published Authors\)](#)." In it, I quizzed readers: What's the biggest selling season for books? Most people will say, "Christmas."

Sure, the holiday season is important for every retailer, including book merchants, but self-published authors need to think beyond

snowflakes and Santa. There are many other great times to market and sell books. The summertime reading season is the top selling season for books—over \$3.4 billion in sales over the long hot summer according to industry sources. That compares with about \$2.9 billion spent for holiday gift giving.

I hope some of these ideas helped you.

*Enjoy a happy
holiday sales season!*

