



Every great book deserves a great partnership behind it.

You've got to read this!

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Marketing to Independent Bookstores...

How does the independent author get their books onto the shelves of independent bookstores, and thus into the hands of readers?

It really comes down to two issues: distribution and promotion. And it is an open secret in the book industry that distribution is the biggest hurdle facing “independent” or self-published authors and small presses today. A listing on Amazon will only get you in front of Internet readers, but if you want to get in front of your own community, you need to be on the shelves of bookstores and libraries. Although independent bookstores accounted for only 9% of the market, that figure jumps as high as 30% when it came to certain kinds of books--most notably, midlist and debut fiction.

- **Make sure your book is easy to find.** Make sure your book has a real ISBN. And make sure to list your book with Indiebound.org, the database that most of the larger independent bookstores use on their websites.
- **Make sure your book is easy to order.** That means industry standard terms, and availability at a wholesaler like Ingram, Baker and Taylor, or Bookazine. Or a distribution deal with another publisher that does list with a wholesaler. Avoid publishing under the imprints of competitors of indie bookstores, like CreateSpace.

Once you have your distribution channels set, then you are looking at long periods of endless and apparently shameless self promotion. It's an entirely different skill set from that of writing a book, and one that does not come naturally to many people. You have to be extroverted, not introverted. Outgoing, not retiring.

- **Be easy to deal with.** The truth is, you are not the first author who has called the bookstore that week about stocking your book or doing an event. You may not be the first author that day. Some of the more active independent bookstores report getting calls from authors several times a day. So patience and perseverance are definite virtues.
- **Be prepared.** Have a press kit available on your website for download. A good press kit gives you control over how you are presented in the media and by venues where you have upcoming events.
- **Be proactive.** Funnel sales through booksellers instead of processing them on your own website store or on your publisher's store. You make less money per book, but gain much more attention from people who are in the business of recommending books.

- **Don't shoot yourself in the foot.** Here are some things that won't impress independent bookstores:
 - Handing out bookmarks, flyers or postcards that say "available on Amazon.com." Do yourself a favor and change that wording to "available where books are sold."
 - Listing only Amazon on your Web site as a purchase option. SIBA strongly encourages authors to choose an independent bookseller or two as your store of choice and become an affiliate of those stores.
 - Citing your Amazon sales rankings, or sales figures for competing big box stores.
 - Telling the store that you've sold the movie options for your book.

Ultimately, just be nice. Indie booksellers can be your best advocate. And most importantly...**become a member of the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance.**

Since visiting all independent bookstores in the region is at the least impractical, SIBA offers a number of ways to connect with our members, and with consumers. We do not sell or distribute books, but we can help you to make our members aware of your new title. First and foremost, you should:

- **JOIN SIBA** as an Industry Member. Dues are \$195 annually, and membership benefits include the ability to participate in many of the programs below, as well as reduced rates on advertising and registration fees. There is a free membership offer for individual authors (sibaweb.com/for-authors).
- **INTRODUCE YOURSELF.** As a member of SIBA, you can receive a complete contact list of all of SIBA's member stores on demand—including contact names, email addresses, phone and mailing addresses.
- **BE A STAR:** SIBA operates a speakers' bureau for authors, the Southern Traveling Authors Registration Service (STARS) that is marketed to bookstores and their customers.
- **ADVERTISE:** SIBA has a wide variety of very cost effective advertising options for authors that can target bookstores and their staff, as well as consumers. eBlasts, banner ads, sponsorships, catalog listings, galley giveaways...we work with authors to help them create the biggest impact possible for their book while remaining in their budget.
- **EXHIBIT AT THE TRADE SHOW:** The annual Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance Trade Show and Convention is the largest regional book show in the south, attracting hundreds of booksellers, exhibitors, and authors.

The publishing industry has been in a state of rapid flux over the last ten years as it attempts to adjust to new technology, new publishing scenarios, and new markets. But what hasn't changed significantly is how books make their way from reader to reader. It is still a "one book at a time" process--somebody, somewhere, hands a book to their best friend or their mother or their colleague at work and says "You've got to read this!"

It is the most powerful phrase in the book industry. And everything a bookseller does, everything you do as an author, is designed to make someone say to someone else "You've got to read this!" about your book.

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*Put Your Money
Where Your South Is!*



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Reach Bookstores & Booksellers....

SIBA Fall "Discovery" Trade Show | sibaweb.com/trade-show
"Friend of Indies" Membership for authors | sibaweb.com/for-authors
SIBA "Watercooler" Group | sibaweb.site-ym.com
Membership mailing lists

Reach their customers....

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Parapalooza! | authorsroundthesouth.com/parapalooza