

Independent Authors

Making Sense
of Online Marketing

The



DOWN LOAD



THE OFFICIAL CONSTANT CONTACT
MARKETING ADVISOR PLAYBOOK

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Introduction

If you're an author, you're looking for new readers all the time.

Authors who maintain a strong online presence are seeing growth.



That means the best way to sell more books is to be found when readers go looking on the internet—regardless if you write fiction or nonfiction.



If you're considering getting started with online marketing, you may become overwhelmed by too many tools, never-ending expert advice, and the many marketing myths presented as fact. If you're already doing online marketing, you may be frustrated to find that it's not as easy as many claim it to be.

You're not alone.

If you're like many Constant Contact customers, you're busy trying to run and grow your business. You're wearing many hats and don't have the luxury of time to figure out how to navigate the cluttered and noisy world of online marketing.

What if there were a way to make sense of online marketing to sell books?

Here's the thing, it's not just about the tools available to you. You also need to understand the fundamentals of marketing so you can get the most out of those tools. Again, that's not easy when you're a writer by trade and a marketer by necessity.

This guide is designed to give you practical advice.

Our goal is to show you how to connect the dots in online marketing. To point out what you should pay attention to so you have a strong foundation in place.

Then you'll have the knowledge, understanding, and confidence to take advantage of the new opportunities online marketing opens for you and your books.



There's something else that's important to note.

As an author, you have a huge advantage over big publishers because you can actually know who your readers are. You can interact with them in ways that big businesses cannot. It's that intimate knowledge that can keep you top of mind and give you an edge.

Ultimately, we're talking about engaging with people. The location has changed to a digital format but at the other end of those devices are people. And people buy books from authors they know, like, and trust.



TIP

Here's a good rule of thumb as you navigate the digital landscape: If you wouldn't do it face-to-face with readers, don't do it online.

Keep this in mind about online marketing.

If you were asked where most of your business comes from today, what would you say? Many authors tell us “word of mouth.” When done correctly, online marketing provides more opportunities to extend the word of mouth that's already so important to your book sales.

As you know, business is built on relationships. Online marketing also allows you to strengthen existing relationships with current readers and build new ones.



Here's what we're going to cover:

Chapter 1: How people find you online

Chapter 2: How to set yourself up for success

Chapter 3: How it all comes together

Chapter 4: How online marketing can work for you

Now let's get to it!



How people find you online

We've mentioned that word of mouth now happens online.

People are talking up their favorite novelists and nonfiction authors directly; they're consuming and sharing content they find useful or entertaining from those authors, and they're asking for book recommendations. You have an opportunity to be part of more of these conversations.



The more you can do to keep your books top of mind and make it easy for readers to talk about you, the more you increase the chances of people recommending or seeking you out when they need what you offer.

Beyond being part of the conversation, you must understand what people may find when they go looking for you specifically by name, or by something your book offers.

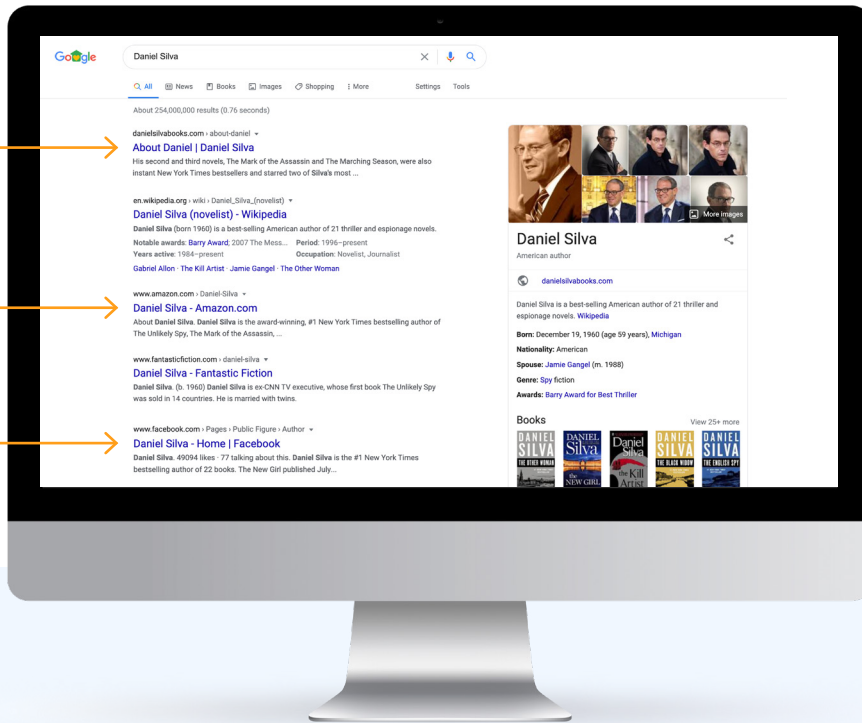
And, of course, be aware that if people don't find your books when they go looking online, it begs the question, "Do your books even exist?"

What do people find when they go looking online for your books?

Author Website

Retail Listing

Social Media Account



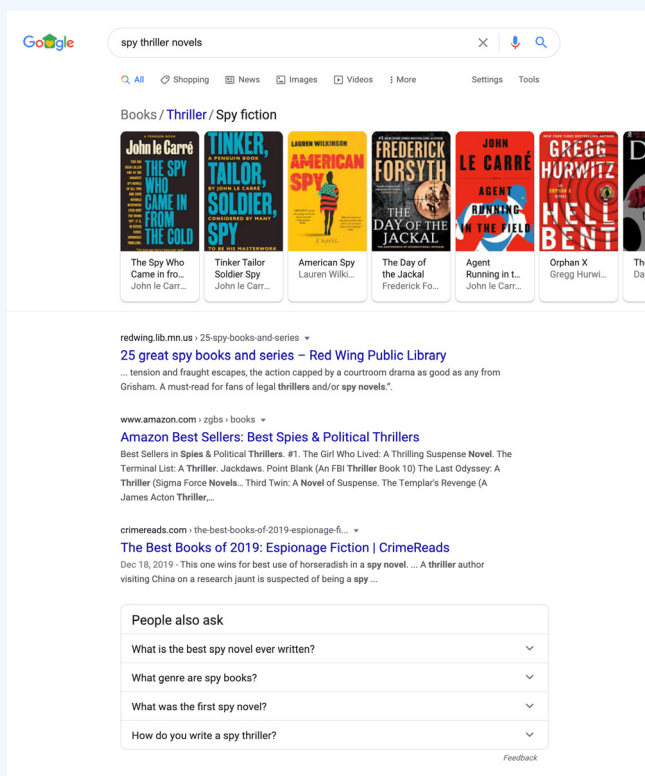
Example using "Daniel Silva" as the search term

It's no secret that people turn to online retailers like Amazon and search engines like Google to get more information about the books. Let's take a look at some of the things that may show up on a search engine results page, or SERP, when someone searches for a book by name:

- Organic (non-paid) search results
- Listings from online retailers at: Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Apple iBooks, Google Play, etc.
- Social media accounts
- Author website
- Industry reviewers and book bloggers
- Info from other sites such as Wikipedia

What if people are looking for something you offer?

In the example on the previous page, we searched for a specific author — Daniel Silva — by name. But, people don't always search by name. Sometimes they know they want to buy a book, but they don't know who offers it. Then they type in a more generic search term, like a book title, such as "*The English Spy*" or a book genre, such as "spy thriller novels."



Let's take a look at an example.

Imagine you want to enjoy an entertaining read that involves a high-stakes espionage story set in exotic locations around the world. So you jump on your computer or mobile device and search "spy thriller novels."

Here's an example of what may come up — of course, your actual results will differ.

Notice that "spy thriller novels" brings up a carousel of book covers first, followed by online bookstore listings at Amazon or Barnes & Noble, and recommended spy novels from book review sites, such as Goodreads.

Beyond these listings, you may also find author websites, social media accounts, industry reviewers, or book bloggers in the search results.

If we apply these results to what may show up for your book, your customers may find:

- Online bookstore listings
- Your author website
- Social media accounts
- Book review sites
- Competitor listings

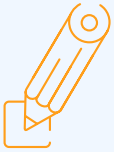
Review Site



The screenshot shows a Google search for "spy thriller novels". The search bar is at the top with the Google logo on the left and search, download, and refresh icons on the right. Below the search bar, the first result is from [crimereads.com](#) titled "The Best Books of 2019: Espionage Fiction | CrimeReads". The second result is from [www.penguinrandomhouse.com](#) titled "15 Books About Spies | Penguin Random House". The third result is from [www.goodreads.com](#) titled "Popular Spy Thriller Books - Goodreads". Below this result is a "People also ask" section with four questions: "What is the best spy novel ever written?", "What genre are spy books?", "What was the first spy novel?", and "How do you write a spy thriller?". The fourth result is from [www.goodreads.com](#) titled "Spy Thriller Books - Goodreads". The fifth result is from [www.audible.com](#) titled "10 Thrilling Spy Book Series for Espionage Lovers | Audible.com". The sixth result is from [therealbookspy.com](#) titled "The Real Book Spy's 2019 Reading Guide: Every Thriller We ...".

Online Bookstore Listings





ACTION STEPS



Search for your author name or book title.

What information shows up? Is it what you were expecting? Is there anything there that surprises you? Is there something missing?



Search for generic terms related to your book's genre.

Does your book appear in either an organic or paid perspective?



Make a list of results that show up on the first page in both scenarios.

Here's the reality: If you're not online, readers can't find you.

Whether people search for your book by name or something related to your book, your readers should be able to find you. You'll want to make sure your books can be found, the information is accurate, and that you're answering the questions your potential readers may have.

As people visit your website and click through from various search results, they're starting to form opinions about your books. Ultimately, they're asking themselves, "Is this the right book for me?"

If you appear present, engaging, and provide helpful resources, you'll increase the chances of people finding you and choosing your books.



The question is, what tools should you use to build a strong foundation for your online marketing efforts? In the next section, let's take a look at how to set up your author online presence for success.



