



HOST A BOOK EVENT

HOW TO HOST YOUR OWN
BOOK SIGNING EVENTS

ALYBLUE MEDIA, LLC
WWW.ALYBLUEMEDIA.COM

PURPOSE

VALUE OF BOOK EVENTS



Your story will heal you and your story will heal somebody else.

IYANLA VANZANT

Why do we write books? To enrich readers by taking them inside our world and impart wisdom learned from our journey.

We want to share with others what happened to us, how we survived the experience, and how it changed us as a person.

Hosting a book signing event is a fun way to promote your story, tell people about yourself, is a great way to connect and build your fan base, and make yourself visible to those who benefit from what you have to share.

Many writers host an event with one goal only—to sell lots of books. Selling lots of books

is a secondary benefit to your primary goal, which is meeting and building your fan base.

Think of it as an opportunity to present your best foot forward while listening and learning from your readers. If you sell lots of books, great! If not, take the experience back home with you and feel good about the lives you touched, whether they bought a book or not. And then take the experience back to the drawing board.

Don't be afraid to play around with your event and make it festive and fun. It's *your* event . . . you can do what you want!

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OPTION 1

NONTRADITIONAL VENUE

I'm writing my story so that others might see fragments of themselves.

LENA WAITHE

Many non-bookstore businesses would be happy to have you host an event at their business. Why? Because it draws people into their store, making it a win-win situation.

The most common venue is a coffee shop, but don't be afraid to think outside the box. Does your girlfriend own a clothing boutique? Partner with her to hold a Ladies Night. She could host a special sale while you host your book table. The two of you can

offer hors d'oeuvres and beverages, giveaways, raffles, accept donations for the local food bank, etc.

The possibilities beyond a coffee shop are limited only by your imagination. My first book event was held inside a grocery store during the holidays. I partnered with three other authors and together we created a fun, festive table to match the holiday mood. We had so many curious customers stop by our table that the time flew by. Not only was it fun, we sold a large number of books because we were accessible and personable in a grocery store!

HOW TO:

1. Select three locations that are at the top of your wish list. Consider coffee shops, grocery stores, a friend's store, etc. Think outside the box.
2. Personally visit each site and ask to see the manager or owner. If they aren't available, ask to schedule an appointment to see them. At that appointed time, be ready with a copy or two of your book(s), sell sheets and business cards. These visual graphics carry more weight than words alone, and it presents you as a polished professional.
3. Some venues will only allow a book signing event if it has to do with fundraising. Let them know if you plan to donate some or all of your profits to a good cause.
4. Purchase a supply of books four weeks in advance using the AlyBlue Media wholesale link. Depending upon your venue, consider ordering 20-50 books. If they don't sell, you have them on hand for the next event.

BRING

- Pre-autographed books
- Sell sheets
- Business cards
- Pens
- Cashbox with change
- Receipt book to track sales
- Sign up sheet to gather emails for email database
- Bookmarks and other freebies
- Water and snacks to keep energy up

5. Consider autographing each book prior to the event. This will save time when you have more than one fan waiting to talk to you.
6. Advertise the event: social media, newsletters, email blasts, website, newspaper, etc. Don't expect the venue to do any advertising on your behalf. If you want people to show up, YOU need to do the marketing for the event.
7. At the appointed day and time, set up a table with marketing material and books to sell.
8. Find volunteers to help manage transactions so you can greet fans and sign books. You'll have autographed the books ahead of time, but during the event be prepared to personalize your autograph per the fan's request ("To Mary").
9. Bring lots of pens for signing.
10. Bring a signup sheet to gather emails for your database. Make it enticing . . . what do fans get if they give you their email? Free giveaways such as bookmarks are useful here.
11. Determine your own price point and keep the profits. The barcode on the back cover of your book lists the retail price, but if you offer it for two dollars cheaper, fans feel like they're getting a deal.
12. Consider setting a price that doesn't involve handling lots of change or one dollar bills. If the sales tax amounts to \$1.17, roll that into your book's price so you aren't handling lots of quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies, which uses precious time that is better spent chatting with your fans. Make sure you note the price on your display poster and say "tax included." Be sure you know your city/county tax rates ahead of time.

