

BEST PRACTICES FOR GROUPS

Goodreads Groups provide an excellent way for passionate readers to discuss their favorite things: books! There are groups for every type of reader, from politics to poetry, classics to contemporary. Authors and publishers should consider incorporating Goodreads Groups when planning a robust marketing campaign. Here's how.

Find your readers

There are literally thousands of groups on Goodreads. Most groups are public so that anyone can join. Groups employ their own rules and moderation guidelines, so make sure you read and understand those before joining.

Connect with readers

The average Goodreads member is likely to be female, have a college degree, and read more than 6 books a month. Goodreads groups are much more text-oriented than other sites, giving members the ability to connect in more powerful ways. Members are looking for an authentic connection and the ability to engage in meaningful conversations. Readers are notified via email about any activity in their groups to keep them engaged.

Start here

Find groups by going to www.goodreads.com/group and searching for relevant groups. Results will produce the most recently active. You can also browse by tags. Here are some examples of how Goodreads members use groups today:

[Emma's Book Club - Our Shared Shelf](#): Emma Watson's book club about feminism.

[Keep Turning Pages](#): Run by the social media experts at Doubleday.

[Harlequin Books - The Home of Romance](#): The title sums this up quite nicely.

[Amazon Editor's YA Book Club](#) - Discuss your favorite books.

[Dead Good Crime Group](#) - Mystery and thrillers conversations run by publishers.

A rectangular button with a thin border and rounded corners, containing the text "Join Group" in a bold, sans-serif font.

Approaching Groups

Incorporating Groups in your marketing campaign is a long-term strategy. Depending on your resources, there are two ways to do this:

Limited Time: Join Groups

Identify 3-5 groups that are most relevant to your work and join them. Introduce yourself and contribute to discussions. Whether you're an author or work for a publisher, don't just talk about your own books! Build relationships with the most active members of the group, and be aware of any opportunities to promote your books. Spend at least one hour a week on this activity.

More Time: Create Groups

You'll need to invest more resources and patience if you start your group from scratch, but you'll have control over the messaging and will build your own audience. We recommend committing to your group for at least six months to allow it to hit its stride, while remaining consistently active throughout this time. This is a great option if you want to build your general presence on Goodreads and create a multi-purpose destination.

Get the most out of Goodreads by participating in groups. Groups range from secret, private, or public. It's never too late to join or create a group.

Tips for Creating a Group

A little planning helps turn a new group into a worthwhile endeavor. If you have the time to invest in creating a group, here are a few things to think about:

Define the purpose of your group.

Figure out what topics you want to focus on in your group, recognizing that it can't be everything. Focus on a particular genre or subject, or create a theme for your group.

Identify the right success metrics.

You'll look at different numbers depending on what you're trying to accomplish with the group. There are three types of metrics to monitor in a group, so consider which ones to track in order to recognize whether you're hitting your goal.

- **Members:** Indicates the reach of your group. Members have opted-in to stay updated on activity and are likely to connect with readers who have similar taste.
- **Views:** This is the number of people who see your content, similar to impressions.
- **Posts:** This is your engagement metric for your content. Encourage your members to participate in discussions, and recognize that it's not always easy chiming in.

Add moderators to your group.

You can't do it alone! Add at least three moderators to your group, including an official publisher account that shows your company's logo. The publisher account allows you to post general rules while your personal accounts let you engage with readers. Readers want to interact with people, not with brands, so use your personal account to represent your company while also providing a human touch.

Set your guidelines.

Groups are ruled by their unique set of guidelines. Identify your tolerance level for swearing and self-promotion. Rely on these rules should you ever need to moderate the group. It is at your discretion who belongs in the group and who does not.

Set up your folders.

Be meticulous when organizing your threads into folders, identifying the underlying themes. Topics that are not placed into a folder will show up under the 'general' folder until they are moved. As more topics get created, you'll be happy to have a method to the madness.

Plan your editorial calendar.

Outline the broad strokes of when you'll discuss various topics or introduce a new theme. Give readers time to read the book if it's new. Plan your schedule at least three months ahead.

Announce your reading schedule.

Identifying the books that you're currently reading in the group, as well as the ones you plan on reading, helps new members orient themselves. Anyone can jump in on a conversation or earmark the next book.

Provide perks.

Incentivize people to join the group and participate by offering something exclusive, be it an excerpt, a chance to chat with the author, or secret giveaways.

Make personal connections.

People love talking about books almost as much as they love talking about themselves. Ask how a theme of a book impacted readers in real life, and encourage readers to connect on a personal level.

Promote your group.

The more people know about your group, the more people will join! Tell people to join your group on social media sites, your newsletter, when listing a giveaway, and in any publicity and marketing material.

Goodreads rotates up to four recently active groups each week in the Featured section on the main groups page. Send a link to your group for consideration to scynthia@goodreads.com

Tips for Joining a Group

Joining groups is a great way to connect with readers who have similar taste in books as you. Here are some tips for joining a group correctly:

Identify groups that genuinely interest you.

It will be much easier to chime in on conversations and connect with like-minded readers when you share a common interest. Start by joining 2-3 groups where you recognize the books they have on their shelves. This will allow you to reference these books immediately and give you credibility.

Look for recent activity.

This helps identify groups that are the most engaging and up-to-date. If you come across a group that you'd like to join but there hasn't been much recent activity, try to reignite some!

Read the rules.

Please be respectful of groups that prefer not to involve authors or publishers. Rules will generally be outlined in the "About" section at the top of the page. Some groups allow authors to promote themselves in designated threads. Check with the moderators to be sure.

Browse the threads.

Familiarize yourself with the layout of the group so that you know what conversations to participate in. Some groups might use abbreviations to refer to certain things, and you'll want to understand their code.

Break the ice.

Look for a "Start here" or "Introduce yourself" thread and navigate from there. Be transparent that you work for a publisher or are an author, but also mention your personal interests, what you're currently reading, or what you're hoping to get out of the group.

Join the conversation.

Don't just talk about your own books, but contribute thoughtfully to discussions. Start with adding comments to existing threads before starting a new thread as you get your bearings.

Learn about the members.

Find out what they are reading by looking at their profile. Follow them to see their updates, or send them a friend request if you have a lot of common interests. Groups are places to meet other readers and build relationships with them, so use the opportunity to meet some readers.

Spend time.

Dedicate at least one hour per week to group engagement. Challenge yourself to post at least three comments in each group you're in. The more you engage with the group, the more the group will engage with you and before you know it, you're having fun!

Contact the moderator.

If you see an opportunity to promote your book, contact the moderator directly and outline what you have in mind. Perhaps you can offer 25 copies and a chat with an author, or perhaps you can give away some tickets to a sold out event.

Adjust your settings.

You'll receive email notifications about new activity in the group based on your preferences. If you're in a lot of groups you may prefer a weekly roundup, or you can receive a daily digest—it's up to you!

Goodreads Groups can be a powerful tool in a marketing campaign when incorporated correctly. Don't hesitate to contact Customer Service at support@goodreads.com if you have any questions.