How to set yourself up for success

With an understanding of how people may find you and your books online, what should you do to make sure you have a strong foundation in place?

Let's talk about the tools you should use and some tips to get you started.

Here's what you need to get online:

1 A mobile-responsive website



2 An email marketing tool



3 A primary social channel



4 Up-to-date Amazon listings



5 A way to easily create content



1



A mobile-responsive website: Your online hub.

Yes, as an author, you should have a mobile-responsive website. Your website is at the center of all your online activities. It's the hub you'll want to point people to in order to drive book sales. You shouldn't rely solely on social media sites. You'll want to have a place you own.

Think about the first thing you do when you want to buy a book. Typically, you'll go looking for a website to learn more. Your potential readers are doing the same. And they're frequently doing it on a mobile device, making a mobile-responsive website important for today's consumers.

A mobile-responsive website provides a great experience for visitors regardless of how they're viewing it because it adapts to the device being used to access it. With a mobile-responsive website, visitors won't struggle to find the information they need. The good news is that you no longer need to be a web designer to build an effective mobile-responsive website.



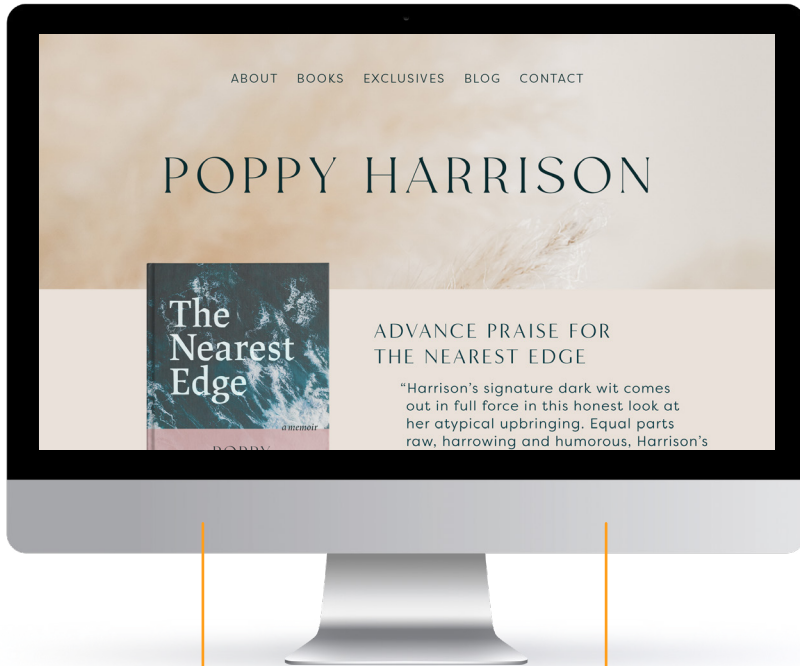
TIP

Buy a domain name for your website to match your name or author brand.

In the early stages of your business, you may use free tools to get online. Eventually, you'll want to use your own domain (for example, YourName.com) to look professional and add credibility to your business as an author.



With a mobile-responsive website, people will be able to read and navigate your site with ease regardless of the device they're using.



Responsive
website
on mobile



Non-responsive
website
on mobile



DID YOU KNOW?

Want a custom-designed site?

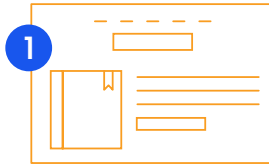
Get a custom-designed, mobile-optimized site in just minutes with [Constant Contact's intelligent website builder](#).

Need a logo?

A logo and colors form the basis for the visual representation of your brand. [Constant Contact's LogoMaker](#) generates hundreds of options in seconds.

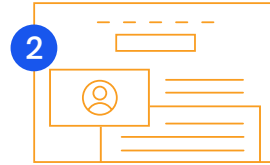
Your website should have at least five pages.

When people visit your website, they're looking for answers to their questions. Use the following pages to answer them.



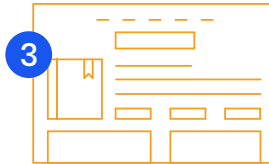
HOMEPAGE

Your front door



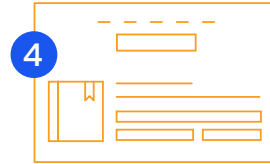
ABOUT PAGE

Your story



BOOKS PAGE

Your products



EMAIL SIGNUP PAGE

Your email list



CONTACT PAGE

Your chance to connect

Think about the business of your books specifically to add additional pages. For example, you might have a Media or Press page. If you sell books directly to readers, you should have an Online Store. If you offer training or consulting, you should have a Services page. Most authors benefit from having blog functionality on their site as well (more on that later).

**What should you put on those five core pages?
Let's take a look.**



HOMEPAGE

What questions should you answer on your Homepage?

What types of books do you write and sell?

People don't have a lot of time. Be clear. Be specific.

Who is it for?

The visitor is asking, "Is this for me?" Who is your ideal reader? Do you serve a particular group or genre? Make it clear who your books are for.

So what?

Why would your potential reader care? Why should they choose you? Is there something about your nonfiction book or fiction story that makes it unique?

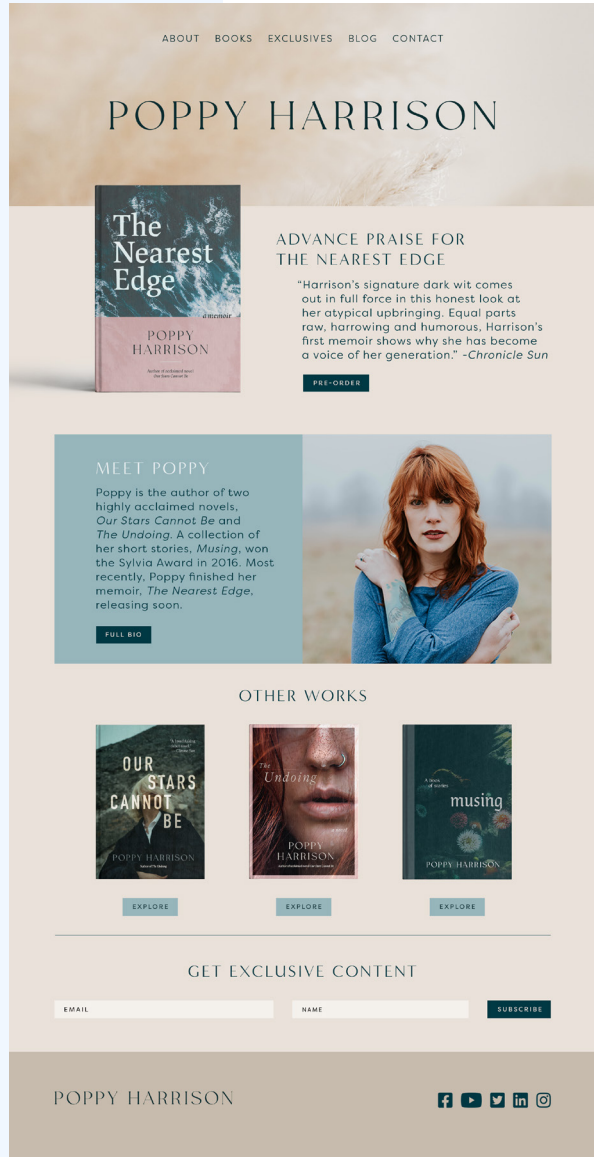
What should visitors do next?

Join your email list? Make a purchase? Contact you with questions? Make it clear what action people should take as their next step.



TIP

Asking readers to join your email list should be the top priority.



Homepage example



ABOUT PAGE

What questions should you answer on your About page?

What is your story?

What problem does your book help solve for your readers? Do your books provide entertainment, education, or inspiration? Why do you love to write?

Why should people care?

How will potential readers benefit from your books? How will you solve their problem and give them an entertaining escape? Do you have testimonials to support your work? Have you won any awards or hit any bestseller lists?

What makes you or your books different?

What are you better at than other authors? How do you use your skills to help your readers? What do you hope people will experience from reading your books?



About page example



BOOKS PAGE

What questions should you answer on your Books page?

What is your book about?

If your book is nonfiction, what benefits or results do you offer to readers? If your book is fiction, what is the plot synopsis of your story?

What endorsements or reader reviews can you display?

Do you have testimonials from well-known leaders or influencers? Has your book won any awards, crossed a sales milestone, or hit any bestseller lists?

Where can readers purchase your books?

Provide links to the major online retailers, such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Apple eBooks, Google Play, etc.

ABOUT BOOKS EXCLUSIVES BLOG CONTACT

POPPY HARRISON

The Nearest Edge
A MEMOIR
POPPY HARRISON
Author of *Our Stars Cannot Be*

THE NEAREST EDGE, A MEMOIR
Coming Soon

Critically acclaimed author, Poppy Harrison, dives deep into her own past and upbringing in her first non-fiction work. Her memoir, *The Nearest Edge*, is a beautiful and heartbreaking account of growing up in a culture of fear and uncertainty.

During the 1980s, coastal Oregon seemed a utopia to young Poppy. It wasn't until she was a teenager that she understood that it was unusual that she and her single father were preparing for the end of the world.

PRE-ORDER
AMAZON INDEARBOND BARNES & NOBLE AUDIBLE

musings
A Book of Short Stories
POPPY HARRISON

MUSING
2017

Poppy Harrison's debut publication. A collection of short stories including journal entries from Poppy's childhood living in a doomsday bunker with her single father.

PURCHASE
AMAZON INDEARBOND
BARNES & NOBLE AUDIBLE

The Undoing
POPPY HARRISON

THE UNDOING
2019

The moonlight is fogged over, soft around the edges. She can hear the Pacific Ocean crashing against the cliffside. Roslyn knows she shouldn't be here. Not after what she's done.

PURCHASE
AMAZON INDEARBOND
BARNES & NOBLE AUDIBLE

OUR STARS CANNOT BE
Now Available in Paperback

From Sylvia Award winning author, Poppy Harrison, comes a darkly humorous novel about the depths of loss, kinship and the power of nature.

