**Marketing Your Book on Goodreads**

By Cynthia Shannon

“Go where the readers are” is the standard advice for authors contemplating how to best market their books. With more than 30 million members, Goodreads is the world’s largest community of readers. Even better, Goodreads’ mission is to help readers find and share books they love. For authors, it provides a platform to interact with readers in a way not possible just a few years ago.

Here are some ways to effectively integrate Goodreads into your marketing campaign, whether you’re a debut author or an established one, traditionally published or self-published.

**Claim your author profile.** This is necessary for you to access the tools available to you to promote your work and connect with readers. Search for your book via ISBN or ASIN, then click on your name; scroll to the bottom of the profile page and click on “Is this you? Let us know!” and complete the information. You’ll receive a “Welcome” email once the request has been approved and get access to your author dashboard, where you’ll see many of the promotional tools you’ll use on Goodreads.

**Edit your author profile.** Give readers the chance to learn as much as possible about you with a robust profile. Once you’ve claimed your profile, complete it with as much information as possible. Upload your author photo, include a detailed bio, and provide information about your Twitter, Facebook, and blog accounts. For the bio, avoid the corporate-sounding bio and use your writing talent to create something personable! Some good examples to check out are [Patrick Rothfuss](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/108424.Patrick_Rothfuss), [Nalini Singh](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/71688.Nalini_Singh) and [Liane Moriaty](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/322069.Liane_Moriarty).

**Switch on “Ask the Author.”** This is a new feature that allows readers to ask authors questions. It’s a great way to create content that will delight and engage readers. Again, we encourage you to make the most of this opportunity to connect with your readers and let your personality shine through! Think of each question as a writing prompt, and give thoughtful answers. Some good examples of authors using this feature are [Michael Cunningham](https://www.goodreads.com/author/1432.Michael_Cunningham/questions), [Anne Lamott](https://www.goodreads.com/author/7113.Anne_Lamott/questions), and [Chuck Wendig](https://www.goodreads.com/author/17152.Chuck_Wendig/questions).

You have complete control over which questions to answer. Questions are sent directly to the author dashboard and it’s only when you answer a question that the question and its answer are shown. To get you started, Goodreads provides some initial questions for you to answer, such as “Where did you get the idea for your latest book?” These questions will remain until you choose to answer them.

We recommend including a message that specifies when and how often you will be answering questions. Your answers show up in the news feed of your followers, are archived on your author profile and also on the unique landing page for Ask the Author. One question answered per day or every day or two is a good rhythm, but find what works best with your schedule.

**Review some books, not just your own.** Readers love finding out what their favorite authors love to read. Help them learn more about you by sharing your thoughts about the books you’re currently reading, or the ones that inspired you to become a writer. You can also rate your favorite children’s books, or comment on the classics. Don’t worry about writing a full review – simply shelving and rating books is fine, too.

**Schedule a giveaway.** Giveaways are a great way to generate reviews, but also awareness of your book. Here are some tips on making the most of your giveaways:

**Remember that you are not limited to one giveaway per book. You can run giveaways for your older books too!**

You can run as many giveaways as you want for any book. Of course, you will want to spread them out so you reach different people. Also, you are not limited to just your latest book. You can also run giveaways for your older books to reignite awareness and interest.

**Run at least one giveaway in advance to your publication date.**

This will help build advance buzz for your book, as even readers who don’t win the book may add it to their To-Read shelf for consideration at a later date.

**Run the giveaway for at least a month.** This will give you time to promote the giveaway, and allows more readers to discover it as they see their friends entering.

**Include a short description, and ask readers to follow you on Goodreads.** A paragraph or two should suffice in describing your book, and you should also state whether the books will be signed or not. If you want to offer special deals to winners after the giveaway has ended, you can do so by posting that information on your blog, which your followers will see.

**Promote the giveaway.** Spread the word about your giveaway via your newsletter, your Twitter account, and your website.

**Send books to winners.** This seems like an obvious one, but you never know what things come up to prevent you from sending the books to winners. If you have any questions or delays, let the [Goodreads Support team](mailto:support@goodreads.com) know.

Giveaways are for print books only. Some authors who are only selling e-book editions of their books will use a print-on-demand service to create print copies for giveaways.

**Participate in groups.** Groups provide the opportunity for in-depth conversations about topics of interest, whether that’s “History and Medicine” or “Vampire Love Stories.” It’s very important to understand that groups are not the place for a sales pitch, but rather for getting to know readers and discussing books with them. Remember to read the rules of any group you join to learn about the etiquette of how and where things are discussed. If your goal is purely to promote your books on Goodreads, joining a group is not the right strategy for you. If you are interested in slowly building up long-term connections with readers interested in the same topics as you, it’s worth investigating some groups.

**Invest in a small advertising campaign.** Any of the aforementioned activities can be enhanced with an advertisement campaign. We recommend starting out with a $50 - $150 initial investment in your first campaign, and following these tips:

**Create multiple ads within the same campaign.** This allows you to test different ads to different audiences to see which resonates best.

**Create a specific call to action.** Tell viewers of your ad exactly what you want them to do next, whether it’s “Add to your shelf!” or “Read an excerpt!” Note though that “Buy my book” is not a great call to action.

**Review your ad performance weekly.** At the end of each week, take a look at how your ads performed taking into account the click-through-rate (the number of clicks divided by impressions, also known as CTR). The average CTR for the self-serve ads on Goodreads is 0.05%.

**Edit often**. If ads aren’t performing as expected, change them! This also prevents what’s known as “ad fatigue” for viewers who may see your ad more than once.

**Pause an ad when it’s not working.** Pausing an ad will disable it from running and potentially using funding. Unfortunately we cannot delete ads or campaigns.

**Include Goodreads on your website.** Many authors overlook this obvious task, providing information about their Facebook and Twitter accounts, but no mention of their presence on Goodreads. Include the Goodreads button along with your other social media. Once you have some reviews to show off, add our reviews widget (found on your author dashboard). You can customize this to only show reviews of a certain star rating.

With any activity you do, keep the reader in mind. Ask yourself what you can do to delight your readers. If you have any questions about anything on Goodreads, email us at [support@goodreads.com](mailto:support@goodreads.com) or find us on Twitter @goodreads.