

SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKING SELLS BOOKS

One thing that's been pretty clear in recent years is that networking via social media does impact book sales. The larger the network, the better the sales through that channel. This doesn't mean that your social media presence has to be extra large, but can you partner with others who – together – will make up a significant network? It's important for authors to have a social media presence today primarily to raise awareness for their book(s), build relationships with readers, and to share their knowledge. The top social media sites today include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. There is no need to go all out (unless you want to of course!)-- just get started with one or two, be active, and have fun!

Here are a few basic social media strategies and tips for you to consider for your book:

3-4 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR BOOK COMES OUT:

STEP 1: Choose a platform

We recommend that if our authors don't already have a social media presence that you feel comfortable sharing your book news, that you pick one and stick with it. Facebook, far and away the most popular social networking site, is a great option because it's so universal. With Facebook, Mountaineers Books, booksellers, press and media, clubs and event venues can tag you in posts and easily promote your book and author events.

Facebook owns Instagram and when you post to Instagram you can click a button to share your photo on Facebook, too. You can also go back to Instagram and share past posting on Facebook anytime.

SETTING UP A FACEBOOK PAGE

We recommend that you set up an **author page** (not a person or a group) to announce press, events and other exciting book news. Keep it simple and just have the page title be "Your Name Author" or "Your Name Writer." It's nice to have this set up at least 3 months prior to your book launch so that you can start to let your community know your book is coming out, and to get the word out about any launch events coming up or press about your book.

Here's a couple of examples from other authors that we think are doing a great job:

Craig Romano Guidebook Author: <https://www.facebook.com/CraigRomanoGuidebookAuthor/>

Shawnté Salabert: Writer: <https://www.facebook.com/ShawnteSalabertWriter/>

How much to post: We recommend sitting down to plan a couple posts a week in the months before your book comes out to help build up excitement for you book, with pictures, fun facts, and perhaps a sample page or two. Other posts will come up naturally – like announcing an event or celebrating a press mention, but it's nice to actually sit down and create a few posts in advance that are just generally about the book.

But what about all those OTHER outlets, you say?

PROS TO INSTAGRAM:

If you have lots of pictures from your book or if you've written a narrative and have photos that illustrate your story, then Instagram is a great social media channel in which to do promotion. Pretty and/or interesting images is what will get you "Followers" on Instagram. Instagram makes you do your postings on a mobile device (phone or tablet) through its app, which is light years simpler to use than Facebook. Simpler also means that it doesn't have nearly as many features as Facebook does. Essentially, all you can do on Instagram besides post photos, is add a description to your images, "like" other people's postings, and follow others. You'll gain followers when you follow other people and like their postings. The experience feels a lot less committing than Facebook does.

You can extend your audience reach by adding related hash tags after your description comment (e.g. #hike #nationalpark #trails). The Instagram audience skews younger (18-35) than for Facebook users (35+), and the action is quick. But it's fun, and usually not too time intensive because you can really just post pictures with text a few times a week.

Find Mountaineers Books on Instagram as @mtnbooks.

PROS TO TWITTER:

If you like engaging with the writing community, jumping into dialogues and sharing your wisdom and book updates in 280-character snapshots, Twitter might be fun for you. It is interactive, and meant for short conversations, responding to news, and keeping tabs on other writers, movers and shakers in your sphere. Some of our authors love it. Some hate it. If it doesn't appeal to you, don't worry about it!

Confused? Want more in-depth explanations of features and best practices? Everything you need to know is just a Google away.