Lawrie is lost. Literally. She doesn't know how it happened, but the trails she's grown up hiking blurred and scrambled. Now she's left with nothing but her old Girl Scout wilderness training (laughable) and her estranged mother's voice in her head (maybe she should get that analyzed).

PURCHASE
AMAZON INDEARBOND BARNES & NOBLE AUDIBLE

OUR STARS CANNOT BE
POPPY HARRISON

POPPY HARRISON

f y t in @

Books page example



EMAIL SIGNUP PAGE

What questions should you answer on your Email Signup page?

What free content can you offer to entice new email signups?

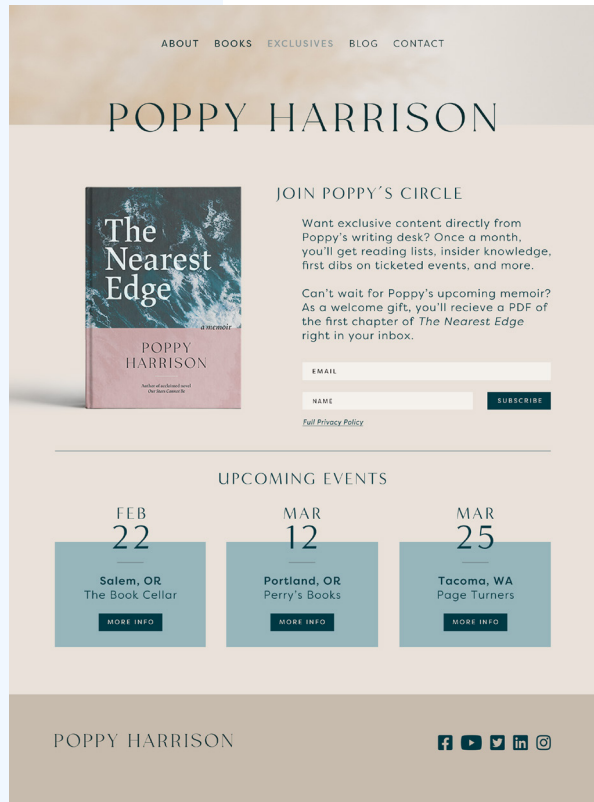
If you write nonfiction, offer a free short e-book, video, or audio teaching of helpful advice. If you write fiction, offer a free short story, novella, or prequel to one of your books.

Do you have an attractive cover for your content offer that looks professional?

Displaying a 3D cover is a nice touch that makes your free offer look more appealing.

Do you clearly state that people must join your email list to get the free content offer?

Do you provide a link to your privacy policy that abides by current regulations?



Email Signup page example



CONTACT PAGE

What questions should you answer on your Contact page?

How can readers contact you?

Is there more than one way? Start with your preferred method. What should they expect in terms of a reply?

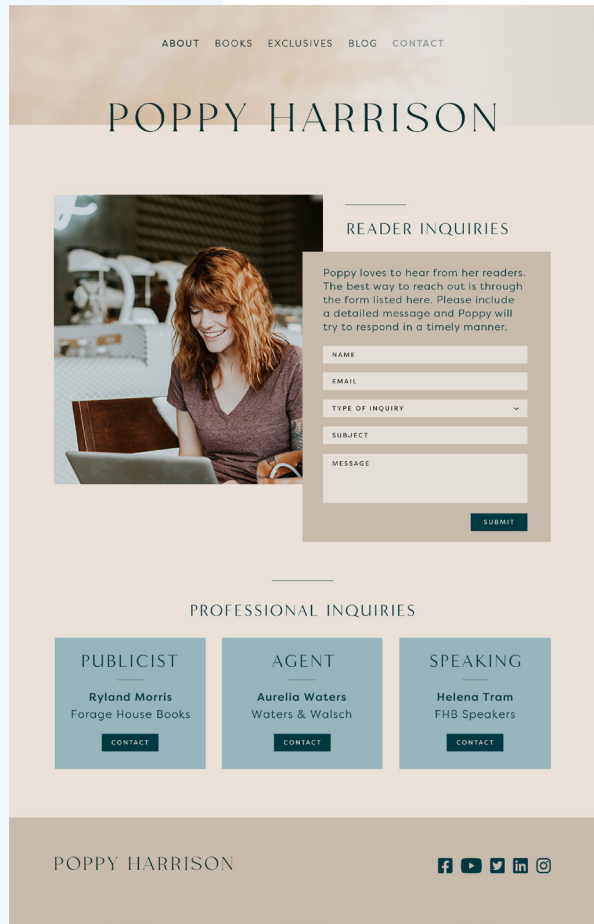
Which social media channels do you use?

How can someone request you for an interview?



TIP

Don't have a physical location? You can use a P.O. box or just ask people to fill out a contact form on your website.

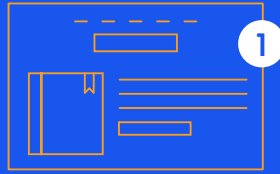


Contact page example



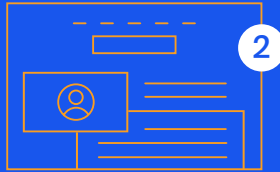
Tips for using images on your website.

Overall, use high-quality images on your website whenever possible. If you don't have your own images, sites like Unsplash offer free, high-quality stock images.



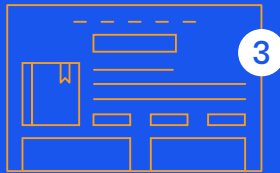
HOME PAGE

Show images of your book covers. If you write fiction, you can also display pictures of your main characters or the settings where your stories are located.



ABOUT PAGE

Show a professional headshot image of yourself that reflects your personality. Wear an outfit that makes you feel comfortable, confident, and interesting.



BOOKS PAGE

Show images of your book covers. Feel free to include images of your books at a 3D angle, like a print book, or as it would appear on an e-reader device, such as a smartphone or tablet.



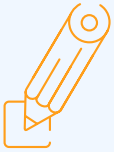
EMAIL SIGNUP PAGE

Show an image of the free content that you offer. If you're offering a free e-book to download, display the image at a 3D angle, like a print book, or as it would look on an e-reader device.



CONTACT PAGE

Show another headshot of yourself that presents a professional image.



ACTION STEPS



Create a simple website.

Don't have a website? [Create one with Constant Contact](#) in minutes!



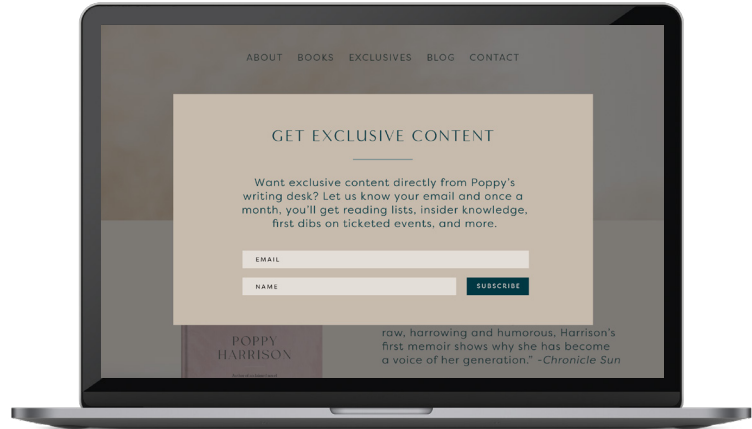
Review your website for the appropriate pages.



Make sure you're answering the questions suggested above.



Add sign-up forms to your website.



What happens if someone visits your website and doesn't make a purchase?

It's unlikely they'll come back again. But what if you had a way to contact them? Then you could encourage them to return to your site or buy your book from a retailer.

This is why you'll want to collect email addresses from people who visit your website. You can do this by adding sign-up forms to your website. In addition to using your website, you should also think about collecting emails in person and in print. Offer something of value to visitors in exchange for their email addresses — like a short story, concise ebook, business white paper, or exclusive teaching content — to get more people joining your list.

You can use sign-up forms on your website to send visitors to your email signup page where they can receive your free offer and join your email list. Once you have someone's email address, you're able to reach out on a consistent basis to encourage them to buy your books by sharing a combination of helpful and promotional messages.

2



Email marketing: It's how you drive business.

Why is email marketing important today? Simply, because it works. And yes, email is still ranked as one of the most effective marketing channels according to Ascend2's 2019 Digital Marketing Strategies Survey Summary Report.

Like your website, email marketing also creates an asset you own. The contacts on your list are yours. And if you're doing it right, those are people who have said, "Yes, I want you to market to me."

Email marketing also allows you to automate much of the communication so the emails your contacts receive feel timely and relevant. Automation assures you get the right messages to the right people at the right time.

When someone signs up to receive your emails, they are actively demonstrating an interest in you and your business. Take advantage of this time when a new contact is highly engaged and automate a couple of emails to continue the conversation. Whether they sign up today or a week from today, they won't have to wait for you to manually send an email to hear from you.



TIP

Create a simple series of emails to welcome clients and prospective clients to your email list.

More on the next pages.



Here are three emails to include in your automated welcome series.



WELCOME SERIES EMAIL ONE

Welcome/ Delivery email

Send this Welcome email immediately after someone signs up. Deliver the free content that was promised, welcome your new subscribers, and reiterate what they should expect in the future.



Welcome email example



WELCOME SERIES EMAIL TWO

Book Excerpt email

Send a Book Excerpt email a few days after the Welcome email. Deliver a free chapter from a current book or a brief excerpt from an upcoming book.

This approach enables you to give readers another reason to consider purchasing your book. In addition, they can forward the free sample to a friend and help spread word of mouth.



Book Excerpt email example



WELCOME SERIES
EMAIL TWO

Invitation to Connect

Send this email a few days after your Book Excerpt email. Let your new contacts know of the other ways in which they can engage with you – this will most likely be on your social channels – so invite them to connect with you.

This email is important because once your subscribers connect with you in other locations, you have multiple ways to engage and stay top of mind.