Example:

- ◆ \$7.50 Your wholesale cost
- ◆ \$12.00 Price to customers (Uncle Sam keeps \$0.94 per book, you keep \$11.06 per book)
- ◆ \$4.56 Your net profit per book

By keeping the retail price at an even \$12 (or whatever you choose), and paying sales tax out of that, you reduce the amount of time you spend making change.

TIPS

- ✓ Tell your backstory . . . people want to know about you!
- ✓ Have a volunteer take lots of photos for social media
- ✓ Take lots of selfies with your fans
- ✓ Keep their attention (keep it fun, compelling or fascinating)
- ✓ Prepare a slide show to go along with your story

OPTION 2

TRADITIONAL VENUE

Good stories surprise us. They make us think and feel.

JOE LAZAUSKAS

Hosting a book event in a bookstore is also fun but a little more restrictive. The advantage for you is that you gain exposure, credibility, as well as fans to add to your email database. You also don't have to tote a load of books around. The disadvantage is that the bookstore handles all transactions and keeps the profits.

Bookstores generally don't like saturating the market, so if you hosted a recent book event in the same community, the bookstore may ask you to come back another time.

Bookstores will order in their own supply of books using their catalog, which includes our titles. They sell the books as you speak, and they keep the profits. This is why they're happy to host you at a book signing—because you draw in the customers, and they sell the books).

HOW TO:

1. Select three bookstores in your region.
2. Personally visit each site and ask to see the manager or the person in charge of book events. If they aren't available, ask to schedule an appointment to see them. At that appointed time be ready with a copy or two of your book(s), sell sheets, and your business cards. These visual graphics carry more weight than words alone, and it presents you as a polished professional.
3. Agree upon a date. Bookstores generally book events about 3 months out.
4. The bookstore might require a poster(s) to hang in their store. You are responsible for supplying this. See link to ordering an event poster on page 6. Be sure to ask the bookstore what size they require, and how many.
5. Do not bring your own supply of books. The bookseller will purchase your books from their catalog. The bookstore handles all transactions and keeps the profits, so don't expect to go home with any money in your pocket.

BRING

- Tabletop poster
- Sell sheets
- Business cards
- Pens
- Sign up sheet to gather emails for email database
- Bookmarks and other freebies
- Water and snacks to keep energy up
- Pop-up banner to help people find you in the store

6. Advertise the event via social media, newsletters, email blasts, website, newspaper, etc. The bookstore might require you to promote per their protocol. If they don't mention it, ask.
7. The bookstore will have the table set up for you. Bring your own marketing material including banner, sell sheets, business cards, fliers, bookmarks, pens, etc.
8. Bring a signup sheet to gather emails for your database. Make it enticing . . . what do fans get if they give you their email? Free giveaways such as bookmarks are useful here.
9. Ask the bookstore if you can arrive early to sign books. This will save time when you have more than one fan waiting to talk to you. The upside is that the bookstore can label any unsold books as "signed by author" before it goes on their display shelf.



OPTION 3

COMMUNITY EVENT

There is no friend as loyal as a book.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Selling your books at a community event is the same as doing it in a non-traditional venue with one main difference: you'll be sharing space with other vendors. One advantage is that event organizers do most of the marketing (though you should do your share too), and many people will attend.

HOW TO:

You'll set yourself up just as you would in a non-traditional venue. The event organizers will assign you a space that is usually 10-feet by 10-feet. You bring everything you need to fill that space.

