



FROM CONCEPT TO CAREER: THE PROCESS AND PACING OF PROMOTION

Presented by Joyce Uglow and Laura Anne Bird
SCBWI-WI

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Promotion is all about getting your story into the hands of the children who need it. Promotion is non-negotiable. You have to do *something* to tell people out there that your book is forthcoming! We've listed some great options here, but you might come up with something else that works. Pacing of promotion? Give yourself plenty of time to coordinate. It is not too early to start, and promotion is best when it's ongoing. While **marketing** plays the long game by building lasting brand loyalty and relationships, **promotion** uses short bursts of high impact to grab immediate attention to inform, persuade, and remind others about your book.

Email signature

This is a quick and easy thing you can put in place *now* to start spreading the word about your book. Here are Joyce and Laura's own email signatures as examples:

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Warrior with Two Braids coming September 14, 2027!



Business cards

It's always nice to have something tangible to hand out to people if you're at an event or conference. Some authors hand out bookmarks or other pieces such as postcards instead. Canva is a great place to design your cards.

Newsletter, Substack, blog

Regular communication with your audience of readers (and *potential* readers) is important. You can do this through a newsletter, Substack, and/or blog. Start building your list of contacts now; it helps to have a spreadsheet of names and email addresses as a starting point. Keep your communication compelling, concise, and relevant. **NOTE:** Also make sure that you're not just talking about your book; maybe include a recipe, a book review (or shout-out to another author!), or a link to something interesting so that your messaging doesn't always feel self-serving.

Launch party

Celebrate your new release by hosting a launch party. The options are endless. A launch party can be held at your local bookstore or community center or another relevant venue. It's your chance to invite family, friends, and/or community members to support you. Make sure to have copies of your book available for purchase. Coordinate a program, activity, snack, and/or conversation so that everyone knows what your book is about and gets excited to read it, purchase it, and spread the word about it. Publicize your launch party on your website, through your newsletter, Substack, blog, social media, etc.

Sell sheet

This is a critical document to have in place. It's a single page snapshot of your book that acts as a pitch to bookstores, libraries, media contacts, event organizers, etc. It introduces your book and author brand while providing key publishing data like ISBN, distributor, pricing, and availability. The layout should be clean and readable and include a graphic of the front cover of your book. **NOTE:** consider having some other documents in place, too, to develop a full-fledged media kit. These documents can include your author bio, Q&A with the author, synopsis of your book, blurbs, and a press release. Have digital and print copies on hand.

Swag

Bookmarks! Stickers! Magnets! Is there something fun that you can create to hand out at author events and other gatherings so that people remember you and your book?

Social media

Social media can be a beast, but it's important to have at least a small digital footprint so people can find you online. Whether it's Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, X, etc., consider what you want to achieve through your social media posts. Perhaps you wish to announce details pertaining to your book, or invite people to your launch party, or promote other authors. Regardless of your angle, make sure your messaging is compelling, concise, and relevant. You might want to consider creating separate author accounts rather than using your existing personal accounts.

Street team

Creating a street team is a great way to get your advance reader copy (ARC) into the hands of readers. Start working on a list now; book enthusiasts who are well-connected or who have a wide audience and who would be willing to post reviews about your book, invite you onto their podcast, feature you on their blog, etc. Once you get their green light, ARCs can be mailed to members of your street team along with any relevant information or instructions. ARCs can also be emailed as digital copies. Ask your street team members which they prefer. A [blog tour can be super helpful in promoting your new release!](#)

Collaborations

Think outside the box! Who can you partner with to get word out about your book? If your book is about nature, maybe you reach out to your local arboretum to do a joint program there. If it's about music, maybe you reach out to your local symphony orchestra or chorale. How can you work with school groups, libraries, museums, or bookstores to shine a bright light on *their* efforts, too? The more time you invest in developing relationships and collaborations, the better situated you will be to promote your book and get some sales. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there and ask. The worst thing they can say is no.

Awards

Have you thought about looking into [SCBWI's Awards and Grants](#)? There are many other awards and recognitions out there for children's authors and illustrators. Don't hesitate to nominate yourself (or another creator) for them.

Book recs!

- Some great advice for marketing and promoting can be found in *Before and After the Book Deal: A Writer's Guide to Finishing, Publishing, Promoting, and Surviving Your First Book* by Courtney Maum.
- Also check out [SCBWI The Essential Guide to Publishing for Children](#). Members, go to your Member Home, choose the My Resources tab, and scroll through the list to see The Essential Guide as well as your other exclusive SCBWI Resources.

And don't forget to be an active and involved literary citizen:

- Read, review, and celebrate other authors.
- Attend events at local indie shops and buy books from them, too.
- Get a public library card and use it!
- Join [SCBWI](#) and participate in events – and show up for your fellow members.
- Get involved in other relevant organizations like [Wisconsin Writers Association](#).
- Subscribe to Jane Friedman's (free) newsletter about the publishing industry, which includes sign-ups for webinars and other opportunities ([janefriedman.com](#)).
- Join [Authors Against Book Bans](#) to ensure that all writers get the chance to share their voices, especially those who come from marginalized backgrounds ([authorsagainbookbans.com](#)).
- Listen to bookish podcasts such as [SCBWI podcasts](#).