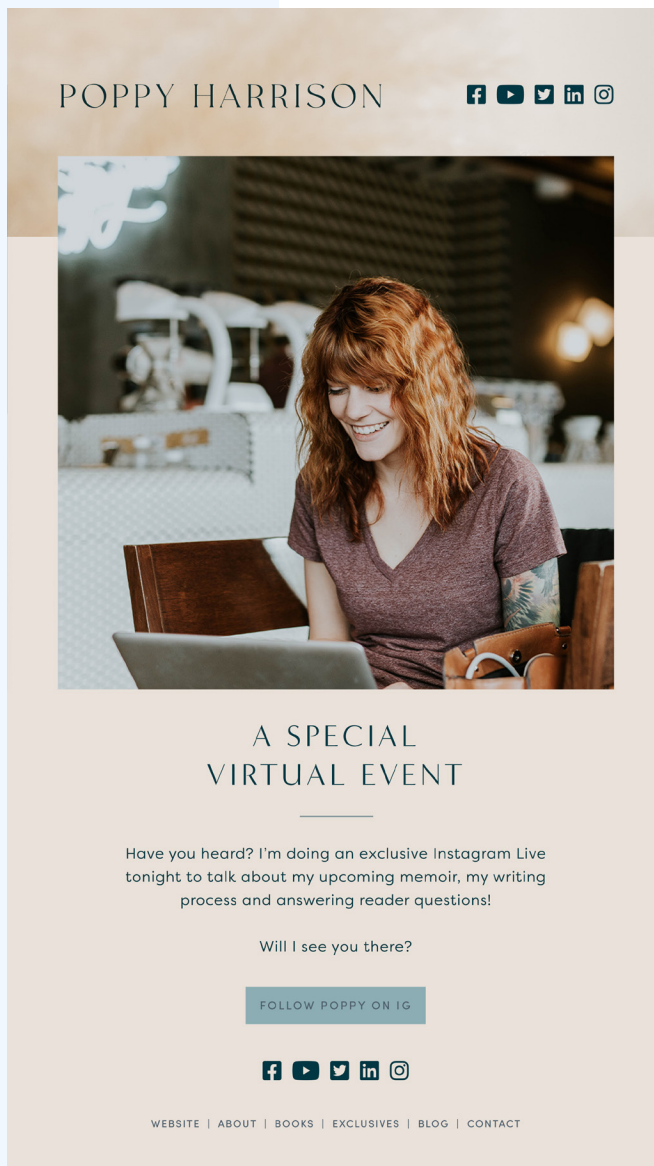
And, if your subscribers engage with you on these public forums, your books get exposed to their connections who are likely also to make excellent prospects as new readers.



TIP

Use email automation to save time and get new and repeat business. Need some ideas?

[Find some here.](#)



Let's Connect email example



ONGOING COMMUNICATION

Plan on sending an email at least once a month thereafter.

Consistency is key in any form of marketing. Write down the potential opportunities you have to reach out to your email contacts. As an author, these opportunities could be:






- Exclusive excerpt from your next book
- Details about a new book launch
- Book tour information
- Links to author interviews on podcasts, blogs, radio, TV, etc.
- Behind-the-scenes glimpses of your writing life
- Helpful advice or teaching articles
- Recommended books, movies, apps that you enjoy




DID YOU KNOW?

Constant Contact offers powerful, easy-to-use email marketing tools.

[Find out more.](#)

POPPY HARRISON     



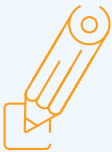
WE'RE GOING ON TOUR!

And I wanted to let you know first! As a thank you for being part of my circle, you get early access to my ticketed events. Check out the dates and locations below. I can't wait to see you on the road.

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>FEB 22</p> <p>Salem, OR The Book Cellar</p> <p>GET TICKETS</p> | <p>MAR 12</p> <p>Portland, OR Perry's Books</p> <p>GET TICKETS</p> | <p>MAR 25</p> <p>Tacoma, WA Page Turners</p> <p>GET TICKETS</p> |
|---|--|---|

WEBSITE | ABOUT | BOOKS | EXCLUSIVES | BLOG | CONTACT

Promotional email example



ACTION STEPS



Set up a simple, automated welcome series.



Plan to send an email at least once a month.



Think about other emails you may want to automate.



Resource email example

In the future, you can get more advanced with automation by sending emails triggered by actions taken by your contacts like opening an email, clicking on a link, or joining a list.

3



Social media: It doesn't have to overwhelm you.

If you're like many of the authors we talk to, social media marketing can feel overwhelming. And it often feels like you're spinning your wheels — doing a lot of activity across many channels with little to show for it. You should reserve your author or publisher name on the important social channels so you have it. But you don't have to be active everywhere. That's why we recommend starting with one channel that makes sense for your business.

Ideally, choose a primary social channel based on the readers you're trying to reach. Also, consider what channel you're most comfortable using and how it fits with your personality.

- **Facebook:** For most fiction and nonfiction authors, Facebook is the top choice. It offers the largest reach and the most versatility to share text, images, and links.
- **Twitter and Instagram:** Some authors prefer Twitter and Instagram, such as self-help, advice, or business genres.
- **LinkedIn and Pinterest:** In most cases, LinkedIn and Pinterest are less effective.

Ultimately, social media should allow you to generate awareness, action, and engagement that you wouldn't have gotten otherwise.



TIP

Choose the right social media platform for your business.

[Find out how.](#)



Each social channel also has its own personality, too.

You should *not* be posting the exact same thing on every channel. You can use the same theme but you should modify your posts to suit the channel.

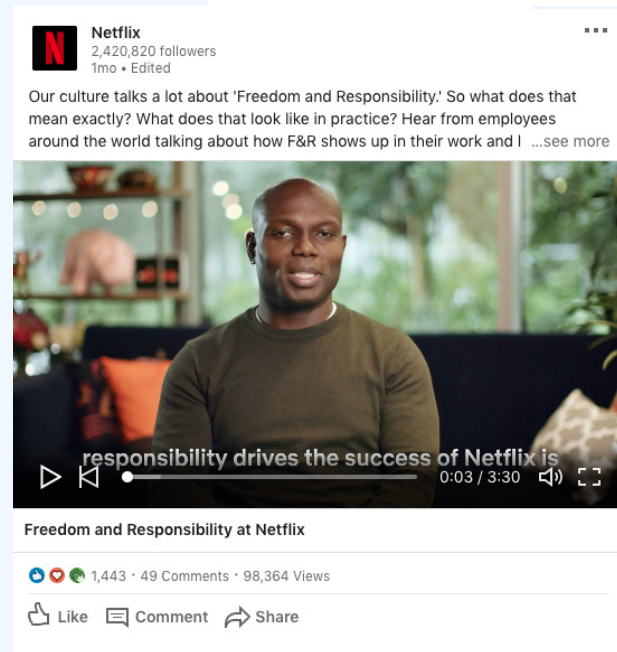
You can see an example of what we mean here by following Netflix on Facebook and LinkedIn.



Now let's take a look at each channel's personality.



Netflix Facebook post



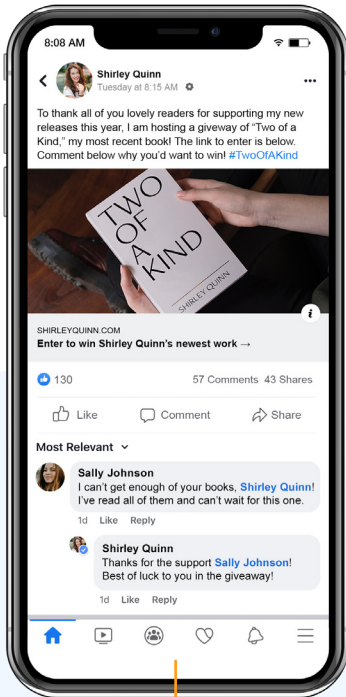
Netflix LinkedIn post



EACH SOCIAL CHANNEL IS UNIQUE

Facebook

In the news feed, you'll be competing with friends, family, and local and world headlines.



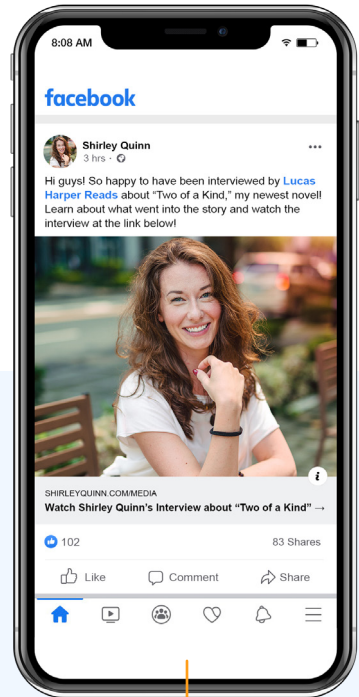
ENGAGEMENT

Respond to questions from readers to provide a personal experience.



DRIVING ACTION

Drive sales by letting people know about upcoming book releases and discounts.



AWARENESS

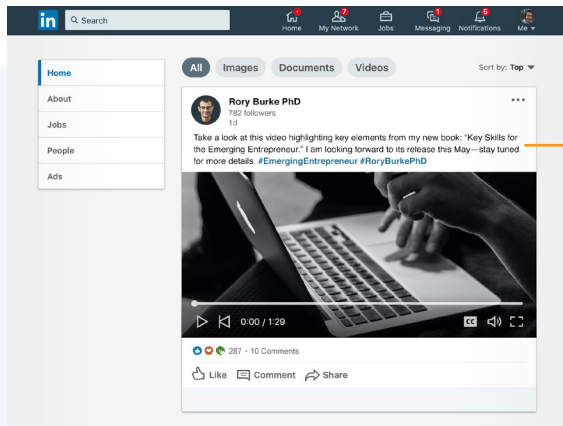
Post content your audience may want to engage with by liking, commenting, and sharing.



