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A MAGAZINE FOR THE LITERARY CURIOUS



From Twitter Tips to Writer Help ***Ask Emma***

Featuring:
Emma Lombard



This month's column continues answering some more questions asked by writers in Twitter's #WritingCommunity. The information provided herein is not a prescriptive do or don't for authors, but it's a good place to start digging deeper into topics that you're seeking answers to. It's also great to have a look at how things have panned out for others who have gone before.

I'd love more info on catching agent attention. — Brook Allen

Trust me, if you're active and engaging on social media then agents and publishing professionals are watching you! However, there is no magic formula that I can offer.

In my guest post for Jane Friedman's blog, [How and Why to Build a Twitter Following While Unpublished](#), I reveal how (and why) literary agent Janet Reid (aka The Query Shark) started following ME on Twitter—WHA-!?

I also assume it was my online Twitter activity that attracted my publishing guru idol, Jane Friedman, to also follow me! This boosted my confidence so much that I took a punt and wrote the above-mentioned guest article for her award-winning blog, never really expecting her to publish me. But she did! This has now led to me publishing my second guest post with her, [How to Take the Sting Out of Query Rejections](#).

So yeah, eyes are watching our every move! It's all a matter of taking huge and brave steps to professionally reach out to some heavy hitters in the publishing industry. Social media gurus call this [reaching out to influencers](#).

Here's a [great video discussion](#) from literary agent, Jessica Faust, about How to Research Literary Agents.

How do I get my book in bookshops? — AaronKeyMarketing

I assume you're an indie author because as a traditional author your publisher distributes your books to bookshops. Here are two sources for indie authors to get their books into bookshops and libraries:

1. [Your Book in Libraries Worldwide Quick and Easy Guide](#)
2. [How to Get Your Book Distributed: What Self-Published Authors Need to Know](#)

Readers of this column are going to hear this A LOT from me, but also always keep a close tab on what Victoria Strauss has to say on her WRITER BEWARE site, including [Writer Beware: 2019 In Review](#) that covers some of the worst schemes, scams and issues uncovered in the publishing industry in 2019.

Education about all aspects (the good and the bad) of the publishing industry is key for all authors.

Should I enter my manuscript into writing contests and awards?

This is a personal choice, but if you do decide that writing contests and awards are the way to go, you might first have a read of this WRITER BEWARE (yip, them again!) article [Awards Profiteers: How Writers Can Recognise Them and Why They Should Avoid Them](#).

Always check *The Alliance of Independent Authors* [Awards & Contest Ratings chart](#) that categorizes dozens of contests and awards according to their merits.

How do I go about getting reviews for my book?

Science fiction fantasy indie author, C.D. Tavenor, recently posted this [superbly helpful thread on Twitter](#) highlighting which strategies he used to get reviews, as well as being perfectly blunt about the strategies that didn't work for him.

Some info from Jane Friedman's blog about this topic:

1. [A Short and Sweet Beginner's Guide to Securing Amazon Reviews](#)
2. [Are Paid Book Reviews Worth It?](#)

I don't know about you, but until I became a writer, I never left book reviews for no other reason than it never occurred to me to do so. If you're asking folks for honest reviews and they mention they've never written a book review before, point them to Alexandra Peel's article, [How to Write a Helpful Book Review in 7 Easy Steps](#).

Definitely marketing tips—what social media platforms actually work and the best ways to develop a Facebook page.

— Helen S Spiers

Some marketing experts reckon you should have an account on every social media platform, but I don't know how folks manage to keep so many balls in the air. My mantra is to stick with what I'm comfortable with at first—I can always expand my horizons when I've got a better handle of things.

Book marketing pro, Tim Grahl, has a fabulous free downloadable [Book Marketing Plan The Definitive Checklist](#) that shows a mind-blowing number of avenues through which to market a book. This was great for helping me decide what I was comfortable doing right away, and gave me some brave goals to work towards (like podcasting and video interviews—gulp!)

As you will see from this BookBub article, [15 Ways Authors Use Facebook To Promote Their Books](#), there is no set formula for developing a Facebook author page. Take a look at what other authors are doing (and doing well) and then experiment with a few of those ideas and see what works for you. Don't be afraid to experiment (or fail). You never know, you might come up with a new idea that becomes the next hottest trend!

Keep in mind that if you're using Facebook to promote your books, you need to do so through a Page and not a Personal Profile—using your personal profile for promotion is a breach of Facebook's rules and you risk having your account suspended.

Before you go

I aim to keep a blog packed full of helpful information for writers, especially newbies. Here are some of my latest posts, including guest articles:

1. [How to Take the Sting Out of Query Rejections](#)
2. [7 Steps for Authors to Handle Constructive Criticism Like a Pro After a Developmental Edit](#)
3. [How to Write a Helpful Book Review in 7 Easy Steps](#)
4. [Simple Tricks for Authors to Get Inside a Character's Head](#)
5. [What is Purple Prose and How Can Authors Fix it?](#)

Don't forget [PitMad](#) coming up on March 5, 2020! This is an opportunity for un-agented authors of every genre to pitch their manuscripts to agents on Twitter in real time. Good luck to all those participating!

Until next month! Happy writing!
— Emma