1. To find a community event, ask your local Chamber of Commerce for any upcoming craft shows or flea markets, scan your community newspapers, ask on Facebook. You'll be expected to pay for a booth, and the price will vary. Event organizers use this fee to help pay for space, marketing, etc.
2. Purchase a supply of books four weeks in advance using the AlyBlue Media wholesale link. Depending upon your venue, consider ordering 20-50 books. If they don't sell, you have them on hand for the next event.
3. Consider autographing each book prior to the event. This will save time when you have more than one fan waiting to talk to you.
4. Advertise your booth on social media, newsletters, email blasts, website, newspaper, etc. Do not expect the venue to do any advertising on your behalf. They advertise on their behalf. If you want people to visit your booth, YOU need to market your booth and tell people where to find you (example: Come see me in booth #8!).

BRING

- 6-foot table
- Chair with pillow for comfort and visual appeal
- Flower bouquet to visually warm up space
- Choose warm colors to encourage spontaneous purchases
- Bring tablecloth that matches your floral bouquet for visual appeal.
- Books
- Pens
- Bookmarks and other freebies
- Tabletop poster so guests don't have to guess what your booth is about
- Cashbox with change
- Receipt book to track sells
- Sign up sheet to gather emails
- Snacks and beverages to keep energy up

5. Autograph the books ahead of time, but during the event be prepared to personalize your autograph per the fan's request ("To Mary").
6. Bring lots of pens for signing.
7. Bring a signup sheet to gather emails for your database. Make it enticing . . . what do fans get if they give you their email? Free giveaways such as bookmarks are useful here.
8. Determine your own price point and keep the profits. The barcode on the back cover lists the retail price, but if you offer it for a dollar or two cheaper, fans feel like they're getting a deal. Consider setting a price that doesn't involve handling lots of change or one dollar bills. If the sales tax amounts to \$1.17, roll that into your book's price so you aren't handling lots of quarters, dimes, nickels and pennies, which uses precious time that is better spent chatting with your fans. Make sure you note the price on your display poster, and say "tax included." Be sure you know your city/county tax rates ahead of time.

TIPS

- ✓ Tell your backstory . . . people want to know about you!
- ✓ Have a volunteer take lots of photos for social media
- ✓ Take lots of selfies with your fans
- ✓ Keep their attention (keep it fun, compelling or fascinating)
- ✓ Prepare a slide show to go along with your story
- ✓ Bring a second tablecloth to cover your display at night if the event is more than one day.

SPEAKING

HELPFUL HINTS

You can speak well if your tongue can deliver the message of your heart.

JOHN FORD

No matter which venue you're in, you'll be expected to speak for a short time. If it helps, make notecards to hold in your hand that prompt you. Below is a standard timeline but feel free to mix things around.

- ✓ Introduce yourself (5 - 10 minutes)
- ✓ Share your story (15 - 20 minutes)
- ✓ Talk about the book and why you wrote it (5 - 10 minutes)
- ✓ Promote your organization (if you have one) (5 - 10 minutes)
- ✓ Invite audience to ask questions (10 minutes)
- ✓ If speaking at non-traditional venue, find volunteers to sell your books while you speak.
- ✓ Autograph copies at the end of your discussion.

IMPORTANT LINKS

- ◆ Use the link below to order your book(s) wholesale.
WHOLESALE LINK: <http://shop.alybluemediacom/t/wholesale>
- ◆ AlyBlue Media sells book signing banners. They transport easily, even on airplane carry-ons, and will last for years.
BANNER LINK: <http://shop.alybluemediacom/products/banner>
- ◆ AlyBlue Media can design a 16x20" poster. Use the link below.
POSTER LINK: <http://shop.alybluemediacom/products/poster>
- ◆ Order inexpensive bookmarks and other freebies from www.vistaprint.com. Vistaprint might have design templates to help you get started. Be sure to include the following on the bookmark:
 - ✓ Picture of you and the book
 - ✓ Title and ISBN (if title is too small to read on picture)
 - ✓ Your website, email, contact information