EACH SOCIAL CHANNEL IS UNIQUE

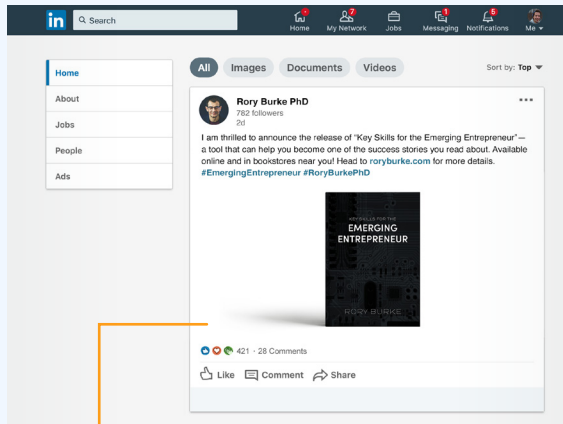


More of a professional network. Makes sense for business authors.



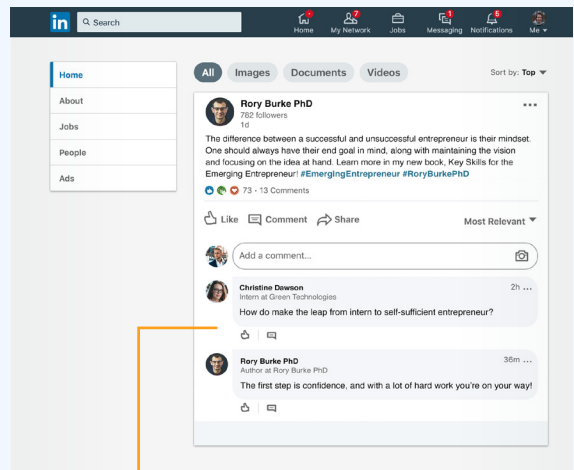
AWARENESS

Share a video about a new book you're publishing.



DRIVING ACTION

Send people to your website to get more information.



ENGAGEMENT

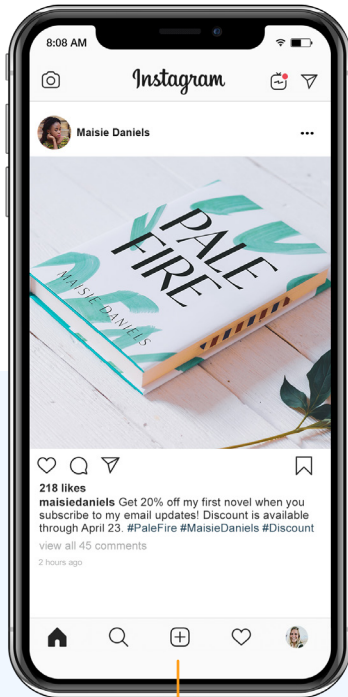
Respond to reader questions about your books.



EACH SOCIAL CHANNEL IS UNIQUE

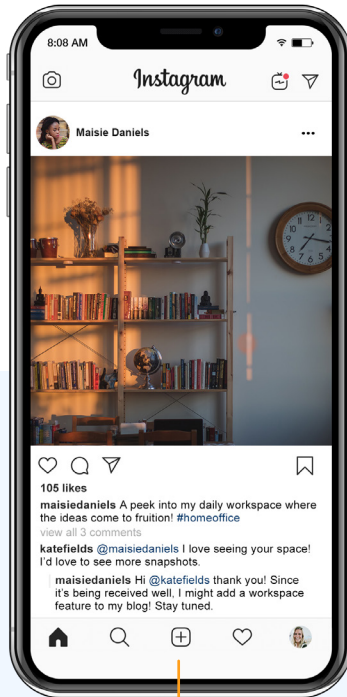


A highly visual network. Let people see what's happening with your books.



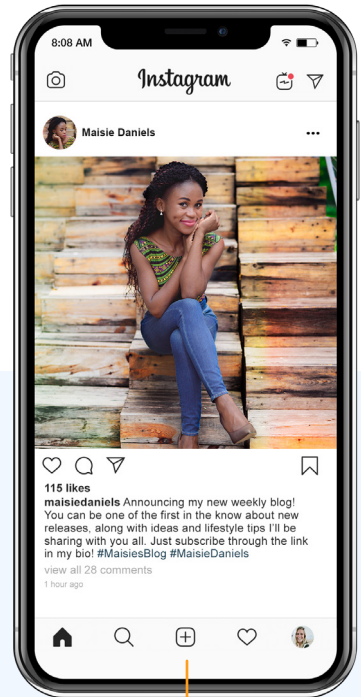
AWARENESS

Let people know about new book releases and discounts.



ENGAGEMENT

Respond to direct messages from potential readers.



DRIVING ACTION

Send people to your website with a link in your bio.



EACH SOCIAL CHANNEL IS UNIQUE



Public news feed of what's happening now.



AWARENESS

Let followers know about your other social channels.



ENGAGEMENT

Make sure to respond to questions.



DRIVING ACTION

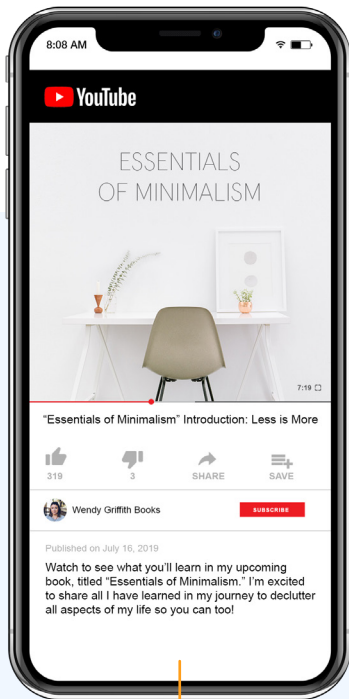
Let followers know how to take advantage of special offers.



EACH SOCIAL CHANNEL IS UNIQUE

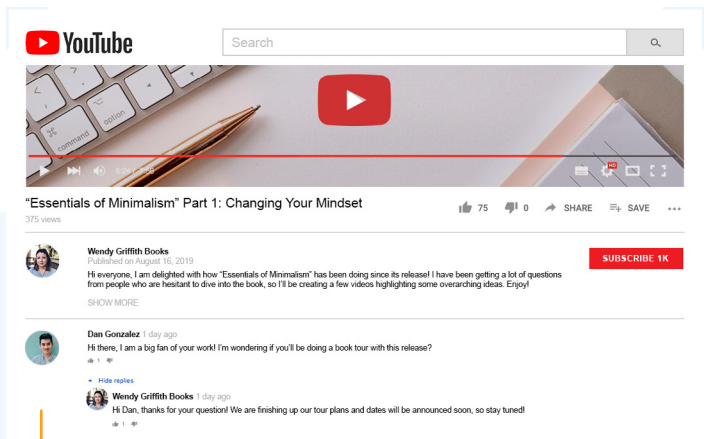
YouTube

Video content that's educational and entertaining.



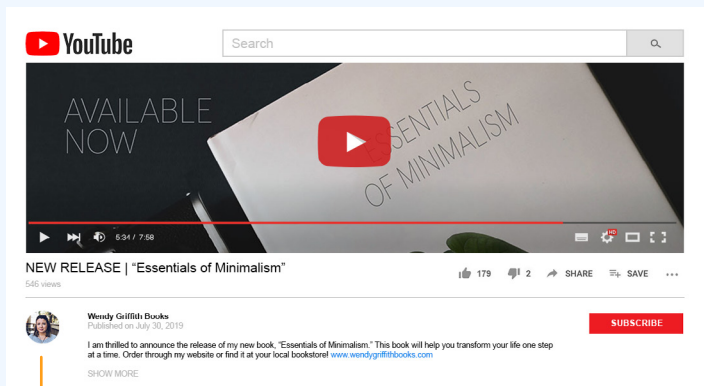
AWARENESS

Upload a video that serves as a commercial for your nonfiction book or a "movie trailer" for your novel.



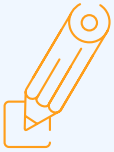
ENGAGEMENT

Respond to questions and provide additional resources.



DRIVING ACTION

Show how to solve a problem that readers face.

**ACTION STEPS**

Determine which social channel makes the most sense for you and your books.



Set goals for this primary channel across three categories.

- Awareness
- Engagement
- Driving action



Create a plan for this channel to reach your goals.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Want to know more about social media marketing?

[Get started with our Social Quickstarter.](#)

Keep focused on how social media can help you with goals such as awareness, engagement, and driving action.

Engage with people on social media so you can ultimately move them to your website and build your email list so you have a list of contacts you own to drive book sales.



However, don't forget social media isn't the only place where people may find and engage with your books. There's a certain website you've probably heard of that is vitally important, Amazon, which we'll discuss next.

4



Amazon listings and review sites: Provide accurate information and respond appropriately.

Today, people use a variety of websites to find books and information they're looking for, especially Amazon and Goodreads. Sometimes, these listings are automatically generated and other times you create them.

As an author, you're able to take control of these listings by claiming them – which is often as simple as clicking a button and submitting requested information that proves a book is yours.

Make sure all information is correct and up to date across all sites. The last thing you want is for someone to find incorrect information as it could cause you to lose book sales.

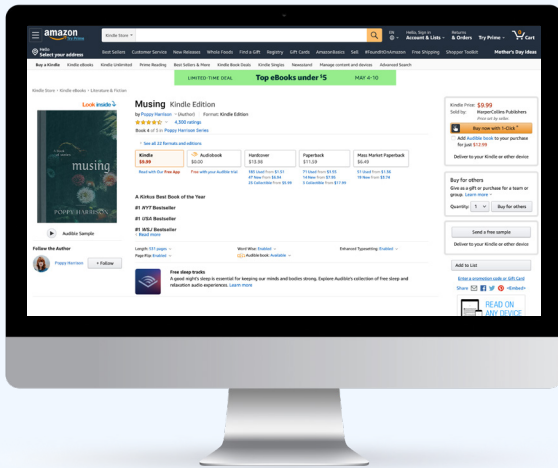


TIP

Once you've claimed a listing, you're able to update the information on those pages for accuracy.



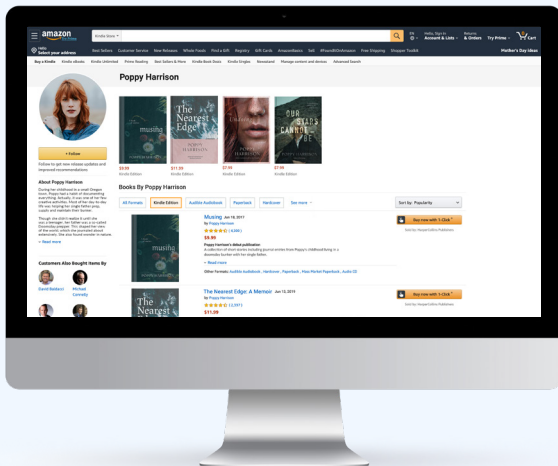
There are three main sites authors should maintain:
Amazon book page, Amazon Author Central, and Goodreads.



Amazon Book Page

Amazon assigns a specific page on their website to each book they sell. In addition, there is a separate page for each type of format, including hardcover, paperback, e-book, and audio.

Typically, the publisher uploads all of the correct information to create the initial listing for a book on Amazon. However, authors can adjust those details at any time, including the product description, editorial reviews, and author bio, by setting up a free Author Central account.

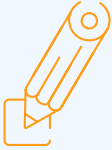


Author Central Profile

Claim your Amazon Author Central profile to show readers more information about you and your books. You can add details, including your author bio, headshot image, blog feed, videos, and a bibliography of all books you've published.

In addition, Author Central enables you to adjust details for your Amazon book pages to keep all of your listings updated and current.

Author Central accounts are free to set up.

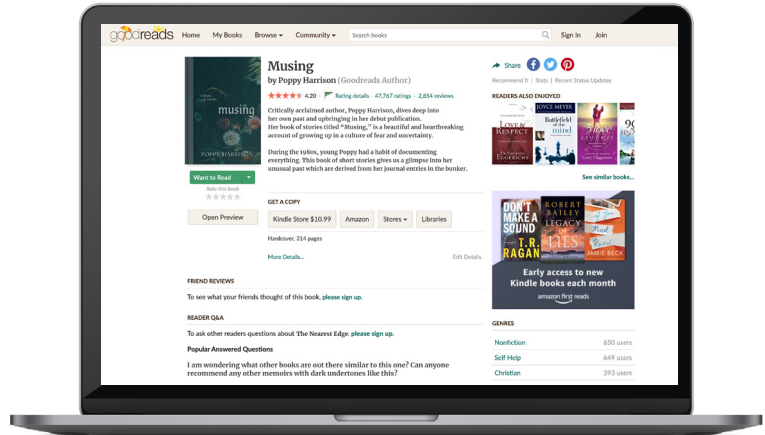


ACTION STEPS

✓
Claim your Amazon book page, Author Central profile, and Goodreads listing.

✓
Identify any other key listings that may be important for your business.

✓
Make sure all information is correct on all sites.



Goodreads Listing

Many people, especially lovers of fiction, use Goodreads to discover new novels. The more robust your listing, the better your chances are of standing out amongst competitors.



At the very least claim your Amazon book page, Author Central profile, and Goodreads listing. And if there are other listing sites important in your industry, claim your author information there too.

5



Create content: Increase your chances of getting found.

Content is what people search for, consume, and share online. If you produce relevant content on a consistent basis that aligns with what your readers are searching for, you'll have more people finding you and sharing your content. You'll also make more connections for your books and reach more readers, who will also share your content.

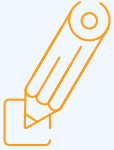
This content helps search engines like Google find you online and can result in free traffic to your website. Yes, there are some technical aspects to consider search engine optimization or SEO. But at its core, it's about delivering relevant and meaningful content to the readers you're trying to reach.

A blog makes it easy to add content, or posts to your website on a regular basis. Whereas your website contains information about books, a blog gives you the ability to demonstrate your writing style, personality, and expertise by answering specific questions for readers.



DID YOU KNOW?

A blog allows you to create helpful content for your audience directly.



ACTION STEPS



Add a blog to your website domain.



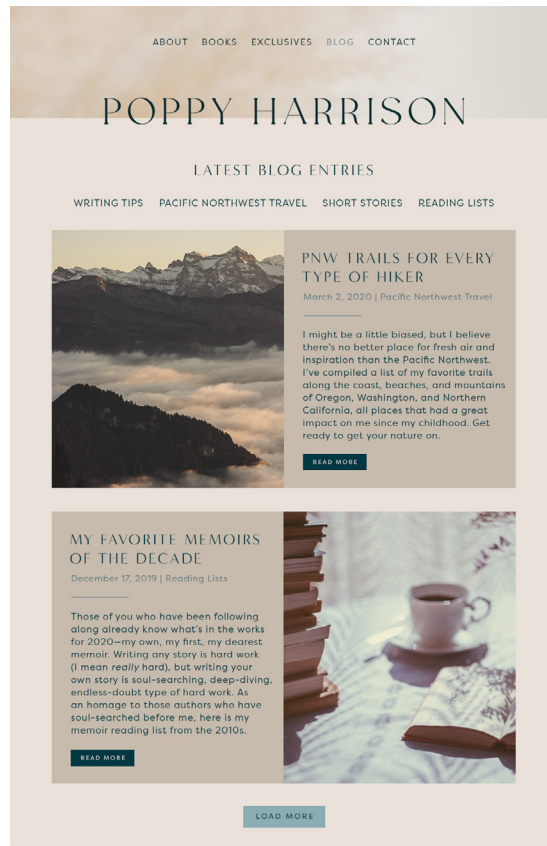
List the top questions you get from clients.



Create a calendar to regularly publish content that answers those questions.

Search engines love fresh blog content.

You get the most benefit when your blog is connected directly to your website and not off on some other platform. Choose a publishing frequency that works best for your business. That could be once a week or once a month. You can then use this content on your social and email channels to lead people back to your website.



Blog page example



How to amplify your efforts.

Once you have the foundational elements in place, you can and should use paid advertising to amplify your efforts. The online landscape has changed over the years. Where it used to be enough to just be there to reach your potential readers, algorithms on most social channels limit the access you have to your audience. Algorithms also impact where you and your books rank in search results. In many cases, you'll have to pay to reach people.

That's not bad. You just want to do it in a smart way.



Facebook and Instagram Ads

Ads on Facebook and Instagram are powerful because not only are there lots of readers on the platforms, you can also target your ads specifically to increase their effectiveness.

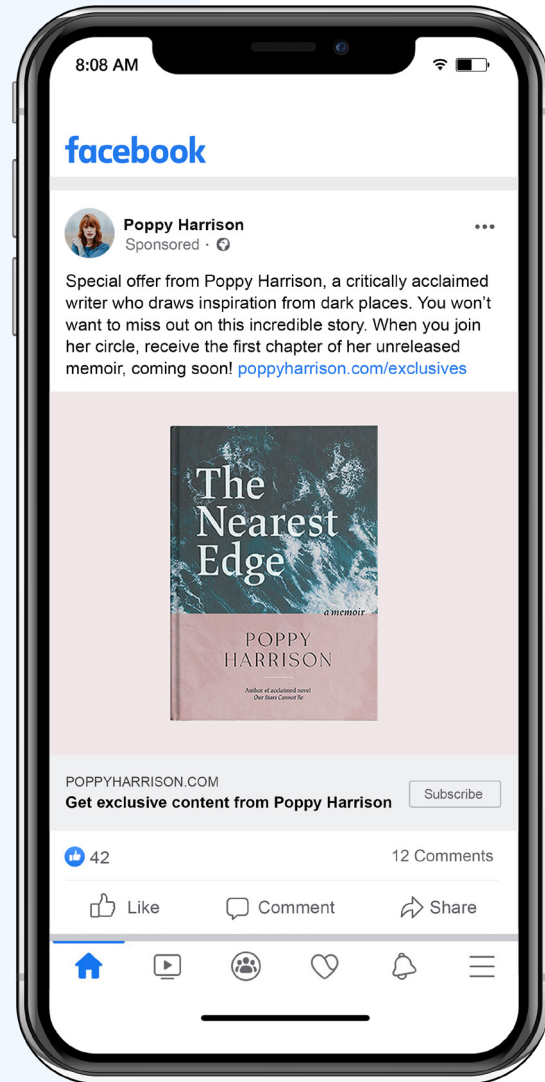
Target your ads based on location, demographics, interests, behaviors, and connections. You can even create a lookalike audience to target people similar to those already on your email contact list.

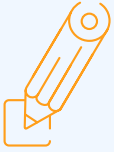


DID YOU KNOW?

Constant Contact walks you through the process of creating ads, making it easy to find customers on Facebook and Instagram, drive website traffic, and grow your contact list.

[Find out more.](#)





ACTION STEPS



Set aside a budget of \$100 to experiment with paid advertising.



Drive traffic to top-performing pages on your website.



Use ads to get new signups for your email list.



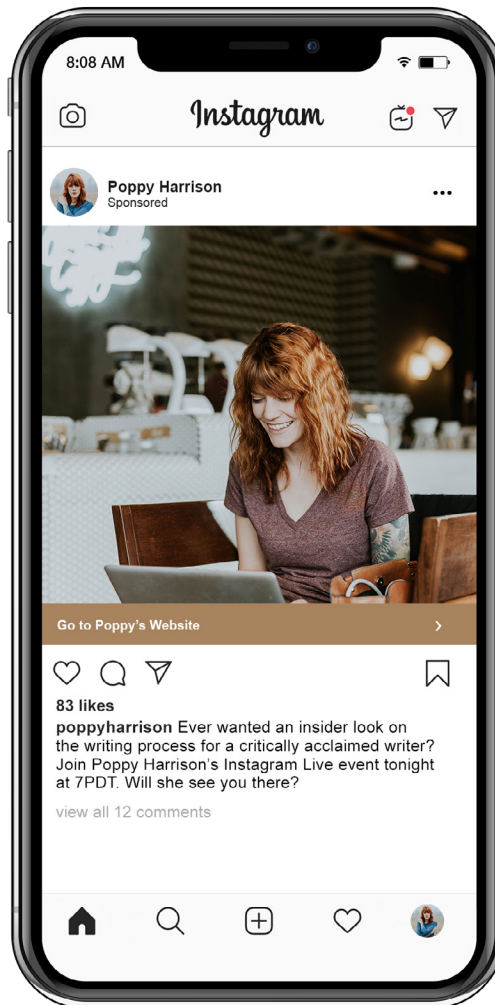
DID YOU KNOW?

Constant Contact has simplified the process for creating an ad and bidding on keywords so that you can quickly start promoting your organization to the people who are actively looking for what your business offers.

Find out more about growing your business with [Google Ads from Constant Contact](#).

How much should you spend on ads?

When you're first getting started set aside \$100 for testing. As you learn what does and doesn't work, you can invest more money in the ads that are working to bring you more business.





How it all comes together

Now that you have a better sense of how readers are finding books online and the tools you'll need to position yourself for success.

How do you bring it all together to drive new and repeat sales? The reality is that if you're not top of mind, people forget about your books. And that can cause you to lose money. Let's take a look at how this all comes together.

Connect

It's all about getting people to your mobile-responsive website and the online book retailers. You now know that happens through word-of-mouth referrals, searches online, paid advertising, mobile searches on apps, or through listing sites.

Experience

Wherever your prospective reader is engaging with you, you should provide a positive experience. That's often as simple as making sure people are finding the answers to their questions, that you're responding and engaging with people, and generally being helpful.

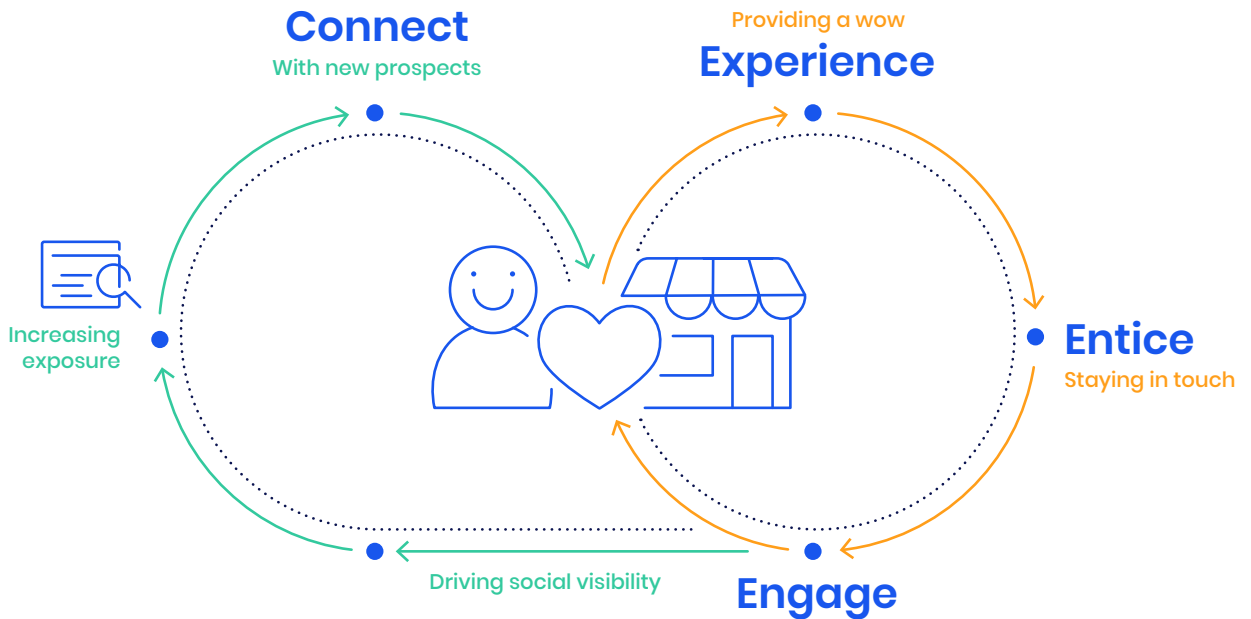
Entice

At this stage where someone is feeling good about your books, it's a great time to entice them to stay in touch with you. This could be mean following you on social channels, or even better, joining your email list.

Engage

Next, engage with these people who have opted to connect with you on a regular basis. This engagement is at the heart of the relationship between an author and your readers.

Engagement keeps you top of mind and puts you on the path to creating repeat readers, loyalty, referrals, and increased exposure for your books. Simply, engagement creates more awareness for your author or publishing business and brings more readers to you.



When your connections engage with you on social, forward your emails, or share your content with their contacts, those interactions create more visibility for your books. In turn, this engagement brings new readers to your books and feeds into the ways people find your books in the first place.

And that's how it all works together.

By focusing on those core elements of connect, experience, entice, and engage, an author or small publisher can create the relationships and interactions that keep existing readers coming back and increase word of mouth and social visibility that brings new readers through the door.

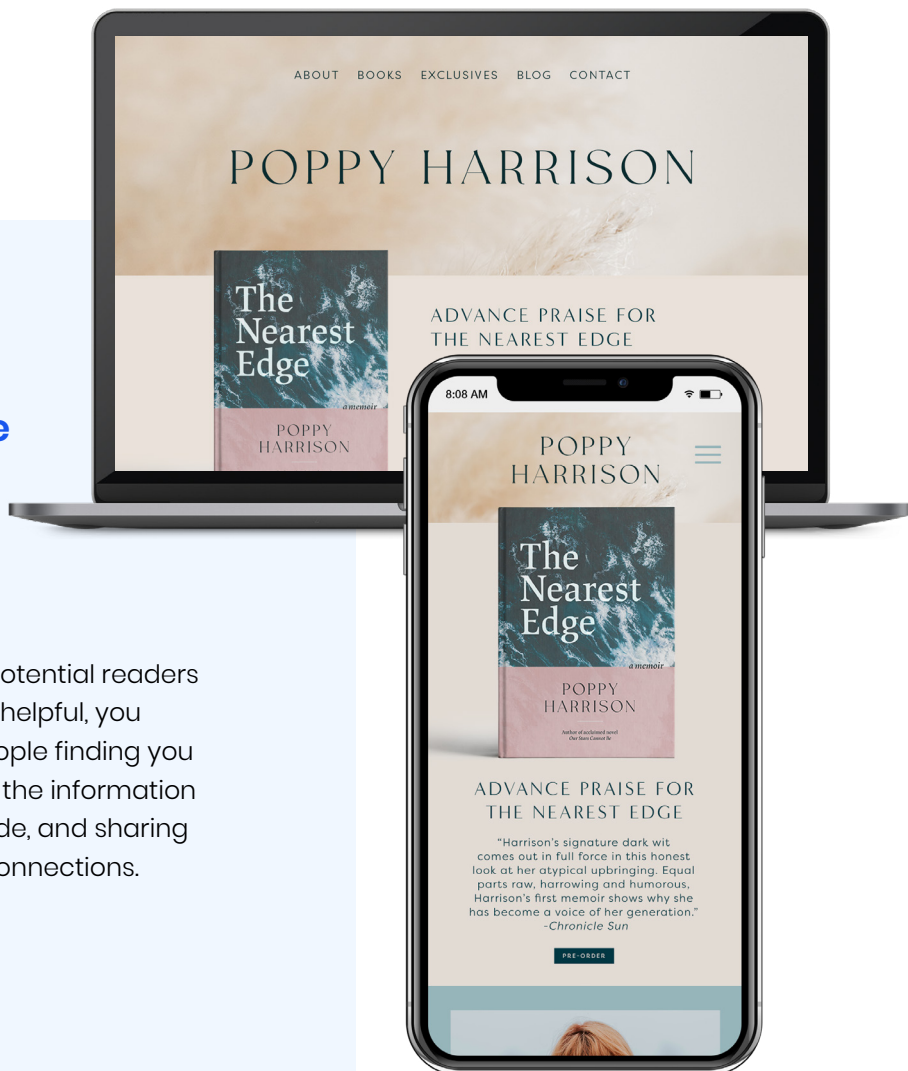
TO RECAP

Here's how you can take action:



Create a mobile-responsive website as a resource for potential readers.

By answering questions of potential readers and creating content that's helpful, you increase the chances of people finding you through search, consuming the information and samples that you provide, and sharing those resources with their connections.



TO RECAP

Here's how you can take action:



Capture email addresses from website visitors.

Offer a book excerpt, sample chapter, or exclusive content to entice people to join your email list. Then you'll have a way to follow up and encourage people to buy your books.

ABOUT BOOKS EXCLUSIVES BLOG CONTACT

GET EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

Want exclusive content directly from Poppy's writing desk? Let us know your email and once a month, you'll get reading lists, insider knowledge, first dibs on ticketed events, and more.

EMAIL

NAME [SUBSCRIBE](#)

POPPY HARRISON
Author of *Our Stars Cannot Be* and *The Undoing*

raw, harrowing and humorous, Harrison's first memoir shows why she has become a voice of her generation." -*Chronicle Sun*

[PRE-ORDER](#)

MEET POPPY

Poppy is the author of two highly acclaimed novels, *Our Stars Cannot Be* and *The Undoing*. A collection of her short stories, *Musing*, won the Sylvia Award in 2016. Most recently, Poppy finished her memoir, *The Nearest Edge*, releasing soon.

[FULL BIO](#)

OTHER WORKS

[OUR STARS CANNOT BE](#) [EXPLORE](#)

[THE UNDOING](#) [EXPLORE](#)

[MUSING](#) [EXPLORE](#)

GET EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

EMAIL NAME [SUBSCRIBE](#)

TO RECAP

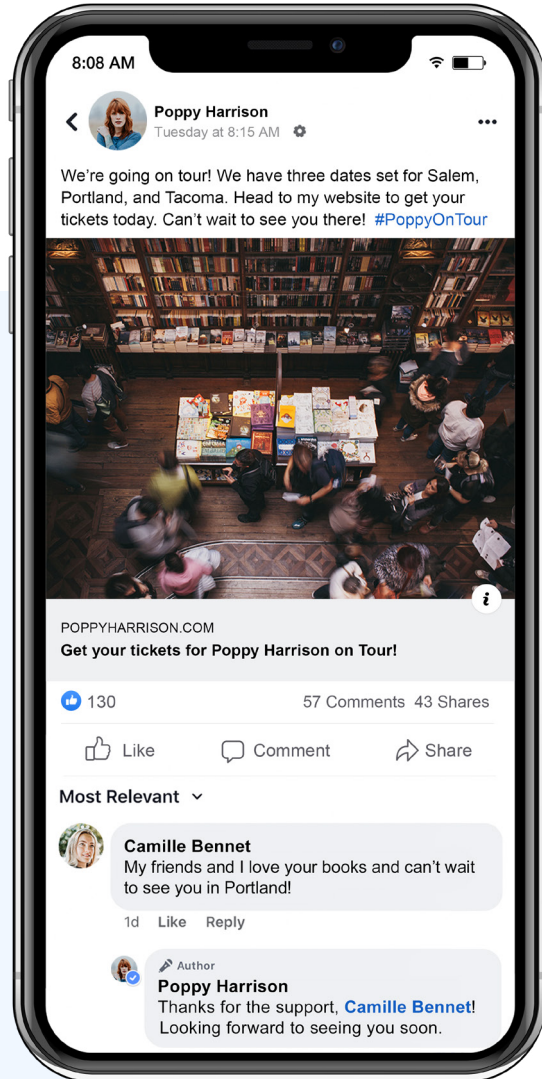
Here's how you can take action:



Interact and engage on social.

Remember it's called social media for a reason.

Social works best when you're not just asking readers to buy your products. Use social to generate awareness, answer reader questions, and drive action. Ultimately, try to get social followers to take the next steps by visiting your website and joining your email list.



TO RECAP

Here's how you can take action:



Engage with reviews to build trust.

Say “Thanks” when your readers take the time to say positive things about your books. Also, be sure to attend to concerns as well.

People are looking to see how you'll respond. Sometimes the feedback is legitimate, sometimes it's not. Respond professionally to see if you can rectify the issue. People watching can tell if someone's being unreasonable.

goodreads Home My Books Browse Community Search books

COMMUNITY REVIEWS Showing 1-33

★★★★★ 4.60 · Rating details · 5 ratings · 2 reviews

All Languages More filters | Sort order Search review text

Angela Schultz rated it ★★★★★ Apr 19, 2020

Poppy Harrison always has a way of touching readers deeply, and the same goes for her book of short stories, “Musing.” I loved learning about her upbringing and how people come from all kinds of backgrounds. I would suggest to anyone looking for a unique and eye-opening story!

1 like · Like · 1 comment · see review

Poppy Harrison I am so glad you enjoyed it! Thank you for sharing your review! Apr 22, 2020 07:25PM

Write a comment...

TO RECAP

Here's how you can take action:



Use email marketing to provide exclusive, helpful, and promotional content.

Email marketing allows you to build more meaningful reader relationships and drive book sales because people have opted-in to receive information from you. They're more engaged with your books than the typical social media follower.

Provide subscribers with deals and information they won't receive other places. Email can also drive action on your social channels.

POPPY HARRISON



WE'RE GOING ON TOUR!

And I wanted to let you know first! As a thank you for being part of my circle, you get early access to my ticketed events. Check out the dates and locations below. I can't wait to see you on the road.

FEB
22

Salem, OR
The Book Cellar

GET TICKETS

MAR
12

Portland, OR
Perry's Books

GET TICKETS

MAR
25

Tacoma, WA
Page Turners

GET TICKETS

WEBSITE | ABOUT | BOOKS | EXCLUSIVES | BLOG | CONTACT

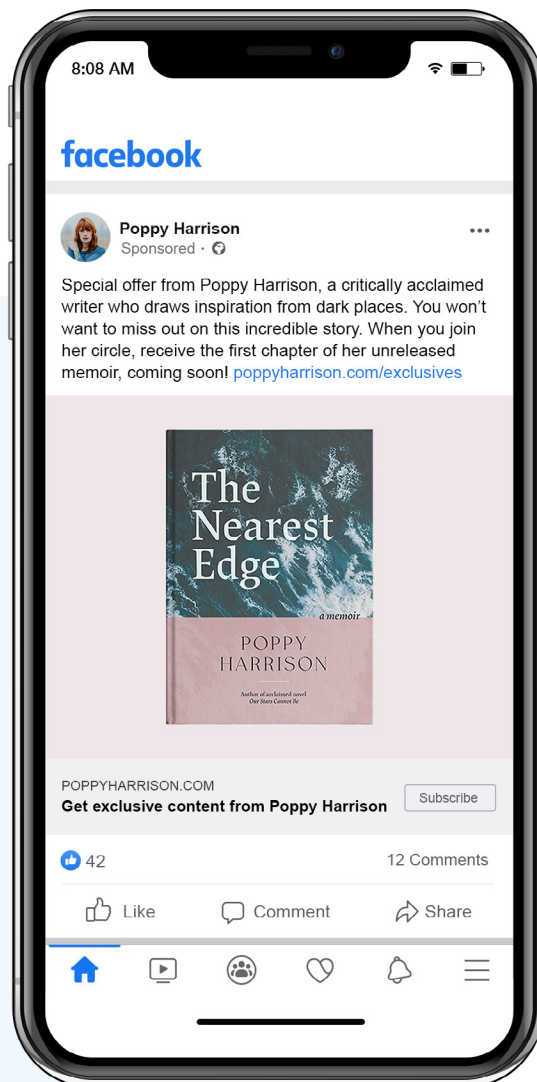
TO RECAP

Here's how you can take action:



Amplify your efforts with paid advertising.

With your fundamentals in place, you can drive traffic to your website, expose your books to more people, and collect more email addresses to get even more sales.



How will you know your online marketing efforts are working?

There's no shortage of things to measure today. Likes, followers, shares, opens, and clicks are all leading indicators. Don't focus on these vanity metrics alone to determine success. Pay attention to the things that are meaningful for your business.

Some high-level questions you should answer to gauge success:

- Are people visiting your website?
- Are people joining your email list?
- Are people contacting you for interviews?
- Are people purchasing your books?

How long does online marketing take to work?

From an organic, or non-paid perspective, you should think in terms of months. But once you build that foundation and have those strong relationships with your readers, the time frame shortens. Then you can experiment with paid advertising to amplify those efforts that are working.

REMEMBER

Across all that you're doing online, the idea should be to use your mobile-responsive website, email marketing, social channels, book retailer listings, content, and advertising to be useful to your current and potential readers.

- Create your website as a resource.
- Use other channels to drive people to your website.
- Capture email addresses and engage to drive new and repeat book sales.



How online marketing can work for you

With your knowledge of how to make online marketing work for your books, you're ready to take those next steps.



By doing these things you'll get the word out about your books, drive more people to your website and retailers, and sell more books.

You've got this. You've got us.

[CONSTANTCONTACT.COM](https://www.constantcontact.com)

Is your business online ready?

Review the following information. If you answer “no” on any of these items, a Constant Contact marketing advisor can point you in the right direction.



Call our marketing helpline:

(888) IDK-MKTG
(888) 435-6584

| | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Do you have a logo for your author brand? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Do you have a domain name? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Do you have a website? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Is it mobile responsive? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Does it include at least these five pages? | | |
| <i>Homepage</i> | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| <i>About Page</i> | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| <i>Books Page</i> | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| <i>Email Signup Page</i> | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| <i>Contact Page</i> | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Are you answering the appropriate questions for visitors on each page? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Are you using the appropriate imagery and photography throughout your site? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Do you have a way to capture email addresses from your website? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Are you offering something of value in exchange for an email address? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Have you ever run an SEO audit on your website? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Are you using an email marketing tool to stay in touch with fans and prospective readers? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Do you have a Welcome Series ready to automatically go out to new subscribers? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Do you have a written plan to send an email at least once a month? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |
| Do you have any ideas for other emails you may want to automate? | <input type="radio"/> YES | <input type="radio"/> NO |

Are you using social media channels for your author brand and books?

YES NO

Have you reserved your business name on the major social channels?

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

INSTAGRAM

LINKEDIN

YOUTUBE

Have you chosen one channel as your primary area of focus?

YES NO

Are you engaging with people trying to interact with you on this channel?

YES NO

Have you set personal goals for your social activity across the three categories?

Awareness

YES NO

Engagement

YES NO

Driving Action

YES NO

Do you have a written social plan to achieve those goals?

YES NO

Have you identified the listings and review sites that are important for your books?

YES NO

Have you claimed your author name and books on these listings and sites?

Amazon

YES NO

Author Central

YES NO

Goodreads

YES NO

Other Listings

YES NO

Have you confirmed the information is accurate on these sites?

YES NO

Are you engaging with people on these platforms?

YES NO

Do you have a way to easily create content on your website such as a blog? YES NO

Have you made a list of commonly asked questions from your fans and prospective readers? YES NO

Do you have a written plan to publish answers to those questions on a consistent basis? YES NO

Are you currently doing any paid advertising? FACEBOOK
 INSTAGRAM
 OTHER

Have you set aside a small budget to test your paid advertising efforts? YES NO

Do you have a written plan for paid advertising efforts? YES NO

Do you have a key metric that's important for your book sales? YES NO

Are you looking beyond vanity metrics and paying attention to the metrics that matter for your book sales? YES NO

Are more people visiting your website? YES NO

Are more people joining your email list? YES NO

Are more people contacting you? YES NO

Are more people purchasing your books? YES NO

→ Find more powerful tools, marketing advice, and how to win with online marketing at constantcontact.com

Constant Contact is an online marketing platform built to simplify the complex task of marketing your idea, even if you're a beginner. And our award-winning team of marketing advisors is there for every customer, every step of the way, offering live, real-time marketing advice on the phone or online anytime you get stuck.

Whether it's creating great-looking email marketing campaigns, running Google Ads to get more website traffic, or finding new customers on social media, we've got all the tools, features, and expert guidance you need to help you succeed—all in one place.



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Waltham, MA 02451

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